

'O Willem! [...]
Wat hebt ge met het
leger gedaan?'



The Deprivatisation, Centralisation,
and Nationalisation of the Dutch Army during the
Batavian Revolution (1795-1799)

Anne de Klerk

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Abstract

With the revenge of the revolutionary Patriots in 1795 in the form of the Batavian Revolution (1795-1799), the Dutch state was transformed according to its beliefs. What often happens after a revolution, is that the military organisation is also drastically rearranged to encompass the revolution's ideology. This is exactly what happened in the Batavian Republic. In this thesis, I argue that this transition period between the *ancien régime's* *Staatse Leger* and the revolutionary *Bataafse Leger* consisted of the deprivatisation of its military entrepreneurs, the centralisation of the military administration, and the nationalisation of the troops themselves. All of these radical changes in the organisation of the Dutch army can be traced back to the ideologies of the Patriot, French and Batavian Revolutions. This study thus confirms the strong intertwinement between these revolutions, which has been debated heavily over the last centuries. Moreover, these conclusions also add a new perspective to the much-discussed current trend in modern warfare in which military tasks are once again regularly outsourced to foreign professionals which brings along grave consequences. This study aims to shine a light on how the Dutch state once before turned this tide by taking control of its own army during the Batavian Revolution.

Preface

This thesis project unexpectedly emerged out of my internship at the Dutch Ministry of Defence. During my time there I was part of the *Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie* (“Dutch Institute for Military History”). Under the guidance of Dr. Christiaan van der Spek, I started researching the underdeveloped history of the reorganisation of the Batavian army. Many weeks were spent in the *Nationaal Archief* (“National Archive”), where I perused many eighteenth-century documents. After finishing up my internship report, I realised I still had not uncovered all there is to know about this subject. I had unearthed many primary sources, but they only told me what had happened, and not why. This led me to the decision to keep exploring this transition during my thesis under the supervision of Dr. Lars Behrisch. During the writing process of my thesis, I contextualised the primary sources I had discovered during my internship. Overlap between the projects is thus unavoidable. However, with the new information I found during the writing process, I could position my thesis in historical debates surrounding the Batavian Revolution, and explain why certain decisions were made. Moreover, now I could briefly compare the Batavian reorganisation with the French one when it was necessary for the explanation of the findings of this study. Still, there is much to be said about this topic, and I doubt this was the end of my exploration of this subject.

All in all, I have learned a lot during my time at the NIMH and while writing my thesis afterwards. This is all thanks to Dr. Christiaan van der Spek and Dr. Lars Behrisch, as both of them have been truly inspiring and helpful in the cultivation of this final product.

Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Historical Puzzle.....	1
1.2 Research Approach.....	2
1.3 Debate 1: What happened during the Batavian Military reorganisation?.....	4
1.4 Debate 2: The relationship between the French and the Batavian Republic.....	6
1.5 Debate 3: How to define and conceptualise revolutionary military philosophy?.....	8
2. The French Army and the French Revolution.....	12
2.1 European Armies of the Ancien Régime.....	12
2.2 The French Revolution and the Unwilling French Army.....	16
2.3 Changes in the French Army after the French Revolution.....	18
2.4 Concluding Remarks on the Changes in the French Army.....	20
3. The Dutch Army and the Batavian Revolution.....	22
3.1 The Patriot Revolt (1780-1787) and their Critique of the Dutch Military.....	22
3.2 The Patriots' Solution: Civilian Armament.....	24
3.3 The End of the Patriots.....	26
3.4 The Patriots in Exile.....	28
3.5 The Batavian Republic (1795-1799).....	31
3.6 The End of the Batavian Republic and its Legacy.....	33
3.7 The Organisation of the Batavian Military Reorganisation.....	34
3.8 The First Steps of Military Reorganisation.....	38
3.9 The Plan of Reorganisation.....	41

4. Theme 1: Deprivatisation	43
4.1 Military Entrepreneurs in the Staatse Leger	43
4.2 The Process of Deprivatisation	45
4.3 An Inventory of Military Entrepreneurs	46
4.4 The Monetary Liquidation of Military Entrepreneurs	47
4.5 Conclusions on the Deprivatisation of the Batavian Army	50
5. Theme 2: Centralisation	52
5.1 Military Organisation in the Ancien Régime	52
5.2 The First Steps of Centralisation	53
5.3 New Personnel	54
5.4 Military Administration Regarding Pay and Management	56
5.5 Military Administration System Regarding Military Healthcare	57
5.6 Conclusions on the Centralisation of the Batavian reorganisation	59
6. Theme 3: Nationalisation	60
6.1 Nationality in the Staatse Leger	60
6.2 Military Organisation and State/Nation-Building	62
6.3 (Proto)-Nationalism in Early Modern Europe	64
6.4 Nationalisation of the Batavian army: Four Examples	66
6.5 Conclusions on the Nationalisation of the Batavian Army	71
7. Conclusion	72
7.1 Denouement	72
7.2 Suggested Future Research	76

1. Introduction

1.1 Historical Puzzle

“*Extrêmement faible*”, declared the French general Jean Victor Marie Moreau. His dismissive description was aimed at the state of the Dutch army in 1795. He was not wrong. The Dutch army had disintegrated after the invasion of the French revolutionary army during the first month of 1795 when they came to the aid of their revolutionary brethren, the Batavians.¹ Where some of its former soldiers had left the country to keep serving the *ancien régime* as part of the allied forces, others had simply deserted not willing to serve the new revolutionary Batavian regime, and those who had chosen to switch to the revolutionary side lay scattered around the country, leaving the army unable to act. Additionally, because of the swift turn of events the military leadership struggled to gain an overview of the remnants of the army of the *ancien régime*. Moreover, the pressure to do so quickly rose as both a counterrevolution led by *Orangisten* (“Orangists”) and a mutiny because of a lack of pay of Batavian-minded soldiers threatened the Dutch army, pushing the unstable structure ever more closely to the edge of anarchy during those first months of 1795. Lastly, the effort to regain control was hindered by the fact that between 700 and 800 officers had left their position after the Batavian takeover.² All in all, chaos reigned in the Dutch army, and a total reorganisation was highly necessary to regain order.

In addition to fixing the aforementioned practical problems which afflicted the Dutch army during this period of political upheaval, this reorganisation also offered the new Batavian regime the opportunity to sculpt the army according to its own ideas, as they had criticised the old structure at length in the years prior. One of the most influential people that phrased this critique was the Patriot Joan Van der Cappellen tot den Pol. In his revolutionary *Aan het Volk van Nederland* (1781), he noted everything he deemed wrong with the Dutch army. Furthermore, he wrote down whose fault he believed most of these defects to be when he exclaimed: “*O Willem [...] Wat hebt ge met het leger gedaan?*”³ (“O Willem [...] What have you done with the army?”) Whereas the Dutch Patriots had not been able to implement their ideas about the Dutch army into practice, their successors – the Batavians – did. However, their ideas did differ from their predecessors, as they had been influenced by the French Revolution which occurred in between the Dutch Patriot Revolt and the Batavian Revolution.

¹ René Koekkoek, *Revolutionaire tijden: politiek en idealen rond 1800* (2020), 157; Marc van Alphen, Jan Hoffenaar, Alan Lemmers, Christiaan van der Spek, *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest: om het machtsevenwicht in Europa (1648-1813)* (2019), 158.

² Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest* (2019), 158.

³ Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol, *Aan het volk van Nederland* (1781), 122.

In this thesis, I will study the transition period between the *Staatse Leger* of the *ancien régime* as ruled by *Stadhouder* Willem V and the *Bataafse Leger*, which was the product of the Batavian Revolution. In the end, I will argue that this practical and ideological transition consisted of the deprivatisation, centralisation and nationalisation of the Dutch army. In addition to uncovering what happened during this transition, I aim to explain these decisions in the context of the ideologies of the Patriot Revolt, French and Batavian Revolutions. Furthermore, I will explore what these findings mean for the historical debates surrounding the Batavian Revolution and its army. Lastly, I will illustrate how the outcomes of this study matter to the current discussion surrounding the modern Dutch army.

