

# **Signifying old boys network**

A historical study on the composition of state committees between 1814 and 1880

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## **Preface**

Before you lies the thesis “Signifying old boys network: A historical study on the composition of state committees between 1814 and 1880.”

This thesis would not have been completed without the help of others. I would like to thank Dr. T. Kerkhoff for his excellent guidance and constructive advice throughout the entire process of writing this thesis.

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the composition of state committees from 1814 until 1880 to examine whether this could signify the existence of an old boys network and whether there is any change or continuity visible in this respect. Apart from generating empirical data on the social and political background of state committee members, this study aims at conceptual clarification of old boys network in the Dutch context. It intends to contribute to research on the legitimacy of state committees and their advice and – by extension – the Dutch advisory system in general.

This research starts with an examination of the literature on old boys network from different perspectives, derived from the private and public sector. This results in a definition on old boys network, which assumes that it is a social network with an insulated character which stretches across elite level in society and that provides social capital to members who share mutual norms and values. This definition lays the foundation for identifying multiple indicators to measure old boys network. By drawing upon and adding to an existing dataset by Kerkhoff & Martina (n.d.), empirical data on the social and political background of state committee members was obtained through the consultation of archive material and biographical records. This results in an overview and analysis on the composition of state committees, based on the indicators to measure old boys network. Moreover, the findings are placed in the historical context of that time.

The thesis finds that signifying an old boys network is a complex matter, since it touches upon multifaceted aspects that are difficult to capture. It turns out that not all the pre-established indicators point towards the existence of an old boys network. Yet, the research manages to gain extensive insight into the background of people that were involved in the state committees between 1814 and 1880. Also, the consideration of old boys network literature leads to a more in-depth understanding of the concept. Due to this conceptual clarification and the empirical findings about the existence of old boys network, this thesis is able to provide more clarity concerning the complex and normative debate about the presumed existence of old boys network in a Dutch political context.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The Dutch advisory system

By tradition, the parliamentary democracy in the Netherlands is based on a culture of consultation and negotiation (Hendriks & Toonen, 1998). This refers to “... *the complex system of actors who cooperate in various ways to provide advice that helps decision makers shape policies.*” (Van den Berg, 2017: 64). The tendency to pursue consensus in decision-making is commonly known as the *poldermodel*. This culture of consultation and negotiation is among other things reflected in the involvement of external advice in the policy-making process. When the Dutch government is confronted with difficulties in policy-making, the appointment of ad-hoc advisory committees is frequently used to come to consensus (Bovens, Hart, & Van Twist, 2012: 305). Consequently, ad-hoc advisory committees and likewise its members are able to affect policy-making. People from all different backgrounds can be appointed in advisory committees. Involving people who represent different perspectives in the consultation and negotiation process enlarges the legitimacy of the decision (Andeweg & Irwin, 2009: 248). Previous research mainly provided insight on the functioning of ad-hoc advisory committees in general. Schulz, Van Twist, & Geveke (2004) did an extensive research to generate empirical data on advisory committees from 1995 until 2005, in which they also examined the composition.

There is a relatively small field in the literature that investigates one specific type of ad-hoc advisory committees, namely state committees. Since 1814, state committees advise the government on policy affairs, act as mediator in political issues and provide proposals for (new) regulation and policy (Kerkhoff & Martina, 2015). They distinguish themselves from other ad-hoc advisory committees because their appointment is ratified by royal decree (Kerkhoff & Martina, 2015: 81). Moreover, earlier research showed that state committees are occupied with subject matters that can relate to various policy fields (Kerkhoff & Martina, 2015: 84). This means that state committees usually deal with policy affairs that transcend government departments, which makes them different from the regular ad-hoc advisory committees. These regular ad-hoc committees are limited to the relevant ministry (Schulz, van Twist, & Geveke, 2007). Hence, state committees are an important and distinct element in the whole of the advisory system. Their assigned tasks are usually challenging. Van Leeuwen (2013) illustrates this by examining state committees that were concerned with constitutional reform. Especially in the nineteenth century, state committees provided advice on fundamental issues that belong to the development of a modern state. These issues include the

design of penal code, tax laws, the quality assurance of education and the construction of infrastructure (Kerkhoff & Martina, n.d.). Due to the rich history, state committees are highly suitable for research over a longer period.

### *1.2. Old boys network*

A recurring debate about the advisory system regards to the question about the sort of people who are involved in this process. Member of Parliament (MP) Wynand Duyvendak presented an official note in the House of Representatives on behalf of this party GroenLinks in which he reflected on advisory committees in the Dutch parliamentary system (Kamerstukken II 2003/04, 29508, p. 1). One important concern of his regarded the composition of ad-hoc advisory committees. In Duyvendak's opinion, its members represent the established order of the Dutch political parties and corporate sector (Kamerstukken II 2003/04, 29508, 1, p. 4). He referred to this group as the old boys network.

In general, old boys network is an imaginative term and Duyvendak is not alone in using it. Whether it is in academic literature or in daily life, old boys network is a frequently used expression and its existence is widely discussed and criticized (Heemskerk, 2007: 89). As I will explain in chapter 2, old boys network is defined as a social network with an insulated character which stretches across elite level in society and that provides social capital to members who share mutual norms and values. The term originates from the English expression *old boy*. The Oxford English Dictionary describes this as “... *A male former pupil of a school, esp. a particular British public school. [...] denoting attitudes or favouritism thought to exist among old boys*”. Because of its general usage, people seem to assume that there is such thing as an old boys network. However, in order to determine whether an old boys network exists, it is important to get an idea of the type of people who are in it. Whereas Duyvendak & Van de Koppel (2005: 15) explicitly mention the existence of old boys network in the advisory system, they omit to give empirical support to confirm this claim. Here lies a motivation to further examine the assumed existence of old boys network in the advisory system. Because state committees in particular are an important element in the whole of the advisory system, they are a suitable subject to narrow down the scope of the research.

### *1.3. Problem definition and research question*

This thesis aims to investigate the composition of state committees over time to see whether this indeed warrants the label of an old boys network and whether we can see change or

continuity in this respect. The period 1814 – 1880 is chosen to conduct detailed research on the composition of state committees, based on an exploration of social and political background of state committee members. In addition, these findings are placed in historical context and related to the political-administrative developments in that period of Dutch history. As great economic, political and general societal changes took place, one can – for example – imagine this had its effect on participation of various groups in Dutch society. Taking into account these changes, change over time in the composition of state committees seems reasonable to expect. This results in the following research question:

*To what extent does the composition of state committees in the period 1814 – 1880 signify the existence of an old boys network and can we see change and/or continuity in this respect over time?*

#### *1.4. Scientific relevance*

As mentioned before, a limited number of studies is aimed at the investigation of state committees. Some research has a specific focus on a particular subject, like Van Leeuwen's (2013) study about state committees focused on constitutional reform. Other research has a more general approach. Kerkhoff & Martina (2015) started to approach the field of state committees as a separate research category. They investigated the number of state committees between 1814 and 1970 and the topics they dealt with. In addition, they looked at what this said about the existence and periodization of a night watchmen and welfare state in the Netherlands. However, the database that was generated – and which keeps evolving – also provides opportunities to look at other questions about state committees. One of these topics relates to their composition. Kerkhoff & Martina (2015: 85) noticed (though these observations are randomly obtained) that state committee members appeared in multiple state committees. Additional observations concerned that state committee members are mainly of a high social class and that they are predominantly men (Kerkhoff & Martina, 2015: 86). However, the particular dataset is insufficient to provide further explanations for these observations. In here lies a direct motive to generate more data in order to gain a better understanding of the composition of state committees. Kerkhoff & Martina's (2015) research serves as starting point to examine whether state committee members share certain commonalities.

Apart from providing more empirical data, this thesis aims to contribute to the literature by identifying different viewpoints on the concept old boys network. This is



important to consider if the old boys network actually has existed and/or still exists today, before drawing hasty conclusions about its consequences for the advisory system. As argued by Heemskerk & Fennema (2009: 810), old boys network is considered to be an opaque concept. The definition of old boys network varies in the literature, which results in terminological confusion. This ambiguity makes it difficult to measure the scope of old boys network. More specifically, the absence of an agreed definition makes it problematic to determine who is part of the network and who is not. To fill in this gap, identifying what various fields in the academic literature say about old boys networks contributes to the formulation of a more comprehensive definition. This enables us to operationalize the concept, which allows measuring the scope and identifying potential network members. Hence, conceptual clarification of old boys network is pursued that is applicable to the Dutch situation.

Lastly, this thesis aims to contribute to the research into the representative nature of democratic institutions. In the 1970s, the scholars Daalder and Cramer started to explore the representation and openness of governmental institutions since 1814. This laid the foundation for the Parliamentary Documentation Center, in which knowledge is collected about the democratic and representative nature of institutions like the cabinet and States-General (Moes, 2012: 32). Obtaining knowledge about the composition of state committees is a relevant addition.

### *1.5. Societal relevance*

The societal relevance of this thesis is captured in the legitimacy of state committees, and by extension the legitimacy of the advisory system as a whole. The legitimacy of these authorities can be explained in various ways. The first part of the introduction already mentioned Duyvendak & Van de Koppel's (2005) criticism regarding the functioning of ad-hoc advise committees. This critique touches upon the legitimacy of the advisory system. Duyvendak & Van de Koppel (2005) question its legitimacy because – in their opinion – only a select group of people are eligible for a place in an advice committee. It is unclear why and how some people are appointed to be part of a committee. The process of composing advise committees is, according to Duyvendak & Van de Koppel (2005), subject to the involvement of a particular establishment, what they call the old boys network. Due to this assumed involvement, they question the legitimacy of the composition of advisory committees.

Another form of legitimacy manifests itself in representation. Andeweg & Irwin (2009: 248) emphasize the importance of representation in estimating the legitimacy of the policy-

making process. A detailed understanding of this train of thought applied at state committees in particular points out the importance of balanced composition. In other words; when the composition of state committees is representative to the population, its policy advice towards the government is considered more legitimate. When considering the legitimacy of state committees, it is therefore essential to examine the (social) background of state committee members and the extent to which this is representative to the population. If the research results demonstrate that state committee members turn out to be a homogeneous group, it says something about the legitimacy of the state committee and their advice.

The topic of legitimacy (and related representation) is potentially at odds with effectiveness, which is also highly valued in the public sector. After all, a homogeneous group of people that speak each other's language and is familiar with each other will book results faster than a group that lacks these qualities. The tense relationship of legitimacy and representation on the one hand and effectiveness on the other remains a recurring issue in public administration. By examining the representation, this thesis aims to contribute to question to which extent state committees are legitimate. The reader should bear in mind that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to judge the legitimacy of state committees based from their composition. This study intends to serve as starting point for a broader exploration of this research field. In order to make appropriate statements on legitimacy, first it is important to consider the extent of representation in state committees, as little is known about this. Subsequently, a connection can be made to the question about the legitimacy of these committees and the policy that they influenced and shaped. Furthermore, if an old boys network does exist, this potentially has far-reaching consequences for the legitimacy of the advice and the subsequent policy that arises from it. In short: the legitimacy of state committees is in part determined by their composition (in representing different groups, interests, ideas and perspectives).

### *1.6. Research approach and reading guide*

A systematical analysis over time is performed to determine the existence of old boys network in a historical context. Therefore, an existing dataset developed by Kerkhoff & Martina (n.d.) will be consulted to conduct the research. This dataset represents an overview of all state committees from 1814 until 1880. It contains the main characteristics of these committees, among other their composition (Kerkhoff & Martina, 2015: 95). The missing compositions – 14 committees in total – were complemented with a self-executed data collection. Features

about the social and political background of state committee members were collected to serve as starting point for the results and analysis.

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 offers theoretical framework and concepts. It discusses the different perspectives on old boys network to come to a comprehensive definition. Chapter 3 offers a short methodological overview. Here, theory and concepts will be converted to an operationalization so that these can be measured. Chapter 4 offers empirical information and an analysis of the composition of state committees. The results are placed in historical-context as a background to changing composition in Dutch history from 1814 until 1880. These might serve as explanation for variation in the composition of state committees. Chapter 5 is the conclusion.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

This chapter will discuss concepts and theories related to the concept of old boys network. Due to the different perspectives on the concept from different bodies of literature, I will discuss how these diverse academic fields use the concept of old boys network to reconstruct a definition that is as best as possible. Since most of this literature is international as well as focused on the private sector (business elites etc.), I will then apply this to the Dutch public situation using literature from both public and private sectors. The aim is therefore to come to a comprehensive definition of the concept that is applicable to the Dutch context.

### *2.1. International perspectives on old boys network*

In order to define the old boys network concept, the international economic literature on this subject will be consulted first. Economic literature recognizes the importance of social networks. It is widely assumed that these networks play an important role in economic life (Taylor, 2000: 871). Regarding old boys networks, they are referred to as social networks which have certain benefits for the people who are in it (McDonald, 2011; Taylor, 2000). According to Taylor (2000: 876), such a network consists of a group of individuals who are likely to fulfill a social function through the mutual certification of the aptitude of its members. This mechanism benefits its members especially when it concerns recruitment processes of employees. Recruitments processes are the research objects to labor economics. Therefore, labor economics are examined in more detail.

The literature on labor economics mentions the existence of an old boys network frequently. It serves as a means to explain the application procedures (Saloner, 1985; Simon & Warner, 1992). Hereby, employers use formal screening mechanisms to assess the job applicant's motivation objectively. However, subjective assessment of the job applicant's competence is also part of the screening process (Saloner, 1985: 256; Simon & Warner, 1992: 307). This informal mechanism includes the consultation of third parties in the job applicant's assessment. In this case, people who are in the same informal network provide their personal opinions, which helps the employer in the selection process (Saloner, 1985). According to Saloner (1985: 256) such networks are often considered old boys networks. Hence, they serve as a sounding board for employers to hire suitable employees. Employers rely on the old boys network's advice because it provides relevant information of the job applicant that formal mechanisms are unable to provide (Simon & Warner, 1992). The old boys network can help employers by reducing their uncertainty about an applicant's true productivity, motivation and

competency. Employers prefer such informal channels to formal selection methods because it prevents poor job matches (Simon & Warner, 1992: 327). Based on the selection argument, it can be concluded that being part of old boys networks benefits its members. It enlarges a person's opportunities on the labor market, because it adds sources to his social capital. Social capital is a concept that originates from sociology. It consists of the whole of resources that a person obtains through the interaction with family members, friends, and acquaintances. Being part of family networks, having groups of friends and membership of associations or clubs helps to enlarge someone's social capital (Moes, 2012: 36). Hence, old boys networks help to acquire this social capital for the insiders. Consequently, not being part of an old boys network creates a limitation in obtaining social capital, which ultimately creates disadvantages for outsiders (McDonald, 2011: 317).

Academic research regarding representation in private business also recognizes this phenomenon. The existence of old boys network serves as an explanation why few women move on to top positions in corporate business (Burke, 1997; McDonald, 2011; Oakley, 2000). In his research, Burke (1997: 909) argues that having the right business contacts is important to be eligible for a CEO position.<sup>1</sup> Many qualified women do not have the right contacts to be noticed for a top position. Burke (1997: 911) attributes this to the old boys network, which is considered to be a small, important and insolated group of men. Oakley's (2000) description of old boys network builds on the social network element, arguing that it:

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*“... is an informal male social system that stretches within and across organizations, and excludes less powerful males and all women from membership. In the old boy networks, the members of network transfer the competition and power advantages realized in the formal structure onto friendship patterns and alliances within the informal system. The old boy network functions as an efficient distribution system that reinforces a system of obligations and recipifications.” (Oakley, 2000: 328)*

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The old boys network can be considered as a dominant sub-culture (Oakley, 2000: 329). At the top, the presence of this subculture ensures a certain status quo. Allowing people to top positions who differ from this status quo could threaten the established order of the old boys network (Oakley, 2000: 328). Competency testing (i.e. let someone prove himself/herself over again) preserves the old boys network from outside interference. By doing this, women are kept actively outside of the old boys network (Oakley, 2000: 328).

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from personal relationships, track records and appropriate expertise are found to be important factors in nominations for board positions (see: Burke, 1997).

## 2.2. *Old boys network in the Dutch context*

This section discusses the concept of old boys network in the Dutch context. The first part examines how private sector literature relates to old boys network. Secondly, the public sector perspectives on the concept are discussed. The final part of this section considers empirical studies that might give a notion of the old boys network in practice.

### 2.2.1. *Private sector perspectives*

Top positions in corporate business have also been subject to research on the Dutch economic situation. Heemskerk & Fennema (2009: 808) qualify this as the corporate business elite, which refers to those who are part of the boards of the largest firms in the Dutch economy. Regular meetings amongst the directors of these firms creates mutual cohesion, solidarity and community spirit. Nonetheless, Heemskerk & Fennema (2009: 815) note that not all directors are equally important to the corporate elite's network. Directors who hold one board position usually have limited relationships in the network. Especially those who hold multiple board positions gain key positions in the network, because they form bridges between boards. This group of key players is called the *inner circle* (see: Useem, 1984).

However, being part of the inner circle is distinct from being part of the old boys network. The acquired relationships through frequent interaction contribute to mutual cohesion and thus the old boys network (Fennema & Schijf, 2004; Heemskerk, 2007; Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009). Yet, it is possible that the key players share a common social background, even before entering the corporate business elite. If this is the case, it is likely to assume that they already share certain norms and values. Therefore, Heemskerk & Fennema (2009) attribute additional characteristics to the concept old boys network.

First, having an elite family background is considered as a component of old boys network. According to Heemskerk & Fennema (2009: 812) elite family background is characterized by the involvement of aristocratic elite in the governance of corporate business. The Dutch aristocracy is challenging to define because its boundaries are not completely fixed. Heemskerk & Fennema (2009: 827) limit their measurement of aristocratic elite to the ennobled and patrician families, which are listed by the Central Bureau of Genealogy in the Netherlands. Secondly, having a shared educational background is considered a characteristic of old boys network. Here a clear reference to the meaning of old boy becomes apparent, that is concerned with the former pupils of British schools. Heemskerk & Fennema (2009: 813)

point out that university life used to play a significant role in the preservation of the Dutch elite. They give a special note to student fraternities, which provide for making life-long relationships possible.

These two characteristics combined lead to the following description of old boys network:

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*“It is commonly used to refer to an elite group in society where life-long friendships and shared educational and family backgrounds define membership of that elite. The boundaries of this elite, however, are not very precise and often implicit.” (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009: 810)*

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Here, a conceptual difference can be recognized in comparison with Oakley (2000). In her description of old boys network, Oakley (2000) emphasizes the interaction between the formal and informal structure when reinforcing the old boys network. Additionally, Oakley (2000) highlights the exclusive character of old boys network by pointing out that outside interference from less powerful men or women in general is prevented. By contrast, Heemskerk & Fennema (2009) argue that having a shared family and educational background is essential to become part of the old boys network. Hereby, Heemskerk & Fennema (2009) pay special attention to the elite positions in society as condition to be part of the old boys network.

Altogether, old boys network is a well-known term in private sector literature. It is considered a social network that mainly but not necessarily consists of men and that benefits its members (Burke, 1997; McDonald, 2011; Oakley, 2000; Taylor, 2000); for example in acquiring top positions (McDonald, 2011). It can serve as sounding board to employers for selecting qualified individuals (Saloner, 1985; Simon & Warner, 1992) and stretches across organizations (Heemskerk, 2007; Oakley, 2000). The interaction between formal and informal structures matters as well because social capital is provided within the old boys network, to the people who are in it (Moes, 2012; Simon & Warner, 1992). Friendship patterns and alliances occur in the network which generates an established order that is characterized by mutual norms and values (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009; Oakley, 2000). This creates a barrier between the insiders and outsiders and ultimately makes the old boys network an insulated elite group (Burke, 1997; McDonald, 2011; Oakley, 2000).

### 2.2.2. *Public sector perspectives*

Old boys network is a repeatedly used term in private sector literature. However, as this thesis aims to investigate state committees, it is also important to look at literature that considers the public sector perspective. Even though the term as such does not occur frequently in this field, some substantive elements of old boys network can be recognized within public sector literature. This section pays special attention to literature about the Dutch consultation tradition to demonstrate some this resemblance. It reflects on two concepts from public sector literature: arranging and folding, and consociationalism. First follows a brief explanation about the concept. Then some are consequences discussed, which can be related to elements of old boys network.

Daalder (1995) described major developments that Dutch politics has gone through in the past four centuries. One of the main legacies from the age of the Dutch Republic is the tradition of arranging and folding (*schikken en plooiën*). As the Republic was constituted of several provinces, it lacked central authority. The society in general was diverse, politically and religiously, in which none of the groups had the upper hand. As a result, the elite of these groups had to cooperate. Regent families played a key role in this process. Decision-making could only take place in a joint setting by seeking advice, obtaining agreement and presenting decisions as jointly taken (Daalder, 1995: 149). Later, this way of making decisions became known as arranging and folding. It referred to the strategy used by the regents who were involved in the decision-making process, which was characterized by compromise and indulgence (Hendriks & Toonen, 1998: 36). Even after the end of the Republic, the regent families maintained their influential position during the nineteenth century, although they were not as defining as they used to be in the course of events within Dutch politics.

The influential position of regents also had a weakness. During the time of the Republic, the Dutch cities experienced nepotism and clientelism exerted by regent families (Hendriks & Toonen, 1998: 37). Studies executed in the nineteenth century explicitly criticized the position of regent families, because they preferred family interest to national interest. In that time, historians considered regent families as an insulated caste solely pursuing their own interests (te Velde, 2010: 32-33). The association of the word regent evolved over time, which has resulted in an ambiguous connotation. First it was used to qualify people who failed to act altruistically in politics. Later, Daalder (1995: 16) used it to note that Dutch politics had strayed away from society. He introduced the expression regent mentality in academia referring to the belief that authority is legitimized in itself, so people do not feel that they are politically accountable for their actions (te Velde, 2010: 39). Te Velde



(2010: 44) addresses the extensive use of the word regent to its ambiguous meaning, as it can help either to denote the government's arrogance or to complain about politics in general.

Another relevant concept is consociationalism. Lijphart (1990) developed this concept to explain why segregated societies, like the Netherlands in the time of pillarization, could still exist as stable political systems. Consociationalism is a form of politics based on power sharing amongst segregated groups, whereby these groups cooperate on elite level and try to reach consensus through negotiation and the interchange of interest. It requires a businesslike and pragmatic approach to decision-making, which preferably takes place in a confidential setting. The Dutch elite appeared to work well together during the pillarization (Hendriks, 2006: 95-96). Also after the pillarization, reaching consensus remained an important issue in Dutch politics.

However, this way of cooperating also has a shortcoming. If the same elite group is repeatedly involved in the policy process, the appearance of back room politics is likely to occur (Hendriks, 2006: 191). Duyvendak & Van de Koppel (2005: 15) criticize the way consensus is reached, because a selective and insulated group of people makes decisions behind closed doors. They refer to this group as the old boys network. Regardless whether decision-making takes place behind closed doors, Bovens & Wille (2011) point out that an over-representation of higher education graduates in politics could be problematic, if the higher educated are not aware of the problems of less qualified people or there are conflicting interests between those groups.

Although use of old boys network as such is limited in the discussed public sector literature, some aspects exhibit substantive similarities to the findings from other literature. When the consultation process is considered, several studies show that it takes place at elite level which underlines the insulated character of the setting (Daalder, 1995; Hendriks & Toonen, 1998). In addition, it becomes clear that the consultation stretches across different elite groups (Hendriks, 2006). Both show resemblance with the previous discussed features of old boys network.

### *2.2.3. Old boys network in practice*

The following section discusses empirical studies that might give a notion of the old boys network, although it is sometimes not mentioned as such. Historical studies focused on the elite position of the nobility in politics, civil service and private sector during the nineteenth century receive special attention, but studies that reach further in time are also included. In addition, the role of education is considered in estimating old boys network.

According to Moes (2012: 92), old boys network served as a means for the aristocracy to maintain informal friendship ties and network relations that were acquired at the political center in the Netherlands, the Hague, so that their position in society was protected. Moes (2012) identified 270 families that had an elite position in the Netherlands. A majority of them was disproportionately overrepresented in Dutch politics and had important positions in politics (Moes, 2012: 69–70). As used to be the custom among these families, offspring also became politically active. This is further investigated by Secker (1992: 105). She describes this phenomenon with the term political family. Secker (1992) conducted a comprehensive research on the social origin of Dutch ministers from 1848 until 1990 to offer a detailed understanding of their family background. Especially until 1918, political families were of frequent occurrence. Of all the ministers up until then, almost thirty percent of them both father and grandfather were active in politics during their career (Secker, 1992: 105). Gevers van Endegeest, Van Lynden van Sandenburg, Van Heeckeren, Mackay, Roëll, Cort van der Linden, Regout, De Jonge and Van Karnebeek are examples of families who held elite positions in Dutch politics.<sup>2</sup> Apart from political families, Secker (1992: 115) also identifies the term family circle (*familiekring*). This refers to mutual relationships amongst family clans.<sup>3</sup> A family circle can be determined for 95 ministers. The majority of them held office before 1918 (Secker, 1992: 116). Striking family names in the family clan are: Rochussen, Van Zuylen van Nijevelt, Van Lynden, Roëll and De Beaufort.

Van Braam (1957) did an extensive research on the civil service in the Netherlands, in which he also examined application procedures and the social background of civil servants. Around 1880, 25-33% percent of the higher civil servants working for the federal government was from the nobility (van Braam, 1957: 230). In those years, the recruitment of civil servants, especially for higher positions, happened through the consultation of acquaintances from the nobility or bourgeoisie (van Braam, 1957: 187). Van Braam (1957: 293) also found that top civil servants were more directed towards their own ranks in social interaction than civil servants who had a lower position. Mutual marriages and the participation in leisure clubs strengthened the solidarity within this group.

The study of Heemskerk (2007: 81) demonstrated that noble elite families also obtained dominant positions in the bank sector and joint stock companies.<sup>4</sup> This involvement marks their connection with the top of corporate business elite. His research identified several

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<sup>2</sup> Father, both grandfathers and father-in-law politically were active, predominantly in national politics

<sup>3</sup> Family clan: a group of family members up to the third degree (Secker, 1992: 115)

<sup>4</sup> Further research on the evolution of aristocracy in the Netherlands, see: Fennema & Schijf (2004)

elite families who dominated corporate business until the 1960s. These families are: Backer, Collot d'Escury, Van Karnebeek, Kretschmar van Veen, Van Lennep, Röell, Van Beuningen, Van Hoboken, Hudig, Mees, Reuchlin, and Dutilh (Heemskerk, 2007: 82).

Apart from the close ties that were extracted from family ties, attending university by itself used to be enough to preserve the boundaries of the Dutch elite (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009: 813). According to Moes (2012), universities served as meeting place to meet new acquaintances. These encounters often led to life-long friendships, which laid a foundation for the old boys network. The small amount of students that attended university at that time contributed to this process. For example, the then largest university (Leiden) had an average of 150 students per year between 1845 and 1905 (Otterspeer, 1992: 411). Because of the limited scale of Dutch academia, student contact was close. Hence, Secker (1992: 87) argues that it frequently occurred that ministers encountered their fellow students in the cabinets they later served in. When two or more ministers and MPs have started the same study in the same year at the same university, a potential network relation is possible to occur. In total, 65 ministers and MPs were identified that met this condition for a potential network relationship that was obtained during their student life (Moes, 2012: 93).

Later political careers were determined by the study choice from an early age. In general, the vast majority of those who hold top positions in politics have an academic degree. Studying law used to be the most prominent study to obtain an important position in politics. Secker (1992: 86) finds that almost all ministers from 1848 until 1918 obtained a law degree. Until 1918, fifty percent of the ministers graduated from Leiden University. From 1918, Secker (1992: 88) notices more variation in university cities. A study on secretary-generals in the Dutch civil service showed similar results, as the vast majority of them graduated at Leiden University (Rosenthal, 1979). Because of their mutual background, Rosenthal (1979: 360) wondered whether that would signify an old boys network at the interdepartmental level of the top of the civil service.

### *2.3. Summary and conceptual framework*

Altogether, the literature overview above serves as guidance upon which the definition of old boys network is based. In this thesis, old boys network is defined as a social network with an insulated character which stretches across elite level in society and that provides social capital to its members who share mutual norms and values. Based on this description, indicators are identified to determine whether someone can be considered as part of the old boys network. The concept old boys network is divided into three sub concepts. Based on these sub concepts,

the indicators are identified to make the concept measurable. In some instances, there are also sub indicators selected in order to make the measurement as precise as possible.

First, **personal characteristics** are identified to explain why this signifies old boys network. The arguments made by Burke (1997), McDonald (2011) and Oakley (2000) indicate that old boys network usually consist of a homogeneous group of people and that mainly but not necessarily men are part of such network. As this indicates that gender matters, it is considered as indicator to measure old boys network. In addition, age is selected. This feature is less pronounced in literature, but Schulz et al. (2006) found that chairs of ad-hoc advice committees are considered the *eminence grises* of the public sector. This suggest that one has to be of a certain age before someone is suitable to be member of an advice committee. Considering the questions state committees are faced with, people must possess expertise in the given area to make an appropriate judgement. This competence is mainly related to having a longtime experience in a certain field. It is assumed that this primarily applies to middle-aged people and therefore age is included as indicator.