1.2 Research Approach

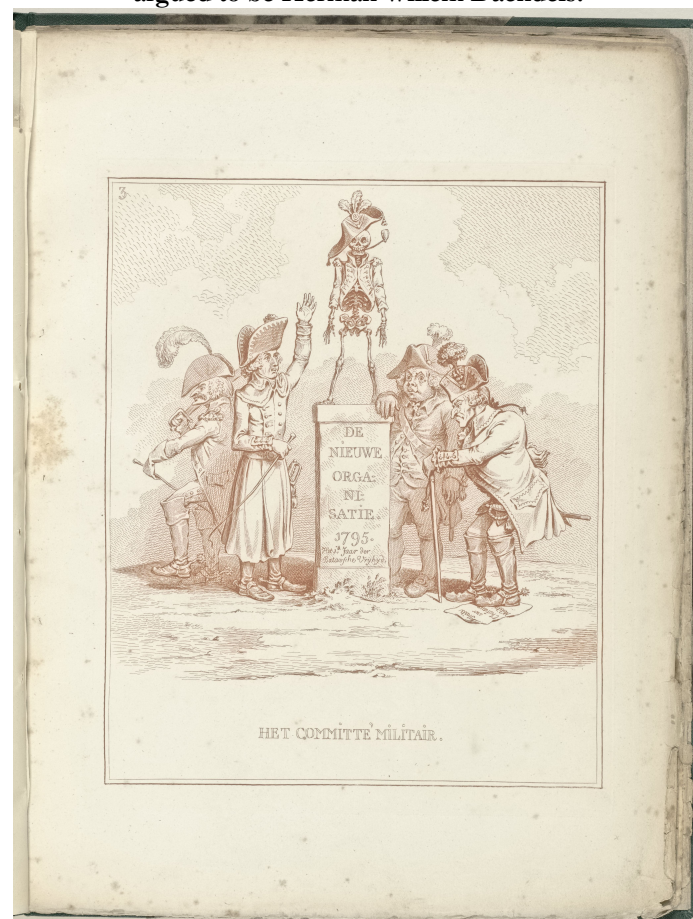
This thesis aims to analyse the transition of the *Staatse Leger* of the *ancien régime* of the *Stadhouder* to the *Bataafse Leger* as a result of the military reorganisation of the new Batavian rulers. To accomplish this, I will first contextualise this military reorganisation in the military philosophy of the Patriot Revolt and the French Revolution. Afterwards, I will outline the trajectory of the Batavian Revolution, its core ideals, its points of contention, and its relation with the French Republic. Lastly, by returning to the primary sources, I will uncover what actually happened during this military reorganisation. Almost all the sources used for this purpose are part of the *Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798* of the *Nationaal Archief* based in Den Haag. I have consulted both printed and handwritten resolutions concerning the reorganisation which are scattered around the entire archive. Unfortunately, all of the archival material directly related to the *Comité van Militaire Zaken* (“Committee on Military Matters”) has been lost over the ages. Despite this loss, some of its work could be recovered from the archives of departments this particular committee send its letters, recommendations, and other material. It is important to note that I have only studied the transition period of the Army, and not the entire military as a whole. If I wanted to add a discussion of this period for the Navy as well this would require additional research in a different archive. As far as I can tell the Navy was always a couple of steps behind during this transition but mainly followed the example of the Army. Future research could determine if this was the case.

After compiling these sources, I have placed them within a theoretical framework. This framework consists of three themes I discovered during my time at the archive. *Deprivatisation* encapsulates the conscious decision of the new Batavian regime to stop outsourcing military matters to private military entrepreneurs. *Centralisation* refers to the tradition-breaking decision of the Batavian rulers to no longer delegate the defence of the country to individual provinces, but

to give these tasks to the central state. *Nationalisation* refers to all decisions made within the reorganisation of the defence of the country which were based on ideas about the nation. Each of these themes will take up their own chapter within this thesis. In these chapters, I discuss my definition of the theme, detail closely related literature to these processes, and position my findings with these frameworks. When possible I will stick to chronological order within these themes. However, as some processes occurred at the same time, some artificial divides must be imposed for the sake of readability.

After combining the results from the literature study with the outcomes of the primary research, this new knowledge could add to three academic debates: (1) the debate surrounding what happened during this military reorganisation, (2) what the relationship looked like between the French revolutionaries and the Batavians, and (3) how to define and conceptualise the processes that took place during this military reorganisation. What these academic debates look like, and how I intend to position myself within them will be outlined in the next three chapters.

Figure 1: A Critical Cartoon of the *Comité van Militaire Zaken* in *Hollandia Regenerata* as the members stand in front of a monument representing the “New Organisation” of 1795. The men on the far left is argued to be Herman Willem Daendels.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

1.3 Debate 1: What happened during the Batavian Military reorganisation?

The existing literature on the military reorganisation during the Batavian Revolution is rather limited, but not nonexistent. However they have some shortcomings: either they are (1) unreliable or (2) reliable but limited in scope. With this thesis I intend to validate the former and to contextualise the latter in this broader study of the Batavian military reorganisation.

The first notable work to mention is the mysterious work called *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795* (1984) written by Krijvenaar.⁴ In this document, Krijvenaar outlines the most significant changes during the Batavian military reorganisation. However, they mostly refrain from explaining these changes or contextualising them, except for in the concluding remarks. When they placed this fundamental reorganisation in the history of the Dutch army, they deemed it unitarian in nature. They argued that central during this reorganisation was the centralisation, bureaucratisation, political purging and democratisation of the Dutch army.⁵ Despite the fact that their observations are intriguing, their theory remains underdeveloped, especially in regards to contextualising these changes in a broader setting of the Batavian Revolution, its predecessor, and the French Revolution. The study itself is more focussed on practical matters. Additionally, its credibility is questionable as it is a thesis. I found this copy in the library of the Ministry of Defence. The study is made up of a stack of papers, written by a typewriter, and stapled together. Moreover, neither the work itself nor the author can be found online. All in all, it is too unreliable to give any definite answers to the process of the Dutch military reorganisation during the Batavian Revolution. One of the goals of this thesis is to validate the claims made by Krijvenaar by doing additional source research and to contextualise its (validated) findings in the broader scope of the Patriot, French and Batavian Revolutions.

Another work related to this debate is the rather limited work of J.P.C.M. Hoof, which consists of a mere 16 pages. Their work deals with describing the basic information of being a soldier in this time period.⁶ Despite its rather limited space for such a broad topic, it was rather useful for my study. Two other works that are also part of the reliable but limited group, as they deal with a small portion of the reorganisation belong to F.G. de Wilde and Zwitzer.⁷ Despite the fact that the former work deals with a longer timespan than my research, because it only

⁴ Th. Krijvenaar, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795* (1984).

⁵ Th. Krijvenaar, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795*, 40.

⁶ J.P.C.M. Hoof, 'Militairen in de Bataafs-Franse tijd', *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie en van het Iconographisch Bureau* 49 (1995), 194–210.

⁷ F. G. de Wilde, a.o., *De uniformen van het Nederlandse leger ten tijde van de Bataafse Republiek en het Koninkrijk Holland 1795-1810* (1999); H.L. Zwitzer, *Comptabiliteit in uniform: 200 jaar Militaire Administratie, 1795-1995* (1995).

focuses on one aspect – its uniforms – it remains limited in its usefulness for answering the main research question of this study. However, it was rather informative on this specific subject, which overlaps with the ideas of centralisation and nationalisation during this reorganisation, which I will elaborate upon later in this thesis. Another work, which deals with a part of this wider reorganisation of the Dutch army is Zwitter's study, which deals with the set-up of the first military administration in the Netherlands during the Batavian Revolution and its evolution until 1995. In this work, Zwitter also relates how this came to be to the ideologies of both the Patriots and the Batavians. However, the French remain rather in the background. His description of the creation of the first military administration in the Netherlands has been very useful for my study, despite not answering my research question. Just like the previously mentioned works, I wish to add to his study by contextualising it in the wider military reorganisation, and the ideology of the Patriot, Batavian and French revolutions.

Another work by Zwitter details the evolution of the military organisation of the Dutch army thoroughly from its inception up until the Batavian Revolution.⁸ Despite mentioning that everything changed during this revolution, he does not go into detail. As I encountered during my study of the Dutch military: the Batavian Revolution is often the end of the scope or included in research spanning until the early 1800s, when the Batavian Republic was relieved of Napoleon, or even further into the future. It is not often that this period is regarded on its own.

The last work worth mentioning in the historiography of the Batavian military reorganisation is the work that originally inspired me during my internship at the Ministry of Defence to study this transition by Pepijn Brandon.⁹ Again the time period of this book does not deal with the Batavian Revolution *an sich*. Instead, in this work Brandon details the story of the private bankers called *solliciteurs-militair*, which were an integral part of the payment structure of the Dutch troops. More information about their role during the height of the *ancien régime* will follow later in the thesis. Brandon's work is detailed and fleshed out with the stories of the actual people involved. Furthermore, he explains the process of the *ancien régime* very well. However, because his research period only extends to 1795, he does not dive into the dismissal of the *solliciteurs-militair* during the Batavian Revolution. Although he does refer to the fact that the new regime ended their practice, he does not go into detail as to why or how this happened. Part of this research will thus add to the study of Brandon, as it will cover the transition period in which the *solliciteurs-militair* were dismissed. However, the *solliciteurs-militair* were not the only private parties affected by the change of regime in the Dutch military. This thesis will thus also explore their dismissal in the context of other deprivatisation suits.

⁸ H.L. Zwitter, *"De militie van den staat": het leger van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden* (1991).

⁹ Pepijn Brandon, *War, capital, and the Dutch state (1588-1795)* (2015).

All in all, there is quite a lot of literature about both the old structure of the Dutch military of the *ancien régime* and the new regime of the Batavian Republic. However, because these studies either often focus on one of these two phases, or on only one aspect of the transition in between these phases, there is a gap in the current literature that describes the transition process from the old system to the new. This is with the exception of the thesis written by Krijvenaar. However, because their work is unpublished, and additionally only deals with the practicalities of the reorganisation on a macro level, without placing it in its context it is not suited to explain the historical puzzle.

1.4 Debate 2: The relationship between the French and the Batavian Republic

It is also important for the context of this research to position it in the much debated relationship between the Dutch and French revolutions. How important was this relationship? And how did these two groups influence each other? In the past there has been a lot of discussion about this relationship in a wider scope than solely on the topic of their military ideology. The evolution of this debate went as follows.

The first to comment upon the relationship between the two revolutions was H.T. Colenbrander. His perspective on the Batavian Revolution was that it was in essence a French export product.¹⁰ This view would persist in the historiography of this field, until the publication of *De Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Stam* which dealt with the entire history of the Dutch over the span of ten books published between 1948 and 1959, by Pieter Geyl. He argued that the Batavian Revolution was not an export product but homegrown. However, Geyl did point to the French as the catalyst of the Batavian Revolution.¹¹ Moreover, he declared the radical part of the Batavian Revolution to derive from French soil.¹² Both, thus deemed the French vital to the nature of the Batavian Revolution.