The second sub concept is **social capital**. In this research, social capital applies to the social status that someone has in society, which is gained through the interaction with family members, friends and acquaintances. Social capital is subdivided into two indicators: social status and function outside of the committee. Because these indicators in itself are too comprehensive to operate as appropriate indicator, each one is subdivided into a set of sub indicators. Social status refers to the position that a person has attained in society and is dependent on features that are attributed to a person or that are achieved by a person. As for attributed features, having a noble title can be considered as such. Heemskerk (2007), Heemskerk & Fennema (2009), Moes (2012), Secker (1992) and Van Braam (1957) all discuss the elite position that the nobility has had in both public and private sector. Because their overrepresentation in elite positions is striking, having a noble title is identified as sub indicator to signify old boys network. As for achievement, the type of education and obtaining an academic qualification are selected as sub indicators. According to Heemskerk & Fennema (2009), Moes (2012) and Secker (1992), attending university contributed to a high social status. Especially Moes (2012) and Rosenthal (1979) suggested that relationships that were gained at university contributed to old boys networks. The second indicator refers to the function outside of the committee, because members usually have another (main) occupation apart from their function in the state committee. Based on Burke (1997), Oakley (2000), Saloner (1985) and Simon & Warner (1992), it can be concluded that old boys network manifests itself in a work-related environment. To measure a person's professional

background, captain of industry and scholars are identified as sub indicators. A diverse distribution would indicate that the committee members are from various work fields that stretch across society.

The third sub concept that is derived from the definition old boys network is **potential network relations**. As the term already implies, the interaction among people within the network is an important feature of old boys network. The exclusive nature of such a network is mentioned frequently throughout the different perspectives discussed above (e.g., Hendriks & Toonen, 1998; Oakley, 2000). Yet, as it is difficult to determine the exact boundaries of such a network (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009: 810), the sub concept is based on network relations that potentially could have existed. The first indicator to discover potential relations is to examine the study content of state committee members to assess whether they have a shared educational background. As discussed by Heemskerk & Fennema (2009), Moes (2012) and Secker (1992), attending university used to be a way for the Dutch elite to differentiate themselves, resulting in distinct network. Therefore, it would be an adequate indicator to examine a shared educational background. Hence, the related sub indicator is to identify state committee members that undertook the same study. The second indicator is to consider whether there were state committee members that had been part of multiple committees. This may be the case if others were satisfied with their work in the committee. If so, the assumption would be that those people would be part of a certain network, because they were appointed multiple times. The third indicator is to examine if there are family ties among state committee members and identify them accordingly. This indicator is included because it demonstrates whether the Dutch administrative tradition of consultation and negotiation endures within (elite) families. The final indicator to discover potential network relations relates to political conviction. When only private sector literature on old boys network is considered, this choice would not seem obvious. Yet, some authors in the public sector literature like Duyvendak & Van de Koppel (2005) associate the old boys network with belonging to the established order. Such an established order, which could be considered as a network, would presumably exist of a group of people who possess dominating authority in society. This dominating power, which could be reflected in a government or cabinet, could be signified by determining its corresponding political conviction. Hence, it would be an appropriate indicator to use, because if the political conviction of the state committee members is in alignment with the political hue of the government of that time, this could signify greater presence of old boys network. Conversely, conflicting convictions between

state committee members and the dominating authority would indicate that old boys network is less likely to be present.

Various additional indicators could be given, but have – for practical reasons of availability of material – not been included. Although it is not incorporated as such in the conceptual framework, this research assumes that when someone is part of a network, he/she shares certain norms and values with other members of that network. This assumption is based on the theory about isomorphism of DiMaggio & Powell (1983), in which they assume that institutions such as universities are important centers that contribute to the development of norms among professionals. Consequently, these individuals have a shared orientation and disposition (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 153). The membership of a network in relation to having mutual norms and values is important to discuss because shared norms and values is a key aspect of old boys network (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009).

**Table 1. Conceptual framework**

<b>Main concept</b>	<b>Sub concept</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Sub indicator</b>	<b>Literature reference</b>	<b>Source</b>	
Old boys network	Personal characteristics	Gender		Burke, 1997; Duyvendak, De Jong, Pauw, & Van Schendelen, 2005; McDonald, 2011; Oakley, 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State committee reports</li> <li>▪ Concept reports</li> <li>▪ Royal decrees</li> <li>▪ Decisions of appointment</li> <li>▪ State committees' minutes</li> <li>▪ Parliamentary documents</li> </ul> via: Leiden University Library, Royal Library, National Archive	
		Age				
	Social Capital	Social status	Type of education	Academic qualification		Burke, 1997; McDonald, 2011; Moes, 2012; Oakley, 2000; Secker, 1992; Simon & Warner, 1992
				Noble title		
		Function outside of the committee	Captain of industry Scholar			
Potential network relations	Content of study	Being member of multiple committees	Same content of study	Burke, 1997; Heemskerk, 2007; Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009; McDonald, 2011; Moes, 2012; Rosenthal, 1979; Saloner, 1985; Secker, 1992; Simon & Warner, 1992		
			Family ties			
	Political conviction	Same political conviction				

### 3. Research design

This chapter discusses the data collection and operationalization of the indicators. Then, how the research is conducted is discussed. In addition, the periodization 1814-1880 is justified. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the research are discussed.

#### *3.1. Data collection and operationalization*

The previous chapter ended with the conceptual framework. This laid the foundation upon which the indicators are determined. The indicators can be used to measure whether there is such thing as an old boys network. Therefore, data needs to be collected. The state committees that existed in the period between 1814 to 1880 are tracked down to find out their composition. Previous research has generated the publication references of state committees (see: Kerkhoff & Martina, n.d.). This made it easier to search for the right documents.

A study on state committees is predominantly dependent on archival research and library visits, as pointed out by Kerkhoff & Martina (2015: 83). The use of online search engines is often limited, because decisions of appointment are digitized only from 1995. Everything before 1995 relies mainly on written documents which are kept in archival collections. Sometimes such data collection is a disadvantage, because the information needed is difficult to obtain. Simultaneously, it is an opportunity because many important documents become available only after a long period time (Toshkov, 2016: 143), which provides insight in correspondence and personal notes. Information state committees that are concerned with very important matter are more easily accessible, such as the state committee for constitutional reform in 1814. Information about the reform, the committee itself and its members can be found online (De Nederlandse Grondwet, n.d.), yet availability like this is an exception.

In order to examine the people who were part of state committees, the composition is ascertained. This information is retrieved from state committee reports, concept reports, royal decrees, the state committees' minutes and other parliamentary documents, which were found in the Leiden University Library, the Royal Library or the National Archive. Once is clear which people were part of state committees from 1814 until 1880, personal information is collected based on the indicators: gender, age, type of education, academic qualification, noble title, function outside of the committee, etc. For this, online sources like [www.parlement.com](http://www.parlement.com) and [www.biografischportaal.nl](http://www.biografischportaal.nl) are consulted.



Between 1814 and 1880, there are 41 state committees. The dataset of Kerkhoff & Martina (n.d.) contains twelve committees for which the composition was already retrieved. Public Administration bachelor students collected the data for fifteen committees in this period, as part of an assignment in which they had to examine one particular state committee thoroughly. The remaining state committee compositions – fourteen committees which corresponds to 156 members in total – were complemented through own data collection. Also, the blank spaces in the existing dataset or in the students' assignments were supplemented, which means that basically every state committee member – amounting to 335 individuals – was additionally checked for missing information to complete the data collection. Ultimately, the collected data is merged into the existing dataset.

### *3.2. Methodology*

This thesis is based on doing historical research. It considers administrative history in particular. Studying administrative history helps us to understand the contemporary administrative structures and processes better, as the present circumstances in society are the outcome of choices made in the past (Raadschelders, 1994: 121–123). If the period 1814-1880 is kept in mind, we see that state committees had to deal with policy issues that formed the basis for the Dutch modern state as we currently know it. The people who were involved left their mark on the advice that resulted from the state committees. Therefore, it is important to investigate who those people are. This particular study not only provides insight on the social and political background of state committee members in the nineteenth century, but it also reveals something about what was considered conventional in appointing those people. Hence, conducting such historical research contributes to explaining the working of the advisory system, as such political processes can be better understood when the historical context is taken into account (Tilly, 2009).

The sources as described above are consulted to discover the personal characteristics of the state committee members. Subsequently, the collected data by means of the indicators is incorporated into the database and subdivided into the right category. This database, established by Kerkhoff & Martina (n.d.), contains broad information about state committees and their members since 1814. The excel sheet that concerns the composition includes the following categories: name, bioport number<sup>5</sup>, gender, year of birth, year of death, education, noble title, academic qualification, position in the committee, position outside of the

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<sup>5</sup> The bioport number refers to the index developed by <http://www.biografischportaal.nl/>

committee, political conviction and additional information. This sheet served as a starting point for the research, yet slight modifications were made to make it suitable to conduct this particular research. For example, age at the time of appointment needed to be calculated as the original dataset only considered year of birth.

Once the data is placed into the right category, they are filtered on each separate indicator. Consequently, an overview of the state committee members' personal characteristics is established. Then is considered whether any consistency can be discovered amongst the results. Similarities and differences are identified to see whether state committee members meet a particular profile.

### *3.3. Period*

This study is limited to the period 1814–1880 to investigate the composition of state committees. This is based on a number of reasons. 1814 is an interesting year to start because it marks the beginning of the Netherlands as a constitutional state. The need for constitutional development contributed to appointing state committees (Kerkhoff & Martina, 2015: 83). At the same time, king Willem I obtained absolute power and was responsible for political appointments. He continued the French approach by involving the nobility in governing the country (Moes, 2012). The chosen timeframe also includes the constitutional reform of 1848, which is considered the most substantial government reform in modern Dutch history as it laid the basis for the present democratic system. This reform had major consequences for the position of the king because he was distanced from involvement in decision-making. From then onwards, the cabinet has borne full responsibility for the government's actions. Also, the nobility and patriciate lost their privileges (Moes, 2012). 1880 marks the end of the timeframe. The cabinet is the main decision maker about the composition of state committees in this period. As the research aims to identify change and/or continuity throughout 1814–1880, the period 1814–1848 and 1848–1880 will be compared to see whether any changes in the composition of state committees occur.

### *3.4. Assessment of the research design*

This section assesses the research design. This historical study relies mainly on archival research. The data is obtained partly by accessing documents that are generally available in archives and libraries. The consulted documents date from 1814 and onwards. Hence, some were printed, but other reports from which state committee members were tracked down were

handwritten, thus the deciphering of handwriting was sometimes necessary. Nevertheless, this is part of doing historical research, as historians are deeply concerned about document accuracy (Kreuzer, 2010). Because this research relies on sources that are well accessible, this lowers the threshold to replicate the study. Also, it is based on written and authentic documents, which contributes to the reliability of the study.

The research design also has its limitations. Occasionally, it was not possible to track down sufficient information about the social background and later career of some state committee members. The availability of biographical data is sometimes deficient. As a result, it is inevitable that gaps might appear in the dataset.

With regards to the concept of an old boys network, Heemskerk & Fennema (2009) notice that its boundaries are opaque and not absolute. Measuring old boys network is dependent on the indicators that are used. An example of this manifests itself in the measurement of the aristocracy. This study only takes into account whether a person has a noble title. Heemskerk & Fennema (2009)'s definition of aristocracy is dependent on the Centre for Family History and includes both nobility and patriciate. Moes (2012) uses a broader approach in studying the aristocracy, as he also includes the patriciate and some influential bourgeois families. Due to practical reasons, I choose to just look at noble titles in order to assess the involvement of the nobility in old boys networks. This means that it might occur that in this study some state committee members are considered not to be in the old boys network, but based on a broader definition as used by Heemskerk & Fennema (2009) or Moes (2012) they could be. Another complicating matter regarding old boys network relates to the ambiguous denotation and connotation that people have of the term. Chapter 2 has provided a comprehensive discussion and definition of old boys network after assessing multiple perspectives to elucidate its denotation. However, this is not necessarily related to its connotation. Therefore, it might occur that, even though the research shows that there is no such thing as an old boys network because mutual characteristics do not apply at all, people can still assume or believe that it exists within state committees because they have such understanding of old boys network. This explains why old boys network is such an ambiguous term and why it is difficult to measure. Hence, this remark is important to bear in mind when the results are interpreted, because it has consequences for the internal validity of the study. Yet, the results can be used to divide facts from fiction about the term old boys network. With the results, a better judgement can be made about whether the prejudice that exists around the concept of old boys network is legitimate.

Carrying out historical research such as this one, is highly important, because it draws upon the latent information that is hidden in archives. It often required a physical visit to a library or archive to obtain this information, which signifies the time-consuming nature of the data collection. Due to the help of first year bachelor students Public Administration at Leiden University, the composition of state committees between 1814 and 1880 could be obtained after all. Whereas the individual background of many state committee members was already captured in their biographical records, all the information combined in one overview was absent until the establishment of Kerkhoff & Martina's (n.d.) dataset. This resulted in a rich collection of new empirical data, which is essential for reporting about and interpreting the results of the composition of state committees. These are the first steps in a process to gain the required knowledge to examine the functioning of state committees from an explanatory point of view.

## 4. Results and analysis

This chapter provides a detailed presentation of the research results. An analysis will follow accordingly, to examine whether the composition of state committees signifies the existence of an old boys network and to see change and/or continuity in this respect. The chapter starts with a section that provides general information on the state committees in the period 1814–1880. Then, three sections will follow based on the conceptual framework as described in chapter 2. The personal characteristics are considered first, then social capital and finally potential network relations. The chapter ends with a section in which the separate indicators to measure old boys network are combined, to see whether this could result in a certain profile that applies to state committee members.

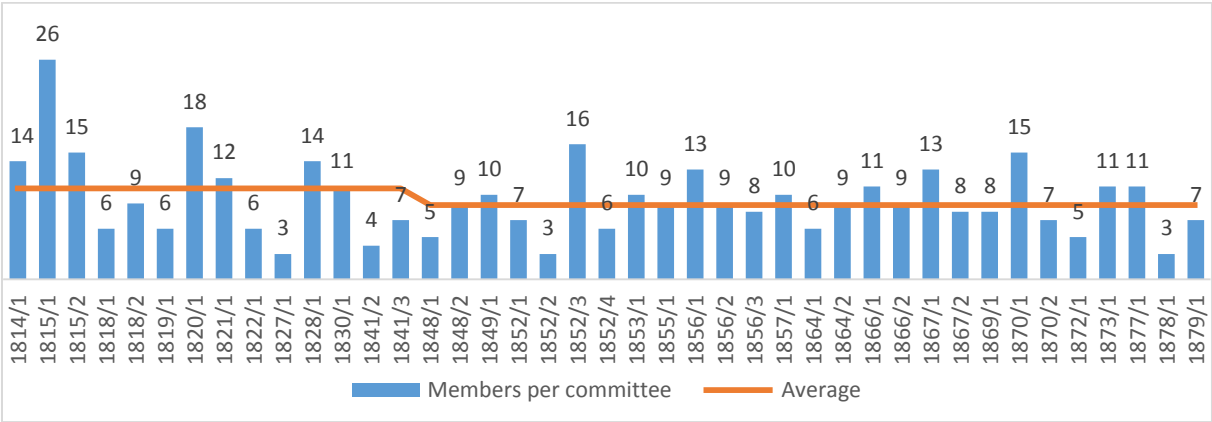
### *4.1. General information*

This section provides general information about the state committees that were appointed between 1814–1880. The period covered 41 state committees in total. These committees had 389 members in total. It is important to keep in mind that these 389 people do not equate to 389 unique individuals. As will be further demonstrated later in this chapter, it turned out that some state committee members participated in multiple committees. The dataset contained 335 unique individuals. Tracing their biographical records was essential to determine the personal background. Of nineteen state committee members, the biographical records were untraceable. Hence, personal information on the vast majority in the data set was accessible. Yet, the quantity differed, which resulted in different outcomes for the indicators. For some people, the personal background information was still limited, whereas for others it was sufficient to meet all indicators.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the total amount of members per state committee. The largest committee had 26 members, which was appointed in 1815 to revisit the constitution of the Netherlands (Kerkhoff & Martina, n.d.). There were three committees with the smallest amount of three members. These had the objective to attend the examination of officers of the Royal Military academy in 1828, to enable the international exchange of science and arts subjects in 1852 and to establish a pension fund for widows and orphans of civil servants in 1878 (Kerkhoff & Martina, n.d.). Looking at the period before 1848, there were fourteen state committees with 151 members in total. After 1848, there were 27 state committees with 238 members in total. As the number of state committees and members

increased, the average amount of members decreased from eleven to nine when comparing 1814 – 1848 and 1848 – 1880. This is visualized with the orange dashed line in figure 1.

**Figure 1. Members per state committee**

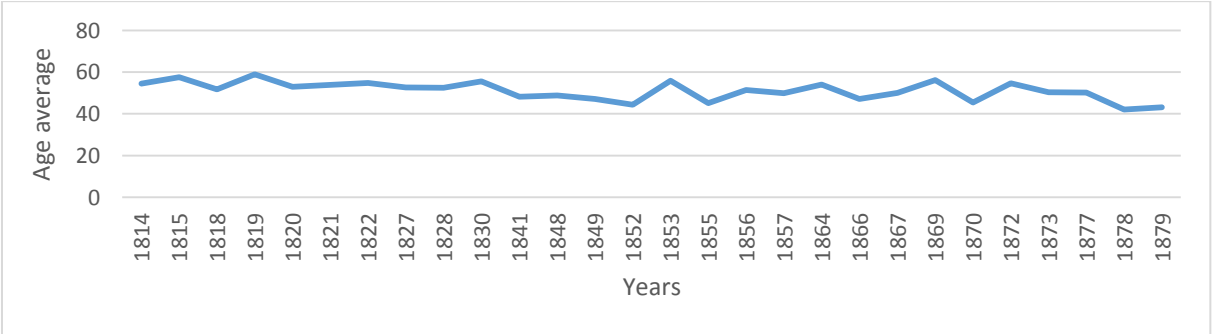


*4.2. Personal characteristics*

This section discusses the personal characteristics of the state committee members: gender and age. As for gender, the results are quite straightforward. Between 1814–1880, the members were all men. For some members, it was not possible to trace down their gender, because the biographical records were missing. Yet, there is no reason to assume that these people could coincidentally be women. As highlighted in the literature chapter, the political domain was predominantly a male affair in the nineteenth century. Therefore, it is safe to assume that women were not part of state committees in the period 1814–1880.

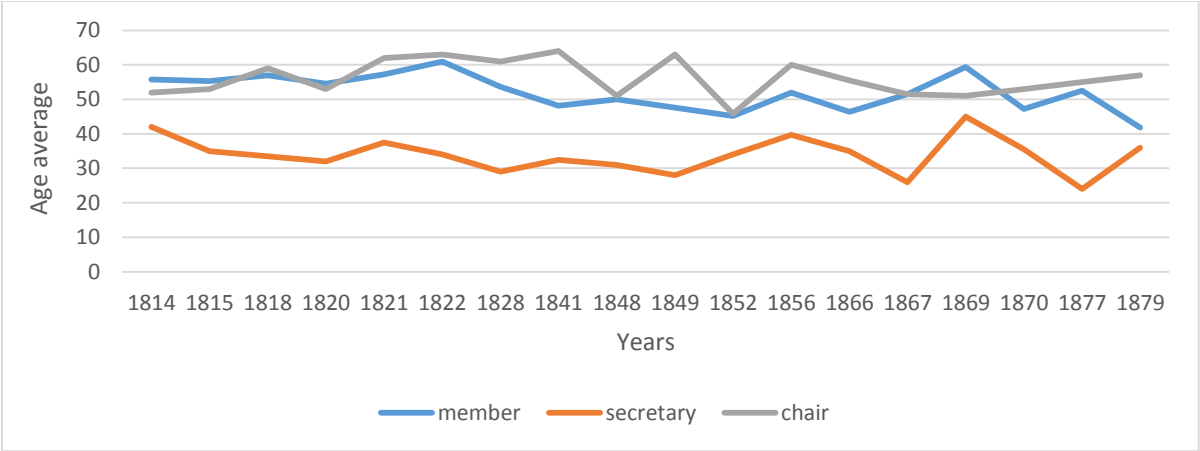
The next indicator that was used to determine old boys network was age. From a historical point of view, age is a relative concept. As the average life expectancy in 1850 used to be around forty years (CBS, 2019), this illustrates that terms like middle-aged are relative to the period that is investigated. The age average for state committee members was 51 from 1814–1880. Figure 2 shows the average age per state committee. It demonstrates that the average fluctuated between the age of forty and sixty.

**Figure 2. Age average over time**



A closer inspection of the data demonstrates that few people below the age of forty were part of a state committee. In total, this included 55 people. If the function within the state committee of the people below forty years old is considered, it was striking to see that the role of (deputy) secretary is fulfilled 22 times while the total amount of (deputy) secretaries in the dataset is 32. This observation led to a further investigation of the average age split according to function, resulting in figure 3. It appears that the average ages of chairs and members are quite close to each other. What stands out is that the secretaries were substantially younger than their fellow members.

**Figure 3. Age average broken down into function over time**



When considering age as an indicator of old boys network, the results show that state committee members for the contemporary understanding of age were indeed middle-aged on average, as was suggested in chapter 2. It can be concluded that they had considerable (life) experience, based on their age average. Yet, if their age is related to the historical context of the nineteenth century, drawing conclusions seem more complex. As said, the life expectancy of people in 1850 was around forty years, which seemed to be much lower compared to the age average of state committee members. The low life expectancy was caused by high child mortality in that time (Treffers, 2008). Still, most people in the nineteenth died at the age of 70 (CBS, 2019), which gives a more nuanced view on age in the nineteenth century. Hence, concluding that the age average of state committee members was substantially above average would not be entirely accurate. Turning to an examination of change over time, there is no substantial difference in average age when the period before and after 1848 are compared. Hence, it appears that when it comes to the age of members, there was quite some continuity.

### 4.3. Social capital

As explained in chapter 2, this research presupposes that social capital refers to the social status that someone has in society that is gained through the interaction with family members, friends, and acquaintances. It is subdivided into two indicators: social status and function outside of the committee. The findings are discussed in the following sections.

#### 4.3.1. Social status

The conceptual framework explained that a person's social status is derived from the position that he or she has attained in society. It is dependent on features, either that are attributed to a person or that are achieved by a person. Having a noble title as a state committee member relates to the attributed features. Hence, the following paragraph discusses these findings accordingly. Then, this section discusses the findings that relate to achievement features. In this study, a person's educational background is considered as part of these achievement features. Throughout the research, educational background is approached from multiple perspectives to serve as an indicator: from a social status perspective and network perspective. As for the social status perspective, type of education and academic qualifications are identified as achievement features as it reflects the position that a person has in society. Hence, these corresponding findings are discussed in the following paragraph. The examination of study content will be discussed in paragraph 4.4 since these findings are considered part of the network perspective.

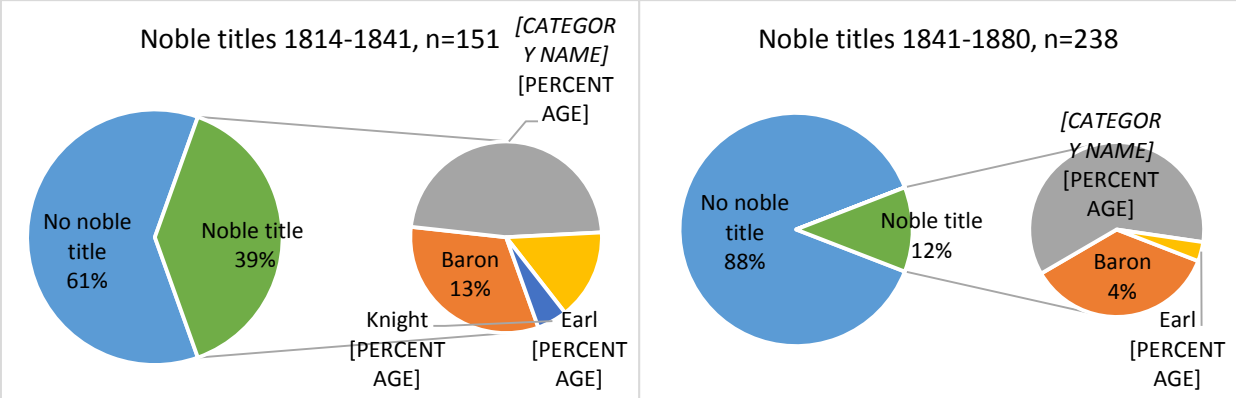
##### 4.3.1.1. Noble title

The first sub indicator to examine is noble title. Out of the 389 members throughout 1814–1880, 87 noble titles were counted. This means that for 302 members, a noble title was absent. The types of noble titles that occurred were: baron, earl, *jonkheer*, and knight. It appears that the title of *jonkheer* and baron were more prevalent than earl and knight. Given the timeframe, the large presence of *jonkheer* calls for a further examination. At the beginning of 1800, the Dutch nobility had become considerably small, due to the lack of growth (Moes, 2012: 42). This led king Willem I and II to expand and renew the nobility (Boels, 2011; Moes, 2012). They ennobled people from elite families or people who had a prominent position in society or due to remarkable personal merit (Moes, 2012). The new noblemen were predominantly appointed as *jonkheer*. Others were ennobled as baron or earl, yet this happened less frequent (Moes, 2012: 42). Hence, the quantity of *jonkheer* seems consistent with its time, when you compare it to the other titles that appeared from the dataset.



The amount of noble titles reveals an interesting distribution when the period of 1814 – 1848 and 1848 – 1880 are compared. Figure 4 makes this difference comprehensible. The amount of noble titles before 1848 is evident. After 1848, there was a substantive decrease in noble titles. Baron and *jonkheer* were still the most prevalent titles. The titles of earl and knight had almost disappeared.

Figure 4. Distribution of noble titles



Based on the literature about the position of the nobility in society in the nineteenth century, it was assumed that having a noble title would contribute to the existence of old boys network. When the entire period 1814-1880 is considered, it appears that the nobility was present in the composition of state committees, yet it was relatively small. A comparison of the period before and after 1848 leads to a different conclusion. Before 1848, a much greater amount of noble titles could be determined, compared to the period after 1848. A likely explanation for this finding could be related to the absolute power of the king, which lasted until 1848. King Willem I explicitly appealed to the nobility during his reign (Boels, 2011) which would make this finding fit into the historical context. Hence, these results would indicate that old boys network appeared to be more present during 1814–1848.

4.3.1.2. Type of education

The second sub indicator that is perceived as part of social status is type of education. To make an enhanced interpretation of the results possible, first it is important to provide some general information about education in the Netherlands. In the nineteenth century, education policy was aimed at maintaining the class stratification since social mobility was considered to be objectionable (Slaman, 2015: 18). Attending university was an expensive and time-consuming business, which allowed only elite families to send their children for higher education. For a vast majority of society, this was inaccessible. Hence, people were deemed to develop themselves within the possibilities of their class (Slaman, 2015: 18). The education

policy of king Willem I provided for scholarships on a small scale, which encouraged training for becoming cleric, teacher or visual artist. Such professions appealed to the community spirit, meaning that this policy was partly motivated for state building. Yet, its success was limited (Slaman, 2015: 58-60). After the constitutional reform, the scholarships were reduced for a number of political reasons (see: Slaman, 2015: 61-102).

An examination of the state committee members' educational background demonstrates that several types of education emerged from the dataset. These include: academic education<sup>6</sup>, basic education, personal education, and a residual category.<sup>7</sup> Few times, it was observed that only personal education was obtained. For example, an Amsterdam notary educated the politician Canneman<sup>8</sup> (Van Leeuwen-Canneman, 2019). Beijerink<sup>9</sup> had a career for the Public Works and Water Management directorate after his uncle educated him as engineer. His family was known to be working for the Public Works, so Beijerink's education took place in practice (Blok & Molhuysen, 1911a). Such on job training through family connections used to be a quite common practice, especially for functions in the central government in the nineteenth century (Van der Meer & Kerkhoff, 2016).

For 122 members, no educational background could be retrieved. Yet after scrutinizing their biographical records, this finding did not necessarily imply that these individuals actually had mediocre careers. For example, it was found that Van Hoey Schilthouwer van Oostée<sup>10</sup> began his career in the lowest military ranks and ultimately climbed up to the position of major general. A similar career path applied to Detmers<sup>11</sup>, Andersen<sup>12</sup> and Gerlach.<sup>13</sup> Another example was Mulken,<sup>14</sup> who volunteered as a teen to fight against the French occupation. This laid the basis for his career as a military officer. Despite the lack of any education, he ultimately became Minister of War and was appointed for the Second Chamber. Such a career path did also occur in the civil service. For instance, Rochussen<sup>15</sup> was appointed as tax controller at the age of sixteen (Blok & Molhuysen, 1911b). Later, he had an extensive career in politics and became a confidant of king Willem I and II (parlement.com, n.d.-a). Yet, the observations regarding ascending from the lower ranks to a key position

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<sup>6</sup> Study programs at the Royal Military Academy are counted among academic education

<sup>7</sup> The residual category included training to become ship builder and navigator on a ship, which occurred twice time in the dataset.