Next in line in this debate was the international and socially focussed work of de Wit.¹³ He placed the Batavian Revolution in the wider perspective of the Atlantic Revolutions – a concept created by R.R. Palmer. According to De Wit, the Batavian Revolution was only one part of a larger power struggle between the aristocratic ruling elite and the citizens who craved for more say during the entire period of 1780-18148 in the Netherlands. Simon Schama agreed with the

¹⁰ Colenbrander, H.T., *De Bataafsche Republiek* (1908).

¹¹ Joost Kloek, Wijnand Mijnhardt, *1800: Blaauwdrukken voor een samenleving* (2001), 19-20; Pieter Geyl, *De Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Stam* (1948-1959).

¹² Pepijn Brandon, Karwan Fatah-Black, “The supreme power of the people: Local autonomy and radical democracy in the Batavian revolution (1795-1798)”, *Atlantic Studies*, 13(3) (2016), 370-388, 384.

¹³ Wit, C.H.E. de, *De strijd tussen aristocratie en democratie in Nederland 1780-1848* (1965).

perspective sketched by De Wit.¹⁴ Both of their studies, however, have been critiqued to be influenced too much by the Marxist model.¹⁵

Later, N.C.F. van Sas attempted to draw the conversation into a different direction.¹⁶ He argued that the Dutch revolutionaries should be considered part of an European trend. Moreover he added to the debate that in some aspects the Dutch were influenced by other revolutions, such as the French, and in other aspects the Dutch were the frontrunner who influenced other revolutionary movements.¹⁷

The final to last notable work on this subject is the doctoral thesis of Joost Rosendaal. In this work he studies the relationship between the Dutch exiled Patriots and the French Revolutionaries and how they both shaped the Batavians. He deems the the relationship between the exiled Patriots and the French Revolutionaries important, but does not remiss to point out the typically Dutch characteristics of the Batavian Revolution. The Batavians had a different outlook on certain topics because of the difference in culture, and history. Moreover, he added that the Batavians had indeed learned from the French revolutionaries, but also from their mistakes. Especially the violent phase of Terror in France had cautioned the Batavians. Thus, he concludes that the Batavian Revolution was not an export product, but neither was it a poor imitation.¹⁸

Lastly, Thomas Poell argues that the Patriots were “deeply affected” by the French revolutionary ideal of unitary democracy. He further states that the Patriots were open to this change of opinion, because of their experiences with the Prussians. This led them to ask themselves: what went wrong? Poell is thus also of the opinion that the Batavian Revolution was the result of a mixture between the experiences of the Patriots, and their lessons learned during their time in exile abroad.¹⁹

I believe that this particular thesis has something to add to this debate. If one wants to uncover differences and similarities in philosophy one should look to its institutionalisation. Any reorganisation after their take-over would be perfect for this endeavour. As this thesis studies the military reorganisation within a wider context, I believe that it will provide some more concrete examples of how these revolutions differed and were the same.

¹⁴ Schama, Simon, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780-1813* (1977).

¹⁵ Joost Kloek, Wijnand Mijnhardt, *1800*, 20.

¹⁶ Sas, N.C.F. van, *The Patriot Revolution: New Perspectives* (1992).

¹⁷ Joost Kloek, Wijnand Mijnhardt, *1800*, 20.

¹⁸ Joost Rosendaal, *Bataven! Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Frankrijk 1787-1795* (2003).

¹⁹ Thomas Poell, *The democratic paradox: Dutch revolutionary struggles over democratisation and centralisation (1780-1813)* (2007), 63-64.

1.5 Debate 3: How to define and conceptualise revolutionary military philosophy?

Because I have chosen to work with three themes with which I create my analytical framework, a discussion of how these concepts already have been used in current literature is in order. Below I will outline the historiography of these terms in relation to Early Modern history at large or the Batavian Revolution alone, and how I position my own work in these debates.

The first theme I use to analyse the changes during this transition period is the concept of “deprivatisation”. I define this as the act of transferring ownership of military tasks or goods from the private sector to the public sector. This process has been discussed previously by Charles Tilly, Max Weber, and Pepijn Brandon, however, they used different terminology. It was Charles Tilly who coined the term “brokerage state”. A broker is a go-between that helps other actors buy, sell or trade. In early-modern Europe, economic elites were heavily involved in the “execution of [...] warring tasks”, which resulted in a “brokerage state”.²⁰ The term, “contractor state”, which is closely related to this debate was first used by Roger Knight and Martin Wilcox. This concept relates to states which relied on contractors for military and naval logistics.²¹ Like the brokerage-system, the Early modern Dutch state also heavily relied on contractors within its ranks.²² Brokers thus facilitate “warring tasks” with their connections and money, whereas contractors provide “warring tasks” with their manpower, military expertise, and or weapons.

Over the course of the centuries, states tried to take these military brokers and contractors out of the equation. Tilly called this a transition to nationalisation.²³ In his book *War, capital, and the Dutch state (1588-1795)*, Brandon applied this concept to the early modern Dutch state and coined the term “federal-brokerage state” to describe its peculiar way of facilitating brokers in the organisation of warfare.²⁴ He also uses the term “nationalisation to describe the process of the intentional demise of the the brokerage system. He does note that this phrasing has internal chronology problems, as nationalisation – in the economic sense – was not a phrase used at the time.²⁵ It is exactly because of this chronological problem the term “nationalisation” poses to describe this process, that I have chosen to use the term “deprivatisation” when I refer to the

²⁰ Pepijn Brandon, *War, capital, and the Dutch state*, 14

²¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

²² *Ibid.*, 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

process in which both the brokers and the contractors in the Batavian Revolution were terminated.²⁶

The second theme I use to analyse the Batavian military reorganisation is the concept of centralisation. I define this process of centralisation as the transferring of military tasks to the center of the organisation: the state. So, all decisions made in the effort to take away power from the provinces in favour of the state, are included in this theme. Moreover, the tasks previously outsourced to military entrepreneurs are also included in this process of centralisation. One could argue that the deprivatisation of these military entrepreneurs could also be described as the centralisation of these tasks. However, the distinction lies in the execution. The Batavians argued for the deprivatisation of the military entrepreneurs. However, this did not have to mean that these tasks would be picked up by the central state. If the federalists would have yielded more power in the military, these tasks easily could have been placed on the shoulders of the individual provinces. If so, the military entrepreneurs would have still been deprivatised, but not centralised. Thus, making these two different processes.

As for the use of the term centralisation in current literature about the Batavian Revolution, a lot can be said, as it is not always used to describe the same process. I argue that centralisation only has to do with the organisation of the “state”. Kloek en Mijnhardt also make this distinction, as they use the term centralistische eenheidsstaat (“centralised unitary state”) when referring to this process, they claim the Batavians learned from the French revolutionaries, which is part of the debate discussed in the previous chapter.²⁷ De Wit also speaks of the centralisation of the Dutch Republic during the Batavian Republic, of which he is a fervent opponent. He uses the phrases, staatseenheid (“state unity”), eenheidsgedachte (“idea of unity”), and eenheid (“unity”) to refer to this phenomenon. He, together with Colenbrander and Geyl also argue that the Batavians were influenced by this concept by the French revolutionaries.²⁸ Schama also discussed the debate surrounding the choice splitting the revolutionaries whether the Dutch should centralise their state or not when he noted that “the unfortunate paradox of all revolutions, certainly all pre-twentieth century revolutions [...] is the contradiction between liberty and power”. He continues this argument with the statement that “a highly centralised autocratic apparatus of state institutions [stand] the best chance of survival,

²⁶ Honesty compels me to credit my supervisor dr. Lars Behrisch for coming up with this term, for which I owe him many thanks.

²⁷ Joost Kloek, Wijnand Mijnhardt, 1800, 559.

²⁸ Wit, C.H.E. de, *De strijd tussen aristocratie en democratie in Nederland*, 108-109.

but also [run] the greatest risk of extinguishing the liberties of which the revolution had been undertaken”.²⁹

The second and third themes of “centralisation” and “nationalisation” have often been combined – or confused – in current literature. I do confess that these processes are closely related, however, they are distinctly different from each other as one has to do with the state, and the other with the nation. However, this distinction is not always made by historians leading to the muddling of these two processes. Two of these historians are Brandon and Fatah-Black. They argue that some Dutch revolutionaries were inspired by the French when they became “followers of the ideal of the centralised nation-state”.³⁰ However, centralisation has nothing to do with the nation, but only with the state. They also use the concept of the “unitary state”, which was aspired by some Batavians. However, they never make clear how the “unitary state” differs from the “centralised nation-state”.³¹ I argue that there is a distinct difference.