<sup>8</sup> Member of state committee 1841/2

<sup>9</sup> Member of state committee 1864/1 and 1867/2

<sup>10</sup> Member of state committee 1819/1

<sup>11</sup> Member of state committee 1819/1

<sup>12</sup> Member of state committee 1857/1

<sup>13</sup> Member of state committee 1866/2

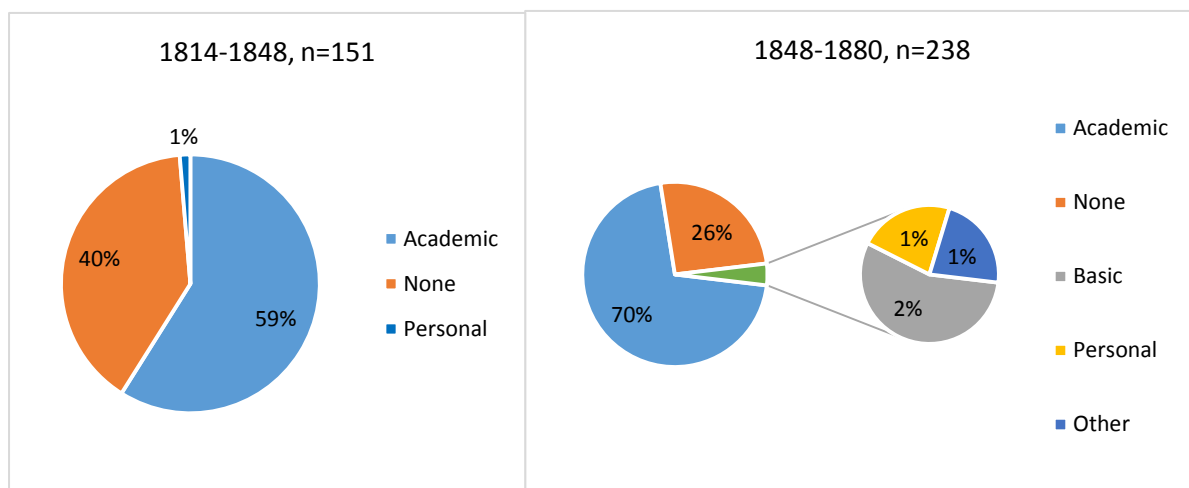
<sup>14</sup> Member of state committee 1864/2

<sup>15</sup> Member of state committee 1857/1

heavily relied on the quality of personal records. It appeared that the starting point of a career was only discussed incidentally, which does not allow for a systematical analysis over time. Still, the observation in itself, enabling people to move up in their career, would suggest that it is at the expense of old boys network. Allowing people from lower ranks to obtain a key position could imply that access to such positions was more open. This would interfere with the assumed closed nature of high ranks. Yet, obtaining such a position in the first place much relied on informalities and family connection (Van der Meer & Kerkhoff, 2016), which suggests that it was not granted to everybody.

For the majority of the state committee members, an academic educational background was found. When comparing the periods 1814–1848 and 1848–1880, the distribution of education types shows striking changes. This is demonstrated in figure 5.

**Figure 5. Distribution of education types**



First, figure 5 demonstrates that the members, for which no educational background was established, substantively declined in 1848-1880. The state committee members that obtained an academic education increased much in this period as well. This finding is consistent with earlier discussed arguments that university education gradually became more important, especially for high-rank positions (Van der Meer & Kerkhoff, 2016: 19). If the literature about education type is reconsidered, it described that attending university would point to a high social status (Moes, 2012; Secker, 1992; Slaman, 2015). Hence, the group of state committee members can largely be considered as high profiled. Judging from the fact that higher education primarily was reserved for the elite, this would suggest that old boys network became more present during the period 1814–1880.

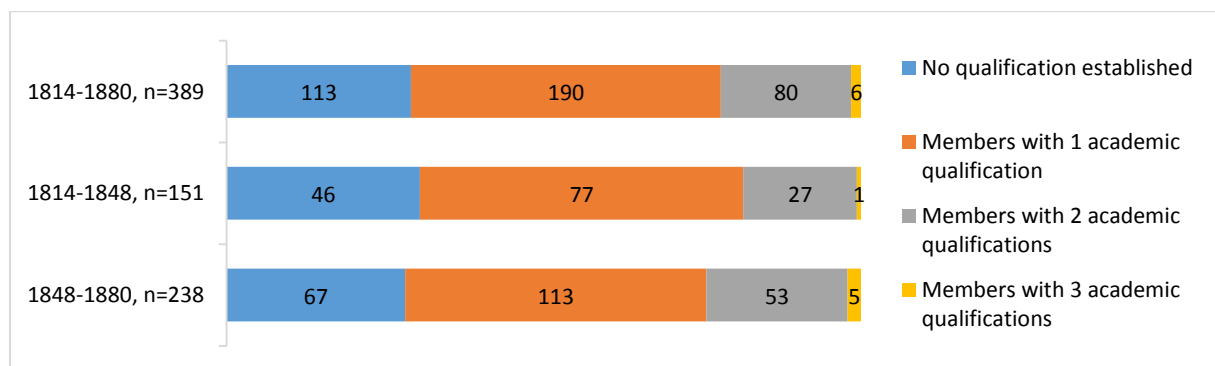
#### 4.3.1.3. Academic qualifications

After considering the education type, now the academic qualifications of state committee members are examined. These titles are discussed from two angles. First, the quantity of academic qualifications per state committee member is considered. Second, the type of qualification is examined.

It turned out that for 113 state committee members out of the 389 in total no academic qualification could be established. For a majority of the members - about two-thirds - one or more qualifications were found. The distribution is displayed in figure 6. After 1848, an increase in the number of academic qualifications per state committee member can be observed. This increase makes sense because there were more state committee members in 1848-1880 compared to 1818-1848. Yet in relative terms, the ratio of academic qualification per state committee members seems rather stable. Hence, this suggests continuity regarding the number of academic qualifications per state committee member.

As mentioned in the previous section, obtaining an academic qualification was time-consuming and expensive. Students could not simultaneously provide for their own livelihood, which made themselves dependent on others. Only wealthy families could allow their children to study at a university, while it was inaccessible for the vast majority of society (Slaman, Marchand, & Schalk, 2015). Hence, the observation that about two-thirds had obtained an academic qualification, suggests that they were part of the upper layer of society. Moreover, more qualifications indicate at a longer time spent in academia. Either, because members graduated in multiple disciplines<sup>16</sup>, or they did a Ph.D. after obtaining the title master of law<sup>17</sup>. Apparently, the people concerned could afford this, despite the involved costs. This again indicates that the majority of state committee members were privileged.

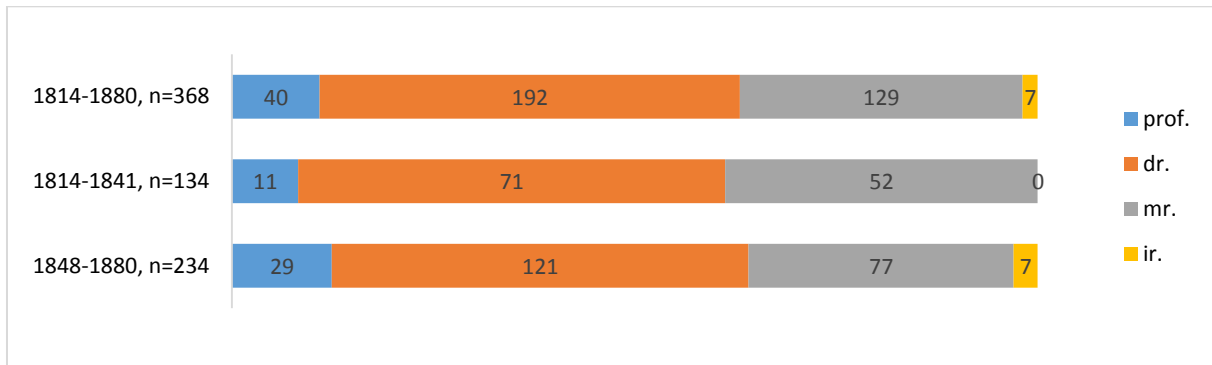
**Figure 6. Amount of academic qualifications per member**



<sup>16</sup> For instance Schröder (1828/1), who studied both philosophy and physics.

<sup>17</sup> For instance De Bruyn Kops (1855/1)

**Figure 7. Distribution of type of academic qualifications**



Now, the type of academic qualifications is discussed. Four qualifications emerged from the dataset: professor (prof.)<sup>18</sup>, doctor (dr.), master of laws (mr.) and engineer (ir.). The distribution is demonstrated in figure 7. Also here, an increase in numbers is observed but this can be attributed to the fact that there were more state committee members after 1848. Relatively speaking, the difference is negligible, so there seems to be continuity in the type of academic qualifications.

It appears that about one-third of the state committee members had an academic background in law. This finding can be related to the literature, which stated that obtaining a law degree used to be a precondition for a position in the public domain (Moes, 2012: 86; Slaman, 2015: 31). An even bigger group held doctorates. Yet, it used to be common in that time to graduate defending statements (*promoveren op stellingen*), rather than establishing a dissertation (Slaman, 2015: 97). Therefore, the threshold to become *doctor* was lower compared to contemporary standards. A small change regards to the emergence of engineers after 1848. This means that the variety in the academic background has extended a little to the technical domain. In general, the significant representation of the multiple academic qualification types suggests that state committee members obtained an elite position in society or that at least a majority of them had a high social status. As social status is considered a characteristic, this could support the idea of the existence of old boys network.

#### 4.3.2. Function outside of the committee

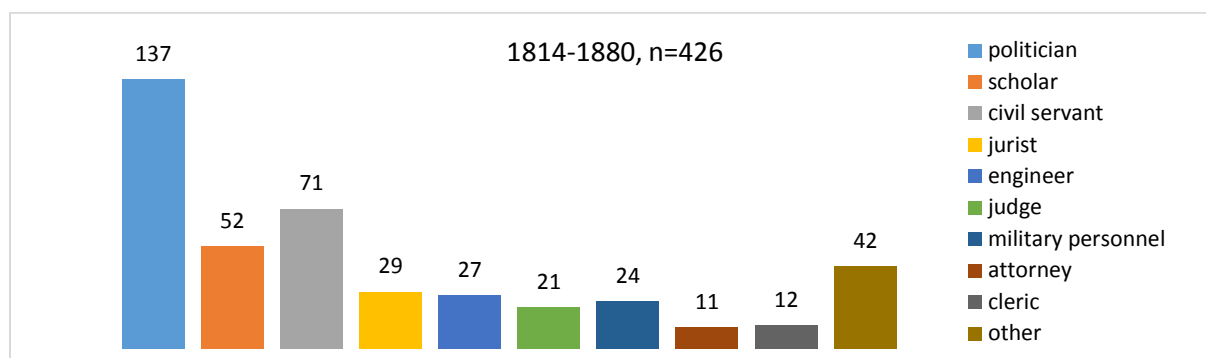
The other indicator to ascertain social capital refers to the function that members had outside of the state committee. First, all the occupations that emerged from the dataset will be examined. Subsequently, special attention will be paid to the professions of scholar and captain of industry, since these were emphasized in the conceptual framework.

<sup>18</sup> In strict terms, professor is not an academic qualification, yet it is a way to address scholars with a professorship.

#### 4.3.2.1. Occupations

This paragraph discusses the occupations that the members held concurrently with their activities for the state committee in which they participated. It appeared that 344 members had a main profession alongside their work for the state committee. For the remaining 34 members, occupational activities other than their work for the state committee could not be retrieved. Figure 8 demonstrates the occupations, 26 in total, held by the 344 state committee members. They held these occupations and participated in the state committee simultaneously. For practical reasons, the category “Other” was established, in which eighteen professions are combined, carried out by only a few state committee members.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 8. Occupations, concomitantly with the work for a state committee



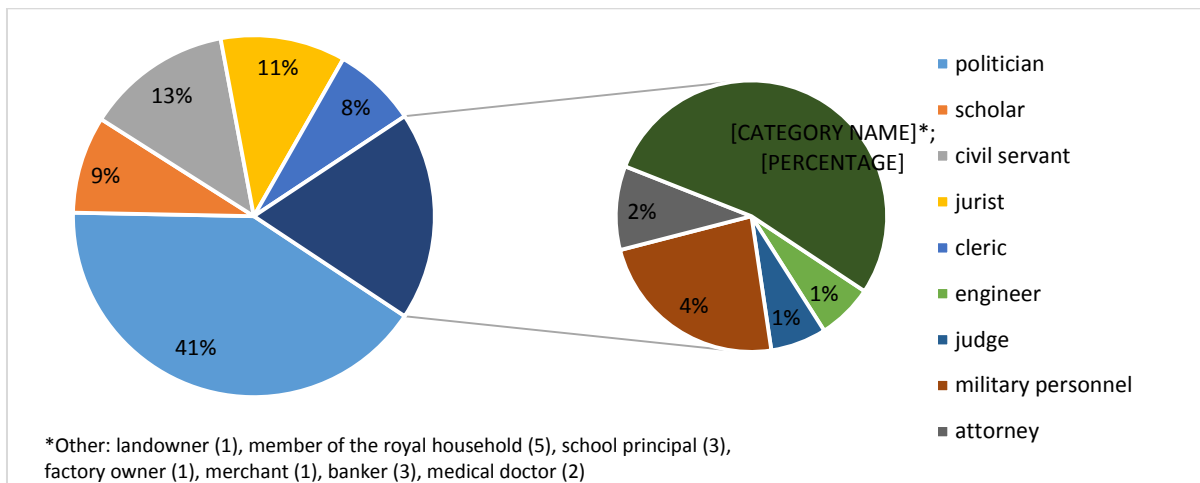
It appears, judging from figure 8, that a majority of the members were politicians and participated in a state committee simultaneously. The dataset showed that a majority of them was part of the national parliament. Only some were representatives in the States-Provincial or in the Water Board. The additional group that accounted for a large part the occupations were civil servants and scholars. They combined their job with participating in a state committee too.

What remains, are less prevailing occupations like jurist, engineer, judge, military personnel, attorney and cleric. The groups of cleric can be considered as an outlier, as it appeared that all the clerics were part of one particular committee that was tasked with a religious subject matter.<sup>20</sup> This is contrary to the other occupations, which appeared throughout the dataset. If the distribution above is split according to the periods 1814–1848 and 1848–1880, this results in figure 9 and 10.

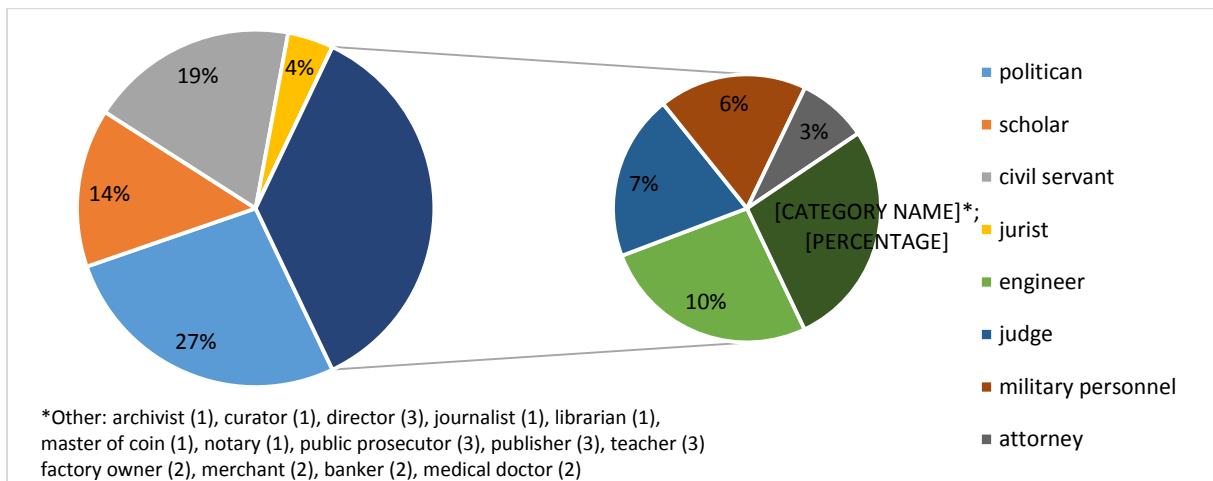
<sup>19</sup> The occupations that apply to the category other are: landowner (1), member of the royal household (5), school principal (3), archivist (1), curator (1), director (3), journalist (1), librarian (1), master of coin (1) notary (1), public prosecutor (3), publisher (3), teacher (3), factory owner (3), merchant (3), banker (5), medical doctor (4).