This brings me to my definition of the third theme: the process of nationalisation. As one could guess, I do not refer here to the economic meaning of nationalisation, but to the political one. One could argue that the use of this term in the political sense has the same issues with anachronism as it had in the economic sense. However, when I say that the Batavian army was “nationalised” I refer to all practices in which the proto-nationalistic ideals of the Batavian Revolution were institutionalised. Later in the thesis, I will detail how eighteenth-century proto-nationalism differs from “nationalism” defined by nineteenth-century thinkers. Simplified, the “nation”, in eighteenth-century opinion, consisted of active citizens who chose the greater good over personal interests. The nation – and with it nationality – was thus not a birthright, but a state of mind. Other historians also use terms derived from the concept of the nation to describe part of the Batavian ideology. Kloek and Mijnhardt, for example, note the importance of *vaderlandsliefde* (“love for ones country”), *natiebesef* (“sense of nation”), and *nationalisme* (“nationalism”) within the Batavian philosophy. They also note the importance of the concept of *burgerschap* (“citizenship”), but they do not relate this to the concept of (proto-)nationalism.³²

Another historian that confuses the concepts of centralisation and nationalisation in the Batavian Revolution is Schama. Consider the next passage:

²⁹ Schama, Simon, *Patriots and Liberators*, 102.

³⁰ Pepijn Brandon, Karwan Fatah-Black, “The supreme power of the people”, 373.

³¹ Pepijn Brandon, Karwan Fatah-Black, “The supreme power of the people”, 373.

³² Joost Kloek, Wijnand Mijnhardt, *1800*, 213.

the concept of popular sovereignty [which was] encapsulated in the slogan ‘One and Indivisible’ [which] assumed a willing acceptance of unified national authority, providing that it was exercised in the name of the people and through their elected representatives.³³

Schama’s “concept of popular sovereignty” is closely related to the process of nationalisation. However, because he combines this with the condition that one willingly must accept a “unified national authority”, which has everything to do with the process of centralisation, it muddles the difference between the two. This confusion becomes even more clear when in the next section he dives into how the wish for centralisation relates to the “revolutionary implementation of democracy”, which are also part of the different processes.³⁴ In another section of his book, Schama discusses the concept of “nationhood”, and correctly notes that both in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and in the French constitution of 1791 the phrase “la nation” is used as a synonym for “political society: that body to which sovereignty has been transferred”. Here, he thus discusses the process of nationalisation, without confusing it with the process of centralisation. However, this does not negate the problems with clarity in other sections.³⁵

All in all, the processes of deprivatisation, centralisation, and nationalisation are greatly contested in the existing literature. More than once, phrases are anachronistic, used to refer to different processes by different authors, or even combined or confused. In addition to substantiating that these processes did occur during the military reorganisation as a result of the Batavian Revolution in the latter part of this thesis, I also think that my clear definitions of these distinctly different concepts add to current academic knowledge. For clarity’s sake these definitions are as follows: (1) Deprivatisation encapsulates the conscious decision of the new Batavian regime to stop outsourcing military matters to private military entrepreneurs, (2) Centralisation refers to the tradition-breaking decision of the Batavian rulers to no longer delegate the defence of the country to individual provinces, but to give these tasks to the central state, and (3) Nationalisation refers to all decisions made within the reorganisation of the defence of the country which were based on ideas about the nation.

³³ Schama, Simon, *Patriots and Liberators*, 356.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 356.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

2. The French Army and the French Revolution

Before we can dive into the Batavian Revolution and their military reorganisation it is important to set the scene. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century a lot happened both in the political and the military sphere of Europe. To understand the military reorganisations of both the French and Dutch Revolutions it is important to sketch how both militaries operated and even changed during the rule of the *ancien régime*. Next, we will turn to an exploration of how the French military was part of the French Revolution, and how the army itself was changed as a result of this revolution.

2.1 European Armies of the *Ancien Régime*

Over the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the balance of power in the military sphere shifted around Europe. At the beginning of the century, it was the United Provinces whose professionalised military was the envy of the rest of the continent. Next, it was the Prussians who were the frontrunner on military advancements, under the leadership of Frederick II. Their disciplined army, backed by a militarised country inspired the rest of Europe to change course. By the end of the eighteenth century, they lost their position to the French, who, emboldened by the Enlightenment and the American War of Independence, saw a completely new way of waging war: with an army of citizen-soldiers. How this evolution of European warfare transpired during these centuries is outlined below.

Most revered in Europe during the beginning of the seventeenth century was the army of the brand-new *Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederland* (“The Republic of the Seven United Netherlands” or “United Provinces”) which was founded in 1588. The fact that they were known for their military prowess is a surprising fact for a nation of traders, farmers, and fishermen. Additionally, its aristocracy lacked strong military influences, unlike other European nations of the time. Like its contemporaries, the Dutch army was filled with (foreign) professional soldiers. Life in these professional armies across Europe was tough, resulting in most of the soldiers being recruited from the outer circle of society: vagrants, the destitute, and criminals.³⁶ However, it was the Republic’s focus on discipline, rationalised routines, and uniformity that made their army so effective, despite the poor quality of men.³⁷ Additionally, because of the unique structure of the United Provinces, its army was set up differently than

³⁶ M.S. Anderson, *War and society in Europe of the Old Regime, 1618-1789* (1998) 28.

³⁷ M.S. Anderson, *War and society in Europe of the Old Regime*, 25.

other European armies of the time. How this came to be, and how these differences influenced the Dutch army over the eighteenth century will be explored later on in the thesis. In any event, over the eighteenth century, the Dutch army lost its position as the military frontrunner of Europe to Frederick II's Prussian army.

Prussia's army gained its status as the military frontrunner of Europe during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). Its performance during those battlefields inspired the rest of Europe to learn from their example and mold their armies into their image. King Frederick II's accomplishments on military strategy and organisation were copied across Europe by experts. Especially their level of discipline had impressed their contemporaries.³⁸ James Boswell, a Scottish lawyer and writer, who visited Berlin in 1764 commented upon encountering a Prussian regiment exercising: "The soldiers seemed in terror [...] for the least fault they were beat like dogs". He went on to say that he found it "doubtful if such fellows don't make the best soldiers [as] machines are surer instruments than men".³⁹ In addition to their discipline, the Prussian military tactics were superior. Moreover, their socio-economic circumstances created the perfect climate to cultivate a rich militarised culture. The military was respected and seen as a place where the sons of (minor) aristocrats could make a name for themselves. This led to an involved aristocracy, which resulted in the militarisation of this entire segment of the Prussian population.⁴⁰ During the eighteenth century, the rest of Europe got inspired *en masse* by this militarised Prussian mindset. This was especially the case for the European upper class, for whom military uniforms became increasingly fashionable.⁴¹ Slowly this militarised mindset also trickled down to the rest of the Prussian population, and both its education and political structure were sculpted to facilitate the army. All in all, Prussia was a disciplined and motivated military machine, which won battles all over Europe. One of these battles would inspire the next military frontrunner, France, to change course, and another would crush the first signs of revolution in the United Provinces, to which we will return later.

During this time period the French army differed a lot from most of its contemporary armies in multiple aspects. For a start, their army was filled with many more national volunteers whereas others relied more heavily on foreign professionals. The fact that the French army consisted of more national troops, made them far more popular amongst the populace than the other European armies of the time. The downside to this bigger representation of the national population in the army was the fact that any unrest in the country would also trouble the army, as it was the country in a nutshell. Another difference with other European armies of the time

³⁸ Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870* (1982), 36-48.

³⁹ M.S. Anderson, *War and society in Europe of the Old Regime*, 170.

⁴⁰ Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe*, 36-48.

⁴¹ M.S. Anderson, *War and society in Europe of the Old Regime*, 170.

was the fact that the French military administration ran rather smoothly and was a well-functioning part of the wider national bureaucracy. The last difference was that the army was way more centralised than its contemporaries. The recruitment, feeding, and healing of the troops were all tasks for the government, none of this was the case in for example the United Provinces.⁴²

Everything changed for the French army after the humiliating defeat of their army at the hands of the disciplined Prussians at the battle of Rossbach in 1757. Afterwards, the shame of this discomfiture – in addition to other factors – resulted in the surge for military reform within the French ranks.⁴³ These reforms would eventually flow into the French Revolution and the French takeover of the military pole position in Europe a couple of decades later. The design of these reforms was mostly inspired by the Enlightenment and its reconsiderations of the role of the military within an Enlightened society.

It was the Enlightenment's humanitarian, national and revolutionary ideas about Man and the Nation, that raised big questions in the French military even before the French Revolution.⁴⁴ Questions such as: are foreign, mercenary or criminal soldiers truly the right way to defend the nation? And would not motives of love and belief, rather than routine, roughness and fear be more effective to inspire soldiers?⁴⁵ These questions – and others – resulted in a newly Enlightened ideal of the perfect French soldier: the citizen-soldier. The French Enlightened thinkers were not the originators of the concept of the citizen-soldier, but the Greek city-states.⁴⁶ Nor, were the French the ones who had brought this concept back from ancient times. Commonly credited with this reintroduction of the citizen-soldier in early-modern Europe are the United Provinces after their revolt against the Spanish Crown, and the English Commonwealth. Even though these European countries had reintroduced this concept, the French gained their inspiration about the virtue of the citizen-soldier across the ocean, during the American Revolution.⁴⁷ It is important to make a distinction between what actually happened, and what the French believed had happened during this war. This is because the American Revolution underwent a serious mystification while its stories crossed the Atlantic to France. In these stories, the American forces consisted only of armed citizens, who persevered against all odds against the professional mercenary army of the British. This was not a

⁴² Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe*, 43-44.

⁴³ M.S. Anderson, *War and society in Europe of the Old Regime*, 158-159.

⁴⁴ Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe*, 52.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁴⁶ Pierre Serna, "Introduction, War and Republic: 'Dangerous Liaisons'", in Pierre Serna a.o. (ed.), *Republics at war, 1776-1840: revolutions, conflicts, and geopolitics in Europe and the Atlantic world* (2013), 1-26, 1-2.