<sup>20</sup> State committee 1815/2 was occupied with the reformed church in Dutch East Indies.

**Figure 9. Distribution of occupations during 1814-1848, n=161**



**Figure 10. Distribution of occupations during 1848-1880, n=265**



Comparing figure 9 and 10, there appear some striking differences. For example, the percentage of politicians participating in state committees shows a severe decline after 1848. By contrast, other occupations, like civil servants, scholars and judges show slight increases. Whereas the category other remains of equal size in relative terms, there is an expansion visible regarding the range of occupations. Based on these findings, it appears that the composition of state committee members had become more diverse after 1848. The growth in the variety of occupations would suggest that the composition of state committees had become more open. As old boys network is considered as a closed stronghold, this openness would be at its expense. Yet, this research also assumed that old boys network “... *stretches across elite level in society*”. Looking at the occupations in question, many of them could be considered as belonging to the elite. From this point of view, the link with old boys network could still hold. Thus, there appears to be ambiguity regarding the definition of old boys network in the case of occupation. Due to this ambiguity, it is hard to say whether growth in the variety of occupations signifies the existence of old boys network.

#### 4.3.2.2. *Scholars and captains of industry*

The conceptual framework paid special attention to two particular professions, namely scholars and captains of industry. As was noted earlier in this section, it appeared from the dataset that scholars took a greater part in state committees in 1814-1880. Further scrutiny of the members' biographical records provided a more detailed understanding of academic life in this period. Its scope appears to be rather limited. This is consistent with the reports in chapter 2, which learned that Dutch academia used to be closely connected. This observation is illustrated by the fact that some names of Dutch scholars occurred repeatedly during the data collection. It turned out that Moll used to be a former student of his fellow state committee member Van Swinden. Both professors were appointed in the state committee 1821/1. When the biographical records of Mulder<sup>21</sup> were examined, it appeared that he used to be a former student of Moll. Although these findings were collected in a non-systematic manner, it could exemplify the relationship of Dutch scholars a bit more. Apart from scholars, captains of industry also receive special attention. This refers to all the directors, factory owners, bankers and merchants that were part of a state committee. Judging from the dataset, there were seventeen captains of industry in total. Hence, they made only a small part of state committees. In relative terms, they were spread evenly over the period 1814-1880.

#### 4.4. *Potential network relations*

The final part of this chapter discusses the potential network relations of the state committee members. First, there will be elaborated further on the educational background of the members, yet now from a network perspective. Hence, the content of study will be discussed in this section. Then, it will be considered whether there were members who appointed in multiple state committees. Thirdly, potential family connections within the state committees are examined. The final part of this paragraph consists of an examination of the political conviction of state committee members compared to the then prevailing political status quo.

##### 4.4.1. *Content of study*

The main issue regarding this indicator is to ascertain whether state committee members have study content in common. The results relating to education type (see: paragraph 4.3.1.2) showed that academic education was most prevalent. Based on these results, the content of these educations will be examined further. Personal education and basic education are excluded from this examination, as they only appeared a few times in the dataset.

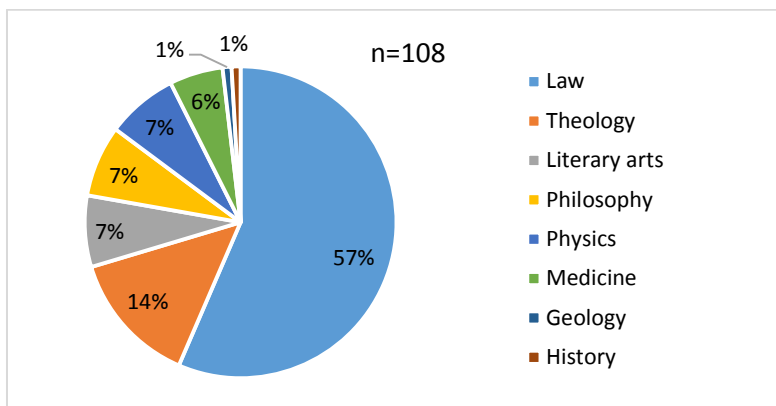
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<sup>21</sup> Member of state committee 1848/2 and 1856/2

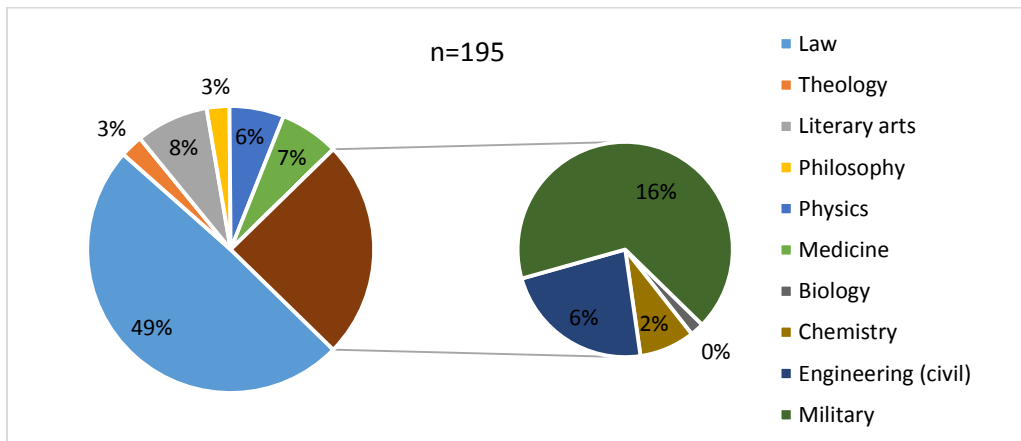


Judging from figure 11 and 12, there are six studies that were prevalent throughout the entire period: law, theology, literary arts, philosophy, physics, and medicine. About half of the state committee members that went to college studied law. Based on the findings of academic qualifications, which showed the amount of master of laws titles, this result was to be expected. Also, this finding is consistent with the literature which reported that law used to be a common higher education choice for people that later had influential positions in public life (Moes, 2012: 86). When the content of study after 1848 is considered (figure 12), several changes appear.

**Figure 11. Content of study in 1814-1848**



**Figure 12. Content of study in 1848-1880**



First, there is a decline in the study theology. This can be related to the fact that state committee 1815/2 was predominantly occupied with clergymen, as it was engaged with a religious subject matter. In addition, after 1848 several ‘new’ studies appeared. These are included in the smaller pie chart in figure 12. It represents an increase of exact sciences, which indicates that the variety in the educational background of state committee members had grown after 1848. In addition, a remarkable increase in military studies had taken place after 1848. As the content of study became more diverse, this would imply that old boys network was less present after 1848.

When comparing figure 11 and 12, the most striking change relates to the emergence of military studies. A closer inspection learned the vast majority was received at the Royal Military Academy (Dutch: *Koninklijke Militaire Academie* or *KMA*), which amounts to a total of 25.<sup>22</sup> The sudden increase of military education after 1848 could be related to the fact that the KMA was founded in 1828. At the KMA, multiple military programs were offered to train prospective officers for the armed forces (Lintsen, 1994: 57). Before the founding of the KMA, other military schools existed (see: Aalders, 1997: 51-66) but those did not pertain to the state committee members' educations for the period 1814–1848. Apart from training military officers, the KMA also provided for the education of military engineers. These engineers were not trained to join the military forces, but for a position as an engineer in the public works instead (Aalders, 1997; Lintsen, 1980). The dataset showed that sixteen members, who were educated at the KMA, later became a head engineer for the Public Works and Water Management directorate. From 1850 onwards, there was a growing demand for engineers with an orientation other than the public works. This led to the founding of the Polytechnical School in Delft, to expand engineering programs, which were civil orientated (Lintsen, 1980).

The findings above have mixed consequences for potential network relations. On the one hand, the increase of military education, which especially applied to the KMA, would indicate a more closed community. This would mean that shared educational background in terms of the military had risen after 1848. On the other hand, the possibility of having a leading position in the military, without the attending the KMA was still present and could not be ruled out. This is reflected in the military careers of Andersen, Mulken and Gerlach, whom all were appointed in a state committee after 1848. As the opportunity to climb up from the lower ranks still existed, this would be at the expense of the closed community sphere and would consequently undermine the old boys network.

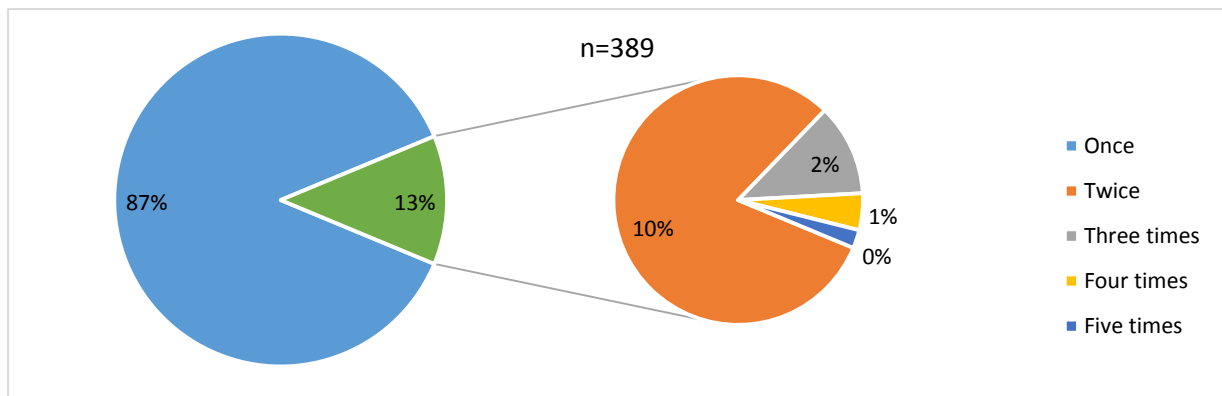
#### 4.4.2. *Member of multiple committees*

The following indicator to figure out potential network relations relates to determining whether members had been part of multiple committees. As stated in the beginning part of this chapter, there had been 41 state committees during 1814–1880, which consisted of 389 members in total. Yet, these are not 389 unique individuals, as it turned out that some state committee members were appointed multiple times. The dataset demonstrated that 335 unique

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<sup>22</sup> The remaining military studies were obtained at the Military School The Hague and the Royal Naval College

individuals were part of a state committee during 1814–1880, of which 293 people were only appointed once. The remaining group, which included 42 people, was appointed multiple times. The majority was appointed twice, as shown in figure 13. Eight people were appointed three times or more. This group consisted of the following members: Repelaer van Driel (5), Roëll (4), Quarles van Ufford (4), Conrad (3), Caland (3), Metman (3), Van Tets (3) and De Vries (3).



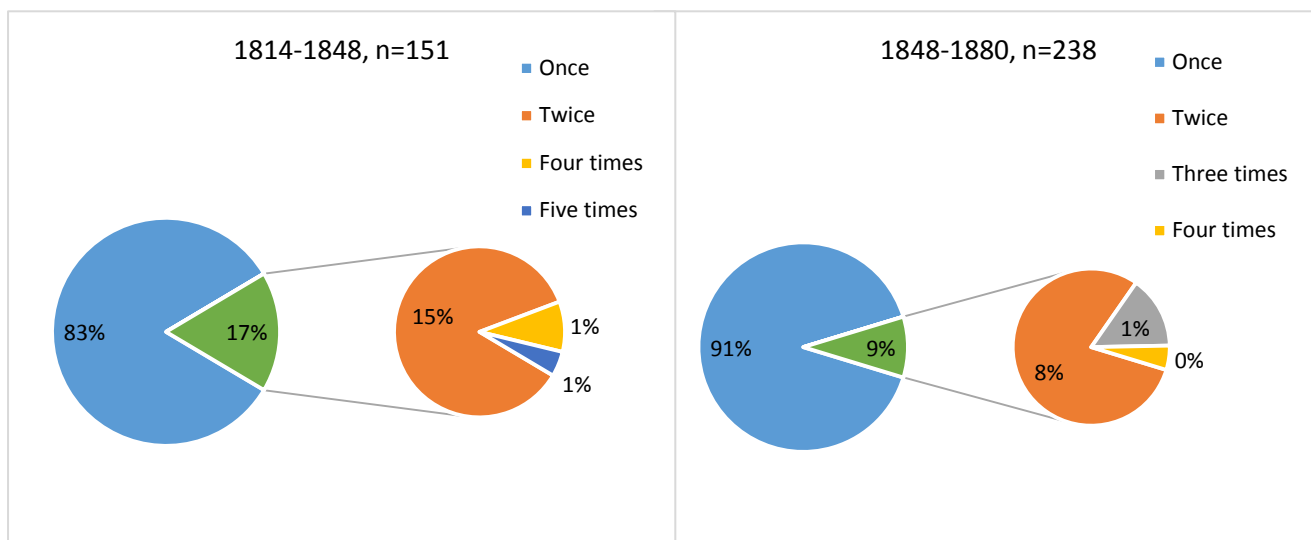
**Figure 13. Distribution of how often people were part of a state committee during 1814–1880**

Based on these results, it can be concluded that there was a small group of people who were relatively called upon often. As they were appointed multiple times, one can assume that their participation in a state committee was highly valued and therefore these people were asked to participate again. The supposed interaction that takes place through this process could imply that this small group is part of a distinct network, which might show some resemblance with the characteristics of old boys network. The more often a person is asked to participate in a state committee, the stronger this network relation could be. However, some reservation regarding this assumption would be appropriate. The reason that these particular members participated multiple times could also be that they were good at what they were doing. They could be appealed to because of their expertise, rather than being the usual suspect. Hence, the findings regarding this indicator require some restraint.

When the periods 1814-1848 and 1848-1880 are compared, a change in the data can be observed based on figure 14. As for the period 1814–1848, there was more often an appeal to people that had experience in participating in a state committee. That would indicate that the mutual interaction among members was presumably stronger, relative to the period after 1848. As this is identified as a potential network relation, this could imply that old boys network was more pronounced before 1848. During 1848–1880, it appeared that the group of people that participated only once became bigger compared to the period 1814-1848. Hence, this

meant a decrease in people who participated multiple times. Given this decrease, it is likely that the composition of state committee members became more open, which would mean a decrease of any old boys network. The shift in how often people were part of a state committee could again be related to the decreased influence of the king due to the constitutional reform.