⁴⁷ Pierre Serna, "Introduction, War and Republic: 'Dangerous Liaisons'", 2.

representation of what actually had transpired, but this was the version that inspired one of the most famous French military philosophers, the Enlightened Hippolyte de Guibert (1743-1790).

De Guibert was a minor nobleman who had been an officer in the French army during the Seven Years' War. He studied the military tactics used by Frederick II – the King of Prussia – who held high esteem in the military sphere at that moment in time, as he had transformed the Prussian military to the disciplined powerhouse it became during the eighteenth century.⁴⁸ Hippolyte de Guibert combined the findings of his studies of the revered tactics of King Frederick II with his own political beliefs in his *Essai général de la tactique* (“General essay of tactics”), which was published in 1770. Like most Enlightened thinkers, Hippolyte de Guibert held the ideal of peace as his ultimate goal, however, he did believe in the possibility of ‘rational’ warfare. This type of warfare was a combination of King Frederick II’s tactics and the ideals of the Enlightenment.

Moreover, ‘rational’ warfare required a new type of soldier. This ideal soldier had to be a “man of Reason”, who was “educated and informed about the cause for which he was fighting”, according to De Guibert.⁴⁹ Moreover, this Enlightened man had to be a professional soldier, as Guibert did not subscribe to the notion of compulsory military service. In essence, this soldier would be a *citizen-soldier*. Not only did the Enlightened thinkers prefer armies consisting of citizen-soldiers for practical reasons – as they were thought to be stronger than professional non-national armies – but they also deemed it more moral. In the new Enlightened ideology they “looked down on men who served for money”, because they were of a mind that “soldiering was only respectable when it was done voluntarily by citizens from the love of their country; under which circumstances it became morally admirable – and politically safe”.⁵⁰ Moreover, these new armies consisting of citizen-soldiers could also be trusted as opposed to standing armies consisting of foreign professional soldiers “which might endanger the liberties of peoples”.⁵¹ Additionally to the role of this new type of soldier, these citizen-soldiers were to be handled in a different way than soldiers had been dealt with up until that moment in time. Were these not also men of honour like the officers themselves? And how could one enforce corporal punishment on honourable men? The result was a softening of military discipline and the humanisation of the relationship between the officers and their men.⁵²

⁴⁸ Annie Crépin, “The Army of the Republic: New Warfare and a New Army”, in Pierre Serna e.o. (ed.), *Republics at war, 1776-1840: revolutions, conflicts, and geopolitics in Europe and the Atlantic world* (2013), 131-148, 132.

⁴⁹ Annie Crépin, “The Army of the Republic: New Warfare and a New Army”, 132.

⁵⁰ Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe*, 77.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 53.

Figure 2: A Portrait of Hippolyte de Guibert (1743-1790).



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Despite these Enlightened ideals held by French army personnel, not many of these changes were institutionalised until the French revolutionaries had taken control over the army after the *ancien régime* had been dismissed. How all of this transpired and influenced the make-up of the French military, and how this led them to be the military front-runner of Europe will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.2 The French Revolution and the Unwilling French Army

At the beginning of July, the need for arms grew amongst the French rebellious crowds. Their fury had been brewing, their patience was wearing thin, and they were done waiting. The electors of Paris, who had been meeting regularly even after their dismissal from their posts, attempted one last time to curb the hysteria by setting up a citizen's militia. They hoped these troops would maintain order amongst the delirious masses. On the evening of the thirteenth of July, the former electors sent out patrols to contain the mayhem. "But," one of them wrote later, "we made a sorry showing: we could not contain the people's fury; if we had gone too far, they would have exterminated us [...] It is not the moment to reason with them." The following day the crowds located their desired pile of weapons: within the walls of the state prison known as the Bastille. Again the electors tried to intervene, hoping to negotiate a bloodless handover. But

neither the crowds nor the Bastille's garrison could muster their composure for diplomacy. The crowds forced their way in, and the garrison opened fire, instantly killing hundreds. As a gift from the heavens, a cannon appeared with which the crowd threatened the drawbridge and the gates of the fortress. The governor knew they could not withstand such force and surrendered.⁵³

The French Revolution would persist the way it had begun: led by crazed violence. Within a decade the French revolutionaries had executed 40.000 supposed counterrevolutionaries, including their king, and arrested nearly 300.000 suspects of political crimes. Moreover, 250.000 people died as a result of civil war, and many more perished in wars with foreign powers.⁵⁴ Since then, many a historian has attempted to explain these events. Some blamed individual problems plaguing French society at the time, others had more all-encompassing solutions. Part of the latter group, Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt stated that the origins of the French Revolution could be divided up into three categories. None of the individual conflicts were strong enough to explain the French Revolution on their own, they argued. The first category was the problems facing its society. The second category consisted of the problems resulting from its monarchy. The third – and final – category incorporates the clashes which were the result of new ideas sprouted by the Enlightenment. As highlighted by the authors, all of these problems also plagued other early modern European countries, but none of them exploded quite as violently as the French.⁵⁵ In any case, the origin of the French Revolution is of no concern for this story, but its outcomes are. The French revolutionaries namely went on to build an entirely new form of government, and with it inspired and ignited other nations to follow their example. Amongst them the exiled Dutch Patriots.

Part of the formation of this new revolutionary government was the reorganisation of the French army. As mentioned before, the army had been trying to reform for a couple of decades but had not been able to institutionalise the new Enlightened ideology within the military as had been suggested by De Guibert. Except for those who had benefitted from the old regime's structure, the army was in favour of these changes. Moreover, most of the soldiers were in favour of the French Revolution. Some of them even aided the revolutionaries in their quest. For example, many men in the regiments felt and showed sympathy with the revolutionaries, and refused to obey orders concerning the management of the demonstrations. Moreover, others actively partook in the revolution themselves. For example, over a hundred French Guardsmen were ringleaders in the storming of the Bastille. Furthermore, they were even the ones who had brought the aforementioned cannon, which led to the surrender of the Bastille.⁵⁶

⁵³ William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (1990), 109-111.

⁵⁴ Jack R. Censer, Lynn Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* (2001), 2-3.

⁵⁵ Jack R. Censer, Lynn Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, 2-3.

⁵⁶ William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 110.

Like noted by Geoffrey Best, the *ancien régime*'s loss of control was nowhere more visible than in its army.⁵⁷ So even if the army had been capable of crushing the revolution, most of their men would not have been willing to do so. In the end, without the help of the army, the *ancien régime* did not succeed in the tightening the reigns, and they surrendered to the revolutionary movement.⁵⁸

2.3 Changes in the French Army after the French Revolution

After the inefficiency of the institutionalisation of Enlightened ideals in the French army during the *ancien régime*, the French Revolution opened the door for military reformers to finally implement their thinking into the actual organisation of the French army after their take-over. This process, of course, took several years, as the nobility opposed the democratic direction in the army fiercely. The reforms they implemented were mostly in line with the ideology of the years prior.⁵⁹ This time, an actual military committee was instituted by the Assembly on October 1, 1789, to work on the military reorganisation.⁶⁰ The most drastic changes made during this time, which are important for this particular study are outlined below.

Figure 3: The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789



Source: Wikimedia Commons

⁵⁷ Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe*, 70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

⁵⁹ Sylvia Neely, *A concise history of the French Revolution* (2008), 106.

⁶⁰ Sylvia Neely, *A concise history of the French Revolution*, 105.

The first change had everything to do with the working conditions of the soldiers of the French army. For example, in line with the Enlightened ideals already spreading through the army before the French Revolution, it was finally institutionalised that one should get promoted based on talent, and nothing else. Men who had never gotten rewarded during their days before the Revolution, now swiftly rose to the levels of officer, general or even marshal. The most notable example of course is Napoleon Bonaparte himself.⁶¹ Moreover, in continuation of what had been happening prior to the Revolution, discipline was even more humanised after the revolutionaries took over. Additionally, pay was improved, as well as soldiers' families' welfare.⁶² Overall, the conditions of the French soldiers in the revolutionary army had improved significantly on paper at least.

The second change had everything to do with the nationalisation of the French army after the revolution. Even though the French army already had the most national volunteers of any European army, improvements could still be made. This is exactly what occurred after the French Revolution. Foreigners simply were not wanted anymore. In line with the ideology of the citizen-soldier, paid foreign professionals were looked down upon, and even mistrusted. Additionally, the National Guard was flourishing all over the country.⁶³ The National Guard was in a sense the nation in arms, which was not armed to fight foreign armies to uphold peace within the boundaries of the country. It could more or less be equated to a militia.⁶⁴ One of the best-known examples of citizens joining the forces is the legendary 10.000 "Volunteers of '91", who joined up to defend the frontiers of the country side by side with the regular army.⁶⁵ The volunteers of the years afterwards, were not as promising. Military conscription slowly took over the recruiting process, perfected in 1798.⁶⁶ Throughout the French Revolution, the French army was nationalised both for ideological and practical reasons.

The third change made in this reorganisation, was regarding the army's bureaucracy. Though the term "bureaucracy" was first used during the mid-eighteenth century in France, it only became fashionable during the French Revolution. Its meaning is different from that of today. While we currently define the term bureaucracy as "a system of government in which most of the important decisions are taken by state officials rather than by elected representatives", this

⁶¹ Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe*, 76.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 76.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

term referred to something a bit more demeaning before and during the French Revolution.⁶⁷ For example, L.S. Mercer defined bureaucracy in the 1780s as

a word created in our time to designate in a concise and forceful manner the extensive power of mere clerks who, in the various bureaux of the ministry, are able to implement a great many projects which they forge themselves or find quite often in the dust of the bureaux, or adopt by taste or by whim.⁶⁸

One of the historians who noted the importance of the bureaucratisation of the French army during the French Revolution was Howard G. Brown. In his work, he studied the changes in the French Ministry of War during the French Revolution and discovered there that the centralisation, rationalisation, and nationalisation of the military supply and service administrations was how the Ministry met the political turmoil of the age and resolved some of its conflicts as well. This plan of attack resulted – without the intention to do so – in the revolutionaries rebuilding the bureaucratic structure of their state larger and stronger than ever before he further notes.⁶⁹

2.4 Concluding Remarks on the Changes in the French Army

All in all, a lot happened during the eighteenth century in the French army, especially after the humiliating defeat against the Prussian army. After the French copied the disciplined Prussian model of Frederick II, they quickly came to realise this was not in accordance with the Enlightened tendencies of the time. This new ideology inspired military philosophers such as De Guibert to evolve from the Prussian model towards something new. While there was support within the army for his ideas about the role of the soldier, and its position within the army and society as a whole, the implementation of these ideas was obstructed by the old guard. This all changed with the French Revolution.

While the revolutionaries flooded the city of Paris to radically change the balance of power, the *ancien régime* – in a final desperate attempt to silence the masses – instructed the army to intervene. Because many a soldier was unwilling to do so, the army was unable to stop the mob

⁶⁷ Howard Brown, *War, revolution, and the bureaucratic state: politics and army administration in France, 1791-1799* (1995), 4.

⁶⁸ J.F. Bosher, *The French Revolution* (1988), 245-246.

⁶⁹ Howard G. Brown, *War, revolution, and the bureaucratic state*, 5.

from storming the Bastille. Moreover, some hundred of them even led the charge, while others provided the needed cannon, in the first place.

After the *ancien régime* had been overthrown, the Enlightened military reformers saw their chances to finally implement their visionary approach in the new military organisation. Soldiers would be promoted based on merit, they would be active citizens of the nation, and they were to be handled with honour, from then on. Moreover, a robust military administration bureau would oversee the care of all these Enlightened soldiers. All in all, the revolutionaries would devise a whole new style of military organisation, part of which was the centralisation, rationalisation, and nationalisation of their Ministry of War, as discussed by the historian Howard Brown.

This new style of military organisation – which would make the French the new frontrunners of Europe – inspired plenty of fellow revolutionaries. The Batavians were no exception.

3. The Dutch Army and the Batavian Revolution

As mentioned in the concluding remarks of the previous chapter, the French revolutionary reorganisation of their army influenced the Batavians. However, before we can determine how these Dutch revolutionaries were influenced by the French pioneers, it is first necessary to dive into the history of the Batavian Revolution, starting with their predecessor – the Patriot Revolt – and their thoughts on the organisation of the Dutch army of the *ancien régime*.

3.1 The Patriot Revolt (1780-1787) and their Critique of the Dutch Military

The predecessor of the Batavian Revolution – the Patriot Revolt – of 1785-1787 caused the first cracks in the rule of *Stadhouder* (“Stadholder”) Willem V (1748-1806). Heralded historians Palmer and Armitage point to the Fourth English War – also known as the War of American Independence as the catalyst of the forthcoming anti-Orange and anti-British sentiment that fuelled the Patriots.⁷⁰ Brandon and Fatah-Black take this assumption one step further as they indicate the American War of Independence to be an inspiration for the Dutch patriots.⁷¹ However, others disagree. Because this discussion has no further implication for this thesis I will dive into the entire debate. As a whole, the Patriots were a diverse group but their ideology can be boiled down to a wish to democratise the political regime in the United Provinces. They saw this democratisation as the answer to all the economic, financial and military crises that plagued the country.⁷²

In the following two years, the Patriots organised themselves and what ensued has often been dubbed a true civil war.⁷³ The civilians in the provinces of Holland, Groningen and Overijssel, mostly supported the Patriot Movement. Whereas the inhabitants of the provinces of Zeeland, Gelderland, and Friesland, favoured *Stadhouder* Willem V and his regime. Utrecht – as often because of their central location – remained divided.⁷⁴ Besides this geographical divide, the camps were also heavily determined by social class. The Patriots consisted mainly of upper middle-class men, such as bankers, merchants, printers and professors. On the other side resided the *Orangisten* (“Orangists”), who consisted of men who either owed their position to the

⁷⁰ R.R. Palmer and David Armitage, *The age of the democratic revolution: a political history of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (2014), 246.

⁷¹ Thomas Poell, Oscar Gelderblom, *Local Particularism Challenged, 1795–1813* (2016), 294.

⁷² Thomas Poell, Oscar Gelderblom, *Local Particularism Challenged*, 294.

⁷³ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 135-136.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

Prince's House, and/or were members of the Reformed Church, and/or were part of the masses, who had no real political interest, but who revered the Prince. In between these two camps remained the largest group of people: both discontented with the old, but also hesitant about the new.⁷⁵ On the international level, the Patriots were supported by the French government as they favoured their anti-British sentiment, and the Orangists were championed by the British because of their anti-French sentiment.⁷⁶

The critique of the Patriots on the rule of *Stadhouder* Willem V and his elite was not only targeted at their style of government or their choice of international partners. Additionally, the Patriots also had plenty to say about the state of the Dutch military during the *Stadhouder's* rule. For starters, the Patriots despised the forlorn state of the Dutch navy at that moment in time. Indeed, the Patriots longed for the heydays of the Republic, in which it had ruled the seven seas with her mighty fleet.⁷⁷ Another complaint of the Patriots was about how Willem V enforced his *patentrecht* ("patent law") in practice, as he simply announced the movement of troops expecting the States and cities to comply, without waiting to discuss these matters with the institutions involved. The Patriots wanted to reinstall citizen surveillance on this practice, to circumvent his will being law in the future.⁷⁸

Moreover, the Patriots feared that *Stadhouder* Willem V would abuse his power over the Dutch army to suppress the Dutch people. This last argument was also featured heavily in Van der Capellen's inspiring *Aan het Volk van Nederland*, in which he stated that he who controls the army, can do whatever he wants.⁷⁹ Another idea promoted heavily by Van der Capellen tot den Pol – who in his turn had been inspired by the Scottish Andrew Fletcher – about why the Dutch should fear their own military, was because of the number of foreign professional soldiers in their army. He – and many others – deemed the introduction of professional armies in the late stages of the European Middle Ages to have undermined the people's freedom.⁸⁰ Whereas the two former complaints of the Patriots could be solved by a change of governance, the latter two needed a different approach altogether: civilian armament.⁸¹

⁷⁵ R.R. Palmer and David Armitage, *The age of the democratic revolution*, 244-246.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁷⁷ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 135.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁷⁹ Joan van der Capellen tot den Pol, *Aan het volk van Nederland*, 81.

⁸⁰ Franciscus Grijzenhout a.o., *Het Bataafse experiment: politiek en cultuur rond 1800* (2013), 58.

⁸¹ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 136.

Figure 4: A portrait of Stadhouder Willem V van Oranje-Nassau (1748-1806)



Source: Wikimedia Commons

3.2 The Patriots' Solution: Civilian Armament

In the same pamphlet, Van der Capellen tot den Pol – the biggest Patriot foreman on this matter – wrote about the need for civilian armament in detail. He summarised his beliefs about this topic with the strong statement that “freedom and an unarmed Nation are incompatible”. He has been credited to be the leader of a widespread Patriot effort to arm the nation.⁸² He would once more drive home his argument in a letter to De Gijsselaar when he noted that: “Liberty and an unarmed people stand in direct contradiction”.⁸³ Van der Cappelen was not alone in this opinion as the *Post van Neder Rijn* published the following words as early as September 1782:

Great men have drawn up plans, which, put into action, would reduce to nothing a usurped power. To wit, that each Burgher should be a Soldier, or rather that each Burgher should be a Warrior. This is the lesson of Nature, the lesson of Reason.⁸⁴

Many Enlightened men were thus in favour of legalised *vrijkorpsen* (“Free Corps”), which would have the right to equip and recruit a popular military force, which would not be

⁸² Franciscus Grijzenhout a.o., *Het Bataafse experiment*, 58.