**Figure 14. Comparison of how often people were part of a state committee**



#### 4.4.3. Family ties

The third indicator for finding out potential network relations is to discover whether family ties could be detected out of the dataset. Potential family ties were identified by taking into account identical family names, yet different initials, bioportnumber, year of birth and death. After the biographical records of each person with a potential family tie were scrutinized, it appeared that for 27 individuals one or more relatives could be discovered, out of 335 unique state committee members. The most common family tie that occurred from the dataset was a brother-brother relation. This was the case for twelve individuals: Jan Conrad<sup>23</sup> and Julius Conrad,<sup>24</sup> Willem Donker Curtius<sup>25</sup> and Dirk Donker Curtius,<sup>26</sup> Cornelis van Maanen<sup>27</sup> and Florentius van Maanen,<sup>28</sup> Johannes Metelerkamp<sup>29</sup> and Rutger Metelerkamp,<sup>30</sup> Abraham de Pinto<sup>31</sup> and Aäron de Pinto,<sup>32</sup> Willem Vrolik<sup>33</sup> and Agnites Vrolik.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Member of state committee 1856/1, 1870/1 and 1873/1

<sup>24</sup> Member of state committee 1877/1

<sup>25</sup> Member of state committee 1828/1 and 1830/1

<sup>26</sup> Member of state committee 1848/1

<sup>27</sup> Member of state committee 1814/1 and 1815/1

<sup>28</sup> Member of state committee 1841/3

<sup>29</sup> Member of state committee 1815/1

<sup>30</sup> Member of state committee 1814/1 and 1820/1

<sup>31</sup> Member of state committee 1867/1

<sup>32</sup> Member of state committee 1870/2

After that, a father-son connection appeared most often. This was applicable to respectively father and son: Henri Fijnje van Salverda<sup>35</sup> and Johannes Fijnje van Salverda,<sup>36</sup> Johannes Fransen van de Putte<sup>37</sup> and Isaïc Fransen van de Putte,<sup>38</sup> Johannes Metelerkamp<sup>24</sup> and Rutger J.C. Metelerkamp,<sup>39</sup> Hendrik Modderman<sup>40</sup> and Anthony Modderman.<sup>41</sup>

An uncle-nephew tie applied for respectively: Arnold Tets van Goudriaan<sup>42</sup> and Gerard van Tets,<sup>43</sup> Aart van Tienhoven<sup>44</sup> and Gijsbert van Tienhoven.<sup>45</sup> The remaining family ties that were found appeared to be a grandfather-grandson relation, which respectively applied to: Campegius Gockinga<sup>46</sup> and Campegius Gockinga,<sup>47</sup> Cornelis van Maanen<sup>22</sup> and Cornelis F.T. van Maanen.<sup>48</sup> The scrutiny of Cornelis van Maanen's biographical records showed by chance that he happened to be the father-in-law of Anthony Brugmans,<sup>49</sup> which could also be considered as a family tie. All the members listed above are shown in figure 15, to provide an overview over time.

**Figure 115. Family ties during 1814-1880**

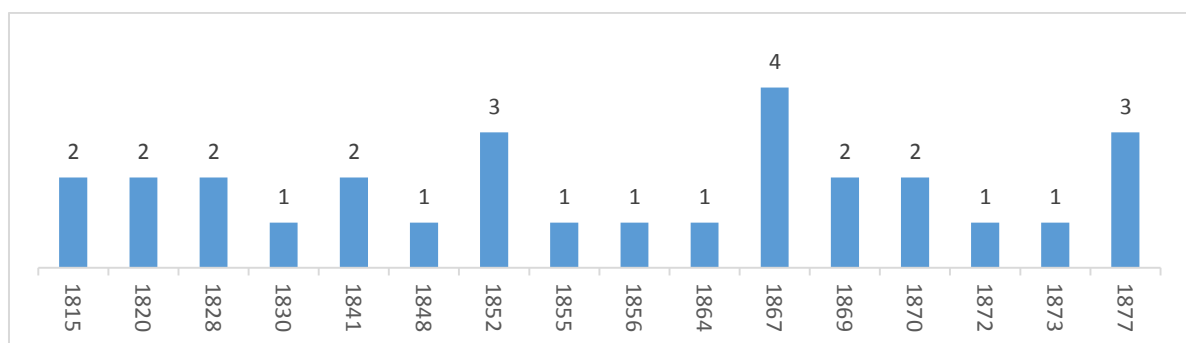


Figure 15 would suggest that network relations based on family ties seemed to exist among state committee members throughout the period 1814-1880. Subsequently, the existence of these family ties would indicate that some sort of family tradition was passed on to relatives. This assumption can be substantiated when the educational background and later profession

<sup>33</sup> Member of state committee 1841/3

<sup>34</sup> Member of state committee 1872/1

<sup>35</sup> Member of state committee 1856/3

<sup>36</sup> Member of state committee 1869/1

<sup>37</sup> Member of state committee 1867/1

<sup>38</sup> Member of state committee 1877/1

<sup>39</sup> Member of state committee 1864/1

<sup>40</sup> Member of state committee 1852/3

<sup>41</sup> Member of state committee 1870/2

<sup>42</sup> Member of state committee 1830/1

<sup>43</sup> Member of state committee 1870/1, 1873/1 and 1877/1

<sup>44</sup> Member of state committee 1869/1

<sup>45</sup> Member of state committee 1867/1

<sup>46</sup> Member of state committee 1820/1

<sup>47</sup> Member of state committee 1867/1

<sup>48</sup> Member of state committee 1852/3

<sup>49</sup> Member of state committee 1852/4

are also considered. Scrutiny of biographical records showed a certain resemblance in the career paths for some relatives. For example, it appeared that both Modderman's studied law. A closer examination showed that the family Modderman used to be a known lawyers family (parlement.com, n.d.-b). A similar career path was applicable to the family Van Maanen. Hence, these observations correspond with the general belief in the literature that studying law used to be an eminent choice for acquiring a high position in public life. Accordingly, the assumption regarding the potential network relations gains strength if the list of relatives are compared to the findings of Secker (1992: 359-361), who identified family circles to demonstrate that Dutch ministers were connected through family ties. There appeared to be a resemblance, as Fransen van de Putte, Modderman, Tets van Goudriaan, and Vrolik occurred in both the list of Secker (1992) and these findings. Hence, it could signify the assumption about potential network relations among state committee members. As these potential network relations were considered an important measure for old boys network, these findings could contribute to signify its existence.

Yet, there were also findings that indicate at a family tradition, which differs from what is considered usual in the literature. The family Conrad differed from the traditional career path, as their biographical records indicate that they were known as a 'Public Works dynasty' (Parlement.com, n.d.-c). Both Conrad's obtained an engineering education at the KMA and later fulfilled important positions as head engineers in the Public Works and Water Management directorate. A similar career path, aimed at engineering, was applicable to Fijnje van Salverda. The father used to be an engineer for the Public Works and Water Management directorate, whereas his son was an engineer for the national railways. These observations may indicate that passing on family traditions could extend further than the traditional path of obtaining a law degree and having a traditional public service career. The attention could be expanded to technical areas of expertise.

This particular research is limited to the period 1814-1880. In terms of determining continuity or change regarding family ties, this length appears to be limited. Secker's (1992) study took a period from 1848 to 1990 in order to make statements regarding the variation in political families over time, which seems to be more appropriate. Therefore, an examination of the variety of family ties over time would be inappropriate for the chosen timeframe.

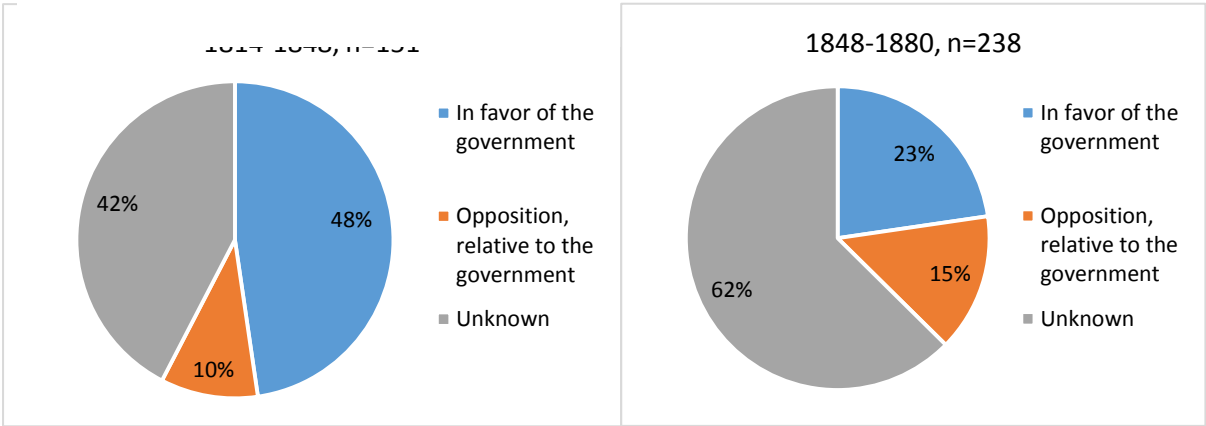
#### *4.4.4. Political conviction*

The final indicator to identify potential network relations is based on determining the political conviction of state committee members, relative to the political hue of the government. The

political hue of the ruling government is based on Boels (2011) and the classification of cabinets made by parlement.com (n.d.-d). Roughly, the absolute power held by the monarchs, respectively king Willem I and king Willem II, marked the period from 1814 until 1848. The political conviction that relates to the then prevailing status quo used to be affiliations in favor of the king, like organism or pro-prince stance. After the constitutional reform in 1848, the political hue of the cabinets alternated between the (moderately) liberals, conservatives, and anti-revolutionaries.

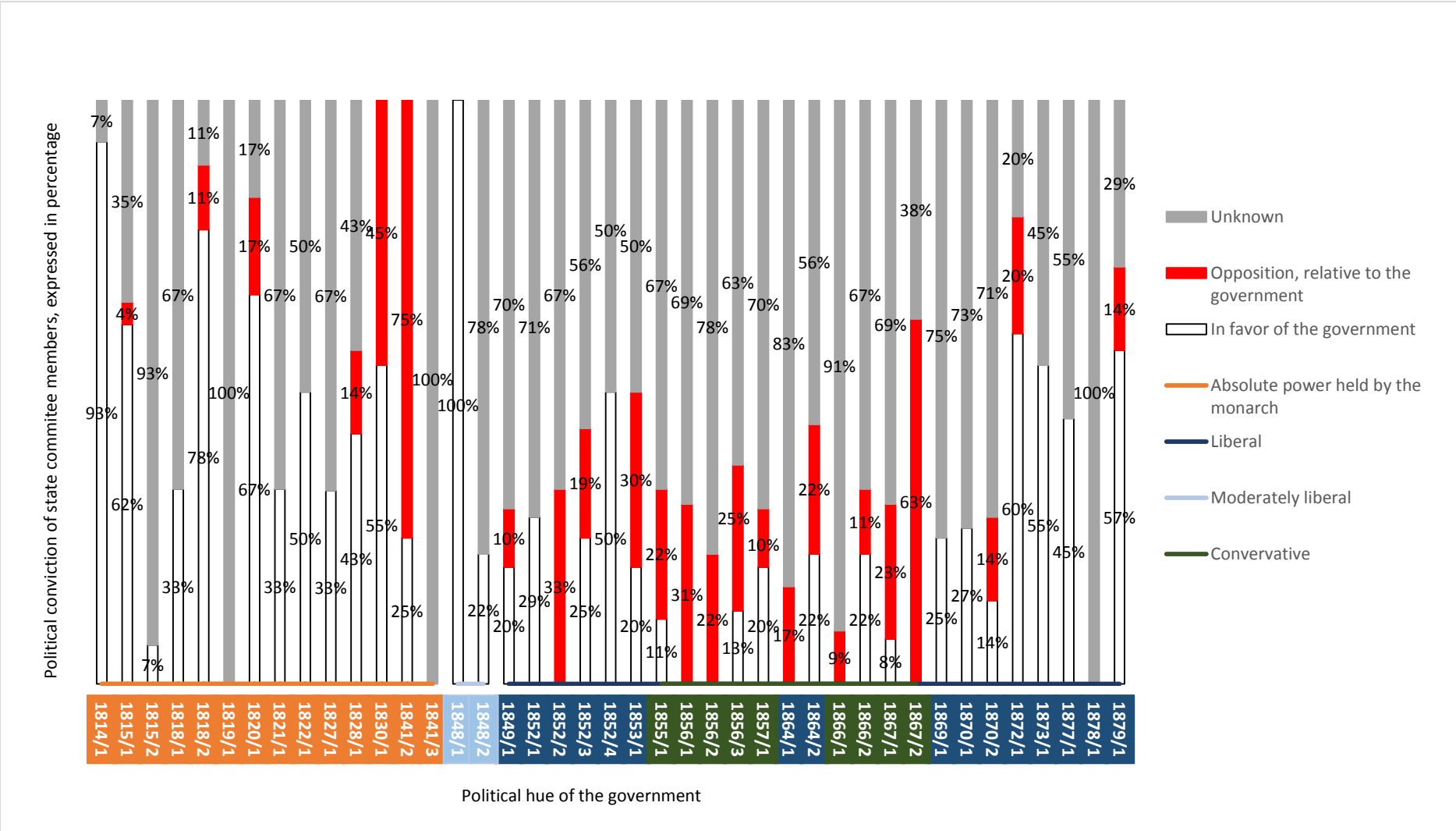
The political conviction of the state committee members when known, was retrieved from their biographical records at parlement.com. For each state committee, the political conviction of its members was then related to the government’s political hue, based on the starting year of the state committee. The outcome was then divided into three categories. A state committee member could have political conviction in favor of the government, an opposing conviction (relative to the government) or the political conviction could not be found, because the political conviction about the state committee member concerned was not available at parlement.com. This examination resulted in figure 17. Also, figure 16 is established to compare the periods 1814-1848 and 1848-1880.

**Figure 16. Political conviction**



The results show that state committees between 1814-1848 primarily consisted of either people whose political convictions were in alignment with the government’s hue or people whose conviction was unknown. In addition, there used to be little room left for state committee members with conflicting convictions, judging from the fact that the column that represents the opposition in figure 17, mostly contained a zero percent representation. Yet, this gradually changed from 1830 onwards, allowing for more room for conflicting conviction. These observations could give the impression that the composition of state committees used to be partly depended on people’s political conviction, of which it was desirable that it was align with the established order. This could signify the presence of old boys network.

Figure 17. Political conviction of state committee members, relative to the political hue of the government





However, people whose political conviction could not be found, form also a big part in the composition in 1814-1848. This observation could imply that apart from beliefs, there were other explanations for appointing people in state committees.

For the period 1848-1880, there appears to be a shift in political conviction among state committee members. From 1848, members with a political conviction similar to the government's hue dominated the composition only sporadically. At the same time, it appeared that there was growing space for members with conflicting convictions, as results from the period 1853-1867 in figure 17. However, they still formed a minority in the state committees' composition. This reversal could be explained by the fact that after the constitutional reform, Dutch politics consisted of various groups where no one really prevailed, which made that consistency in cabinets was missing (Boels, 2011: 157). This situation could have had its repercussions in appointing state committees members. Above all, state committee members whose political conviction could not be found had the upper hand during 1848–1880, which could imply a trend continuing from the foregoing years. This could strengthen the assumption that political conviction became a less important factor in appointing state committee members. Perhaps, experience and skills slowly became properties that were found more important. The earlier reported results relating to academic education could support this thought, because they showed a substantial increase. In short, the shifts in political convictions after 1848 would be detrimental to the existence of old boys network, as it is assumed that the composition would be dependent on the political hue of the established order.

To expand the analysis regarding political conviction a bit further, the outliers resulting from figure 17 receive extra attention by taking into account the topic of the state committee. The topics discussed below are based on the dataset by Kerkhoff & Martine (n.d.). First, the state committees are discussed which consisted entirely of members whose political conviction is in favor of the government's. This applied to one committee: 1848/1, which was concerned with the constitutional reform that restricted the king's absolute powers. Due to this reform, the cabinet now bore the full responsibility for the government's actions, which was longed for by the liberals. Hence, it makes perfect sense that the state committee's composition reflects the political hue of that time.

Another outlier relates to state committees that entirely consisted of people whose political conviction could not be found. This applied to three state committees. The first one, 1819/1, was concerned with a military topic. The committee's aim was to design a study plan for military engineering. State committee 1841/3 is the second outlier, which was related to a health care topic. The state committee members had to develop an improved standard for the

practice of medicine. The third committee, 1878/1, was concerned with a social security topic. It had to develop a pension scheme intended for orphans and widows of civil servants. What these topics have in common, is that they were much concentrated on societal challenges that occurred in practice. The subjects can be considered as apolitical for that time and required expertise to provide a decent plan. Hence, the political conviction of the members involved seemed to be irrelevant.

Finally, the state committees are discussed in which members prevailed that held opposing convictions relative to the government's hue. This applied to two committees. State committee 1841/2 was concerned with research to the then condition of the Society of Humanitarianism (*Maatschappij van Weldadigheid*). The second committee, 1867/2, related to the public works in the province of Zeeland. Here, it seems less obvious why state committee members with an opposing conviction prevailed.

#### *4.5. Working towards an old boys network-profile*

In the previous paragraphs, the composition of state committees was examined on the aspects of personal characteristics, social capital, and potential network relations to see whether this could signify the existence of old boys network. With the obtained results, this final paragraph tries to see whether this could result into a certain profile, that properly takes into account the various aspects of old boys network and which could potentially involve some state committee members.

When reconsidering the aspects of old boys network concerning personal characteristics, it turned out that the age of state committee members fluctuated between forty and sixty years old. The social capital is derived from both social status and function outside of the committee. As for social status, it appeared that being academically educated and having one or more academic qualifications, were most applicable for old boys network. It also matters whether a person has a noble title. The function outside of the committee relates to having an occupation on elite level, which is most applicable to politicians according to the dataset. Finally, there occurred potential network relations out of the dataset that could be related to old boys network. Potential network relations resulting from a common study background in law was most applicable to state committee members. In addition, being a member of multiple committees and having family ties among other members contribute to potential network relations. As for political conviction, this has to be in alignment with the political status quo. When the dataset is compared to the characteristics above, it appeared that a select group of state committee members would match this profile.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Introduction

The process of consultation and negotiation has traditionally had a great influence on decision-making in Dutch politics. Through the involvement of external advice, in theory, anyone could be enabled to contribute to this process. Yet, there appears to be a recurring debate about the people involved in this advisory system. Only a select group would be eligible for such positions, which is referred to as *old boys network*. While some are convinced of its existence (see: Duyvendak & Van de Koppel, 2005), empirical support for this claim is generally missing, in recent times and especially going back further in time.

In this thesis, the confusion relating to the existence of an old boys network in Dutch advisory systems was addressed. First, the conceptual clarification of this concept was provided. This resulted in a definition of old boys network as a social network with an insulated character, which stretches across the elite level in society and that provides social capital to members who share mutual norms and values. This research then investigated a particular kind of ad-hoc advice committee, namely state committees. These form a distinct category in the whole of the advisory system. By investigating the social and political background of state committee members, a better understanding was obtained about the people who were an important part of the consultation and negotiation process in the nineteenth century. As such, this thesis has examined whether change and/or continuity in the composition of state committees signifies the existence of an old boys network in Dutch history from 1814 to 1880, with special attention for a comparison of the periods before and after the crucial ‘constitutional’ year 1848.

### 5.2. Continuity and change

In order to establish an answer to the research question, the main research findings will be repeated first, discussing each indicator separately. For gender, it appeared that there were only male state committee members during 1814-1880, so continuity applied here. The age of these members fluctuated between forty and sixty years old throughout the period. Hence, there was also continuity. It appeared that forty percent of the members had a noble title from 1814-1848. During 1848-1880, this number was twelve percent. Thus for this indicator, a decrease for members with a noble title becomes clear when the two periods are compared. When type of education is considered, the period 1814-1848 showed that nearly sixty percent of the members attended university, while for about forty percent no education could be

retrieved. In the period 1848-1880, seventy percent of the members attended university whereas for 25 percent an education could not be found. This demonstrates an increase in educational level for the period 1814-1880. Regarding academic qualifications, it turned out that about two-thirds of the state committee members had obtained one or more. This ratio did not show any major changes when the period before and after 1848 are compared, so continuity applied in this case. For function outside of the committee, it appeared that forty percent of the state committee members were also active as a politician during 1814-1848. In 1848-1880, this percentage declined to 27 percent. Overall, there was a growing variety in occupations over time. Regarding the content of study, about sixty percent of the members with an academic background studied law in 1814-1848. After 1848, this percentage changed to 49 percent, so a slight decline appeared for law studies. The emergence of civil and military engineering studies in 1848-1880 was very striking. For the indicator that was related to participation in multiple committees, it appeared that 17 percent of the members participated more than once in 1814-1848. In 1848-1880, this percentage was only nine percent. When the entire period 1814-1880 is examined, a decline occurred for people who participated multiple times in a committee. If the family ties are considered during 1814-1880, it turned out that for 27 members such a tie could be identified, which occurred throughout the period. In 1814-1848, the results for political conviction showed that about 48 percent had a political conviction that was in favor of the government, while for 42 percent their conviction could not be found. In 1848-1880, the percentage of members of whose conviction was in favor of the government decreased to 23 percent. Contrary, the percentage of members whose political conviction could not be found increased to 62 percent.

### *5.3. Signifying old boys network*

Against the background of these findings, several differences can be seen with regard to the existence of an old boys network. When you compare the period 1814-1848 with the period 1848-1880, it seemed that for the indicators of gender and age continuity occurred. Hence, this is consistent with the assumptions made regarding to the existence of old boys network. Continuity also occurred regarding the indicator of academic qualifications. It appeared that a great number of members obtained one or more academic qualifications in 1814-1880. So, this finding is also consistent with the old boys network expectation. Another finding, which also signified its existence, is the growing number of state committee members that attended university. The indicator level of education showed that the percentage grew to seventy percent in 1848-1880.

Yet, there were also findings that provide a more diffuse view on the existence of old boys network. In the first instance, the findings concerning noble title would signify the existence of old boys network for the period 1814-1848. However, there was a severe decline visible after 1848. This would mean that old boys network was less present, when the entire period 1814-1880 is considered. A similar conclusion can be drawn for the findings of content of study. In the period 1814-1848, members that studied law dominated state committees. Although law still prevailed in the period 1848-1880, there was clearly more variety in study content, whereby especially the civil and military engineering studies stood out. Due to this growing diversity, it can be assumed that old boys network would be less present for the period 1848-1880. When it comes to the indicator content of study as a whole, old boys network slowly became less present for the entire period 1814-1880. A similar development appeared for the indicator of political conviction. For the period 1814-1848, it could be assumed that there was some kind of old boys network, since about half of the state committee members held a political conviction that was in favor of the government's hue. Yet after 1848, this group substantively decreased. At the same time, the group whose political was not publically known showed an increase. It also seemed that there was state committees were slightly more open for opposing convictions in 1848-1880. Thus for the period 1848-1880, any existence of old boys network can be called into question. In the case of political conviction, old boys network became less present for the entire period 1814-1880. The indicator of family ties showed consistent results for the entire period 1814-1880. However, a family tie could be identified for only 27 members, which casts doubt if such a small amount would signify the presence of old boys network.

Two indicators did not provide a clear answer to the research question. The first indicator relates to members that were part of multiple committees. Indeed, there were members who were appointed multiple times in a committee. Yet, it remains unclear whether this was because of their expertise or because they were the usual suspects. The former would cast doubt about the existence of old boys network while the latter would signify it.

Second, there appeared to be ambiguity considering the results for function outside of the committee. After 1848, the results showed a growing variety in occupations held by state committee members. According to the definition of old boys network, this either could mean that due to the growing variety of occupations (which still belonged to the elite), old boys network is signified because it is assumed that it stretches across the elite level. However, that same definition ascribed a feature, which presupposed that old boys network has an insulated character. From this perspective, the opposing argument can be made that the existence of old

boys network can be questioned. This is because it is likely to assume, due to the growth in different kinds of occupations, that state committees became more open, contributing to a more diverse composition. This is contrary to the insulated character of old boys network. Although the features ‘stretching across elite level’ and ‘insulated character’ are not necessarily mutually exclusive, the findings relating to occupation raise questions more than provide answers in relation to the existence of old boys network.

Ideally, each result of each indicator would have been most prevalent and continuous over time in order to signify old boys network. Yet, this is not the case. Not every indicator had convincing results and changes over time occurred for several indicators. There are a few indicators that point towards the existence of an old boys network in the composition of state committees between 1814 and 1880 – like age, gender and some indicators relating to educational background. However, there are also findings that give a diffuse view on the existence of old boys network. Indicators relating to occupation, study content and political conviction gave the impression that the composition of state committees became more open, which is in conflict with old boys network. Moreover, it is important to mention that the indicators in relation to each other are not of equal importance. For instance, indicators such as gender and age would be less of relevance if all the other indicators, that relate to social status and potential network relations, point towards the existence of an old boys network. That said; the research findings, that showed a negligible presence of occupations such as captains of industry and a growing diversity in social and political backgrounds, are of more importance to casts doubt about the existence of old boys network, rather than findings such as gender and age, which showed continuity in relation to old boys network. Hence, it is hard to signify the existence of old boys network based on the used indicators.

#### *5.4. Reverting to the literature and relevance*

When the conclusions above are considered, it goes without saying that several indicators pointed out that a large part of the state committee members obtained an elite position in society or at least had a high social status. Some findings could be related to the literature about the Dutch elite, as discussed in chapter 2. Although this might strengthen the thought that participating in a state committee was preserved only for a select group, the research showed that this does not necessarily signify the existence of old boys network. When you want to address the (potential) existence of old boys network and its consequences, as done by Duyvendak & Van de Koppel (2005), it is important to make clear what is meant by old boys network. The literature overview showed that old boys network is a multifaceted concept,

which touches upon aspects like social status and network relations. Duyvendak & Van de Koppel (2005) limit themselves by assuming that old boys network exists based on a presumed established order of the Dutch political parties and corporate sector. By examining the composition of state committees, this research demonstrated that signifying old boys network is a more complex matter. Multiple indicators need to be combined to see whether it exists or not. The findings illustrate that old boys network is an opaque concept with unclear boundaries, as argued by Heemskerk & Fennema (2009).

In relation to scientific relevance, this study managed to gain more insight into the composition of state committees through the collection of empirical data. In addition, it has managed to provide more conceptual clarification on the concept of old boys network in a Dutch context by combining a private and public sector perspective.

The societal relevance of this study related to issues concerning representation and legitimacy. The findings of this study provided more insight into the social and political background of state committee members. Several results gave the impression that the composition was not representative to the society. Hence, this could have had its repercussions to the legitimacy of state committees in particular, and the advisory system in extension. Yet, some reservation would be appropriate. The scope of this research is limited as it only considers the composition of state committees. Therefore, it is too soon to draw profound conclusions on the legitimacy of state committees and the policy that arises from it.

### *5.5. Recommendations*

When the findings are taken into consideration, it seemed that not all the pre-established indicators were sufficient to signify the potential existence of old boys network. For example, there appeared a lack of clarity for the findings of members who participated multiple times in a committee. The research was unable to figure out why these people were appointed repeatedly; because of their skills and expertise or their connections. Therefore, it would be appropriate to examine decisions on the appointment, in order to figure out why some people participated frequently in a state committee. Further research would allow us to obtain more information about the transparency of this process. In addition, the indicator relating to occupations seemed also insufficient to establish an answer to the research question. There appeared ambiguity from the findings. It remained unclear whether more diversity in occupations would be at cost of the presupposed insulated character of old boys network. This could be related to the definition that this research used, which presupposed that old boys network “... *stretches across elite level of society.*” Because its scope was not explained in

detail, uncertainty could arise. Therefore, it seems appropriate to identify more clarity about the scope of elite level occupations.

Apart from the pre-established indicators, there were also aspects of this study that were left aside. Ideally, the indicator friendship ties would be included in the conceptual framework. Oakley (2000) specifically emphasized the friendship patterns and alliances in describing the traits of the old boys network. Likewise, Heemskerk & Fennema (2009) identified the importance of lifelong friendships as indicator to measure the old boys network. Hence, the friendship ties would have been an important feature to determine old boys networks. However, such informal friendship structures are difficult to uncover since it relates to the personal life and tangible evidence is hard to ascertain. In his research, Moes (2012) attempted to discover informal network relationships and/or friendships that originate from a person's early life. He supposed that a potential friendship relation can be assumed when two or more people start the same study at the same university in the same year and meet each other again later in their career. This concurrence of circumstances would make it likely that the provision of mutual services occurs (Moes, 2012: 93). To suspect a friendship tie based on these assumptions might not be fully valid. Apart from this, it is unfeasible for this research in particular to track down the information needed to make such assumption. Therefore, friendship ties were not involved as indicator.

An indicator that could have been included was concerned with certain ancillary activities that state committee members had. During the data collection, it turned out that several members were engaged in the *Maatschappij Nut van 't Algemeen*, an association established in 1794 to stimulate individual and societal development from a cultural perspective. A systematical analysis on the involvement in such initiatives, which could be associated with having shared norms and values, would be helpful to signify old boys network. Another indicator that could have been included relates to wealth. Several findings indicated that it is likely to assume that a majority of the state committee members was part of the upper layer in society. By including wealth, these assumptions could be substantiated and would provide a more complete view on the social-economic background of state committee members.

The findings of this study also raise new questions. When combining several results, it seems that the composition of state committees was based on a rather homogeneous group of people. Assuming that these people speak each other's language, then it would be interesting to examine whether a relationship could be identified for the composition of a state committee and its effectiveness. In addition, there are findings that showed a decrease of nobility in the



composition in state committees and the increase of academic graduates. This calls further investigation of the reasons why people are appointed in a state committee. Hence, research on these subjects would gain more insight on the legitimacy of state committees in particular and the advisory system in general. To conclude, the great benefit of this study was that it made use of publicly available sources, which resulted in a rich collection of empirical data. Due to this approach, research on the composition of state committees is highly suitable to expand it to other periods in time.

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