⁸³ Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, 81.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

commanded by the Captain-General.⁸⁵ The idea of the Free Corps was not a far reach for the Dutch Republic as it had a history of *schutterijen* (“shooters”), which had functioned as the town watch since the twelfth century, and consisted of citizens. However, at the end of the eighteenth century, these *schutterijen* were a mere persiflage, according to the Patriots. The ruling elite merely dressed in their uniforms to pose for portraits, and to attend to ceremonial duties. The *schutterijen* had become social ornaments and were not used in practice at all. Another difference that would distinguish the Free Corps from the *schutterijen* was their new objective. Whereas the *schutterijen* functioned to protect the city from harm, the Free Corps would protect their freedom.⁸⁶ The Free Corps would do so by having its commissions open for election. Moreover, the Patriots promised not to discriminate based on religion when one wished to join. Additionally, their officers would have representation on the city councils. Lastly, the militia would be used to defend the rights of free assembly and speech, and may the Stadholder threaten either.⁸⁷ The first Free Corps was established in Dordrecht in January of 1783 led by Pensionary, Cornelis de Gijsselaar, the recipient of the former letter from Van der Cappelen. A month later, a Free Corps was set up in Rotterdam consisting of over a thousand men in total. Others followed swiftly.⁸⁸

One of the best-known Free Corps members was the young student Pieter Philip Juriaan Quint Ondaantje, who joined the Free Corps of the *vaderstad* (“father town”), Utrecht. In August of 1783, he organised a petition signed by 314 citizens to protest the clear nepotism by the hand of Orangists concerning the promotion of civil personnel. Ondaantje even marched with his followers to the City Hall of Utrecht. He succeeded in his effort when in January of the next year, Voet van Winssen was promoted, as he was a candidate acceptable to all parties.⁸⁹ Ondaantje recently was recognised for his effort to enact democratic governance in Utrecht and the Netherlands at large, when in 2021 his name and likeness was immortalised in the walls of the City Hall of Utrecht.⁹⁰

To conclude, the Patriots had plenty of criticism about the state of the Dutch defence during the rule of the *ancien régime*. While a reorganisation of governance could solve some of these problems, the rest would need the institution of something new: civilian armament. In this way, the Patriot’s ideas about the defence of the Republic, were in accordance with the French

⁸⁵ Ibid., 81.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 81-82.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 82.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 82-83.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 84-86.

⁹⁰ <https://www.duic.nl/cultuur/gevelsteen-ter-ere-van-patriottenleider-pieter-quint-ondaantje-onthuld-bij-utrechts-stadhuis/> (06-06-2023)

Enlightened ideals about the citizen-soldier, as proposed by De Guibert and others. However, they did differ, as the Patriots saw civilian armament as a protection against the army, not a substitution.

3.3 The End of the Patriots

Despite the odds, the Patriots managed to gain ground as the Republic became increasingly unstable. *Stadhouder* Willem V was paralysed by indecision. In 1781 he wrote: “I wish I were dead” and “that my father had never been Stadholder [...] I feel I have no ability to be at the head of so many affairs”.⁹¹ In the end, it was his wife, Wilhelmina of Prussia, who took action and traveled from Nijmegen to The Hague to address the representatives of the province of Holland about the state of affairs. However, at Gouda, she was arrested by a Patriot militia. She enlisted the help of her brother, the aforementioned King Frederick II of Prussia, to strike back. He complied and sent an army of 20.000 men into the Republic to aid his sister and brother-in-law.⁹² The Prussian army advanced with three different divisions, their main attack was aimed at the southern part of the province of Holland, and especially Den Haag.⁹³ At first, the Patriots did not believe the reports that the Prussian army was closing in. Eventually, they would find out the hard way.⁹⁴

The Patriots stood no chance against the revered professional Prussian army but did not give up easily. During the defence of their towns, the Patriots taunted the Prussians with songs. For example, they sang the following mockingly in Ouderkerk:⁹⁵

O Pruysen! Dagt gij niet	O Prussia! Did you not think
een bende te vernielen,	to destroy a gang,
die gewoon aan 't vuur,	Who, just to the fire,
uw krijgsmacht weerstand bood,	resisted thy army,
Getuig nu in uw land,	Recall now in your land
hoe uwe helden vielen,	how your heroes fell,
Hoe de gevreesde Pruys,	How the dreaded Prussians,
niet Amstels Burgers, vlood.	not Amstel's citizens, fled.

⁹¹ R.R. Palmer and David Armitage, *The age of the democratic revolution*, 243.

⁹² René Koekoek, *Revolutionaire tijden*, 137; R.R. Palmer and David Armitage, *The age of the democratic revolution*, 254.

⁹³ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap: Nederlandse politieke vluchtelingen in Noord Frankrijk* (1976), 4.

⁹⁴ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 4.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

Despite their bravura, the Prussian flooded their weakly defended strongholds, and after a mere two weeks, the order was restored and the country cleared of Patriots – 5000 of them having fled south to France after the violence and humiliation they had suffered at the hands of the Orangists.⁹⁶ The rest crumbled before the new old regime. Gerrit Paape, ever the Patriot, would write pungent words about the latter category, describing their surrender as “there I saw them, those who had sworn either Freedom or Death, bowing all the way to the ground for the Orange madman”.⁹⁷

The Orangists gladly saw the Patriots run. They even printed a satirical letter from an imaginary Patriot to his imaginary wife, exclaiming: “Poor Patriotic me! [...] What will become of us?” and “I want to promise them that I will never do it again; some are telling me that it is honourable and for the good cause to suffer, but I would gladly transfer this honour to someone else.” He further described his life now as “wandering between the heavens and the earth, not belonging anywhere”. Lastly, he exclaimed that he curses the poor men who had tricked him into joining, who were still safely at home, while he and his brothers were on the run. He has learned his lesson he tells his wife: “Never will I transform into a soldier again”, and “Never will I be tempted by the high and mighty powers, now that I have fallen so low”. He concluded his letter by expressing his thoughts about his wife’s opinion. “I can almost hear you say, walk on, foolish son of liberty [...] but I could be wrong about that”.⁹⁸

In addition to making fun of them, the positions previously held by Patriots in local government were once again filled with supporters of the House of Orange. This time they had to swear loyalty to the Stadholder himself and the heredity of his title.⁹⁹ Moreover, the houses of the fleeing Patriots were plundered.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, their *vrijkorpsen* were disarmed at the request of Princess Wilhelmina.¹⁰¹ Despite this drastic turn of events this was not the last cry of the exiled Patriots. Seven years later, they would return as the Bataven (“Batavians”) with the French Revolutionary army to accomplish what the Patriots had not.

⁹⁶ René Koekkoek, *Revolutionaire tijden*, 137; R.R. Palmer and David Armitage, *The age of the democratic revolution*, 254; van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 5-8.

⁹⁷ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 9.

⁹⁸ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, page between 10-11. Unfortunately Van Gelder does not elaborate on where he encountered this fake letter or give any context to its origin.

⁹⁹ Pepijn Brandon, Karwan Fatah-Black, “The supreme power of the people”, 372-373; R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 5-8.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

3.4 The Patriots in Exile

As hinted at above, the Patriots were bruised but not beaten after the Prussian attack. Most of the Patriots fled south to France, where revolution was in the air. There they would contribute to the effort, and learn from the French revolutionaries their accomplishments and mistakes before they were to return home, where they would end the *Stadhouder's* reign and his beloved *Republic of United Provinces*. Most of the Patriots fled to north France as its rulers had promised to aid the Patriots during their exile. Many of them settled in St. Omer, with at its height housed 2500 exiled Patriots.¹⁰² Others took off towards Switzerland, and the German States, and in particular the cities of Bremen, Hamburg, Bentheim, Leer, Linden, Gronau and Burg Steinfurt. The earl of Burg Steinfurt protected the Patriots from repercussions of their actions and even permitted them to print, exempted them from paying taxes, and helped them with favourable terms for setting up new businesses. Lastly, some Patriots crossed the Atlantic to the Americas, where the Enlightenment reigned. However, tickets were expensive, so only the most privileged could undertake this journey.¹⁰³ In their places of exile, the Patriots bided their time, hoping for the tables to turn. The most work to further the Patriot cause was undertaken in the North of France.

One of the families that fled the country after the Orangist take-over were Emilie (1748-1788) and Wybo Fijnje (1750-1809) and their children. Emilie Fijnje (Born Luzac) was the daughter of a bookseller, and publisher, most notably of the *Gazette de Leyde*.¹⁰⁴ On November 5, 1775, she married Wybo Fijnje, owner of the *Hollandsche Historische Courant*.¹⁰⁵ Both of them played a central role in the patriot footing in Delft after 1780. Most notably with their paper, in which radical democratic patriot and notorious journalist Gerrit Paape (1752-1803) made a regular appearance.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, Wybo Fijnje was involved with the re-establishment of the Delft's *exercitiengenootschap* ("exercise society") which consisted of armed civilians by the patriot ideals of civil armament.¹⁰⁷ Finally, on August 21, 1787, the Patriots took control of Delft during the Patriot Revolt.¹⁰⁸ The victory was short-lasting as they had to surrender to the Prussian troops on September 17, of that year.¹⁰⁹ Afterwards, the family Fijnje fled to Amsterdam, where plenty of fleeing Patriots converged. They defended this city against the Orangists until October

¹⁰² R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 15-16, 55; Joost Roosendaal *Bataven! Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Frankrijk*, 85.

¹⁰³ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 15-16.

¹⁰⁴ Jacques J.M Baartmans, *Emilie Fijnje-Luzac: Myn beslommerde Boedel, brieven in ballingschap 1787-1788* (2003), 9-10.

¹⁰⁵ Jacques J.M Baartmans, *Emilie Fijnje-Luzac*, 18, 21.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

10 but had to flee yet again after the surrender of the city.¹¹⁰ In the days after the fall of Amsterdam Emilie and her children took cover with Emilie's family in Leiden, while Wybo fled to Bremen, but eventually, they all boarded a ship to the city of Antwerpen on the cusp of December.¹¹¹ After these turbulent months, the family settled down in Brussels, just in time for Emilie to give birth to their youngest child – who would not survive long.¹¹² After her recovery, the family travelled southbound eventually settling at a *château* in Watten – located in the north of France – on May 31, 1788.¹¹³ During their stay, they shared the spacious castle with other Patriots, most notably the family Daendels, of which Herman Willem Daendels will play a key character later on in this story.¹¹⁴ Emilie would succumb to her many illnesses in November 1788, never being able to return to the Netherlands. Her husband, Wybo, would return with the other exiles in 1795, after bidding his time in the French countryside. We will catch up with him later on in the thesis.

As mentioned earlier, the number of exiled Patriots – like the family Fijnje – that ended up in the north of France was high. Some rightfully predicted that the French would help avenge them. An anonymous poem from this time read:¹¹⁵

't Is Vrankryks Edelmoedig Koning,	It is Vrankryk's Generous King,
Die ons zyn Land ten vryen woning	Who gives us his land for free to live,
Zyn geld ten hulp, en bystand geeft,	his money in aid, and assistance,
Hy zal ons ongeluk eens wreeken,	He will avenge our misfortune,
De Macht des dwinglandy Verbreeken,	Breaking the power of the tyrant,
Wiens opgeraapt gezag, reeds voor zyn	Whose acquired authority already
krygsmacht beeft.	trembles before his army.

But it was not the French king, that would help the Patriots carry out their revenge, but the French revolutionaries.

During neither of the regimes, did the Patriots await their future patiently. While they were exiled, the Patriots had erected a multitude of institutions to help their cause. Before this, however, the Patriots underwent a rebranding in regard to their name. No longer would they call

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 34.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 36-38.

¹¹² Ibid., 46.

¹¹³ Ibid., 60.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 61.

¹¹⁵ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 29.

themselves Patriots, from now on they would be *Bataven* (“Batavians”). This name change was not only symbolic but also held meaning for the revolutionaries. The Batavians saw the old *Batavieren* (“Batavians”) as the original inhabitants of the Low Countries who – like them – “fought for freedom and independence”.¹¹⁶ This myth about the heroic Batavians had also served as an inspiration to incite the population in the revolt against the Spanish occupation centuries before. Now – during the Batavian Revolution – this primitive people again provided the fantasy, this time of a "virtuous, simple, armed, freedom-loving" and "democratic" people. The story – despite (or perhaps because of) its historical flaws – caught on.¹¹⁷ Under their new name, the Patriots would later create a Batavian Legion within the French army and a political *Comité Batave*.¹¹⁸

When revolution also threatened the French *ancien régime* the Batavians were eager to join forces. After the storming of the Bastille and the regime change, the Batavians finally got an ally. It was the National Convention, that promised support for all people, who fought for freedom. This invigorated the Batavians.¹¹⁹ After this declaration, the Batavians intensified their efforts to get the French to march with them into the Netherlands. They held speeches at the National Convention, the ministries, the Jacobin clubs, and even for the military. They even accused the French of having *une dette sacrée* to help them.¹²⁰ The Batavians yearned for the French revolutionaries to help them achieve their and other European revolutionaries’ dreams. P. Van Schelle phrased this in one of his *Vaderlandsche Liederen* in 1791 as:¹²¹

Ja; volk by volk verlangt naar 't uur,	Yes, people by people long for the hour
Dat Heerschzucht wage, 't oorlogsvuur,	That Glory dare, to light the fire of war,
Op Frankryks grenzen, aan te steken.	On France's borders.
Dat uur is 't uitzigt van elks hoop;	That hour is the prospect of every hope;
Het tydstip, voor geheel Euroop,	The time, for all of Europe,
Om ook zyn ketenen te breken.	To break their chains too.

The Patriots turned Batavians would only have to wait a little bit before they could return victorious to their homeland. On the first of February 1793, the Batavians’ prayers were

¹¹⁶ R.R. Palmer and David Armitage, *The age of the democratic revolution*, 243.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹¹⁸ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 47.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

answered when the French declared war on *Stadhouder* Willem V.¹²² The Batavians – not able to hold their glee a secret – immediately wrote a speech, which they send to all the revolutionary clubs. Some even travelled to one of these clubs, to deliver the speech in person. It has been said that Robespierre himself applauded them at one of these occasions, and helped them distribute their message.¹²³ However, it would take a while for the French to actually make good on their promise. In the meantime, the exiled Patriots kept the pressure on their fellow revolutionaries.

The tenacity of the Dutch Patriot exiles paid off in the middle of January 1795, when the French-Batavian troops crossed the frozen rivers of the Waal en the Lek into Dutch territory. Without encountering much resistance the troops marched onwards evermore into the United Provinces. On January 18, early in the morning, *Stadhouder* Willem V and his sons boarded a fishing boat at Scheveningen, and fled the country from the floe-covered beach towards the safe haven across the sea, England.¹²⁴ The next day, the French army – including the Batavian legion – entered the city of Amsterdam through the Leidsepoort. This moment has been captured by an artist in the figure below, which shows the ecstatic crowd that welcomed the liberation army.

3.5 The Batavian Republic (1795-1799)

A question often raised with regard to the exiled Patriots, is what they had learned and unlearned during their time in France. For example, what did they learn from the French revolutionaries, in terms of how to pull off a successful revolution? Moreover, what did they learn from the following years of terror? And how did those lessons distinguish the ideology of the Batavians from that of the Patriots? Gerrit Paape has been quoted to have said that the exiled patriots attended the *Hoogeschool van Patriottismus en Revolutie* (“Academy of Patriotism and Revolution”) during their time in France. Since then, this phrase has often been questioned in the debate surrounding the relationship between the Dutch and the French revolutionaries.¹²⁵ I think the answer lies in how the Batavians set up their own structure after their return, and how it mirrored or complemented the French system post-revolution.

On January 31, 1795, the Batavians published the *Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens en de Burger* (“Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen”), in which the sovereignty of the Dutch people was declared. Additionally, their rights were declared, based on the original French Rights of Man and the Citizen.¹²⁶ So far, the Batavians seem to have learned a lot during their

¹²² Ibid., 34.

¹²³ Ibid, 41.

¹²⁴ René Koekkoek, *Revolutionaire tijden*, 157.

¹²⁵ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 53-54.

¹²⁶ René Koekkoek, *Revolutionaire tijden*, 157.

time at the *Hoogeschool van Patriotismus en Revolutie* in the north of France. In the following months, the Batavians took control of the local government. The revolutionary army was aided in this task by the underground network of Batavians, which had remained in the country after the Orangist takeover. Slowly the *Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden* (“Republic of Seven United Provinces”) was transformed into the *Bataafse Republiek* (“Batavian Republic”). The Batavians started their take-over of the country on the local and provincial levels. Most of the city councils were forced to step aside, and the State General of every province was replaced with new councils filled with Batavian representatives. Overall, the change of power went without a hitch. This is with the exception of the provinces of Zeeland and the northern Provinces – as they bit back against the rapid change.¹²⁷

On an international level – the Batavians changed the course of the country when they accepted a peace treaty with the French and agreed to a military alliance with them in May 1795. This change of alliance meant that the Batavian Republic was now at war with England, their former ally. In response to this betrayal, England – with the blessing of *Stadbouder* Willem V – took control over all of the Dutch colonies. This loss had devastating consequences for the state of Dutch trade and industry.¹²⁸

On a national level – the next order of business for the Batavians was the creation of a National Assembly. Up until that point the States-General – which consisted of the representatives of the individual provinces – was the highest political organ of the country. However, the Batavians had different plans. More and more people agreed that the Dutch state would benefit from a centralised government. This is an important ideological difference with their predecessors, who all believed the Dutch state should remain a federation. However, not everyone was in favour of this position. This debate quite literally split the Batavians into two camps.¹²⁹ On one side were the *Unitaristen* (“Unitarians”), who formed the minority of the Batavians and can be characterized as the democrats. They believed that the Batavian Republic should have a centralised government. On the other side were the *Federalisten* (“Federalists”), who formed the majority, and were rather conservative for revolutionaries. They wanted to keep the Batavian Republic a federation like it had been when it was still ruled by the *Stadbouder*.¹³⁰ This fundamental disagreement surfaced again and again while drafting the Constitution. This

¹²⁷ Ibid., 157.

¹²⁸ Joost Kloek, Wijnand Mijnhardt, *1800*, 29.

¹²⁹ René Koekkoek, *Revolutionaire tijden*, 158.

¹³⁰ Thomas Poel and Oscar Gelderblom, *Local Particularism Challenged*, 295; R.R. Palmer, David Armitage, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* (2014), 518.

disagreement resulted in a lack of a constitution for the first three years of the Batavian Republic.¹³¹

Eventually, Revolutionary France got involved in 1797 and sided with the *Unitaristen*.¹³² In addition to influencing public opinion, France even helped stage a military coup. In the end, they succeeded, and the *Unitaristen* took over the National Assembly and they wrote the Batavian Constitution of 1798.¹³³ Even though this quarrel between the *Unitaristen* and the *Federalisten* takes up a lot of room within the historiography of the Batavian Revolution, often highlighting how this brawl resulted in an impasse between the camps, the Dutch army had been successfully centralised during that same period. This seems to be a true dichotomy on the question of centralisation and its relation to the Batavian ideology, which remains unexplained in current literature.

3.6 The End of the Batavian Republic and its Legacy

The Batavian Republic did not stand the test of time. Partly, this was the fault of the inner division between the unitarians and the federalists. However, the French also had something to do with the end of the Batavian Republic. Since the foundation of the Batavian Republic, its relationship with the French Republic could be described as inequitable at the least. When they arranged their alliance in May 1795, the Dutch had to make plenty of concessions to their French liberators. For starters, they had to abdicate land to them. Moreover, the Dutch had to pay 100 million *gulden* in damages to the French. Lastly, they had to host French troops on Dutch territory, and even pay all their expenses.¹³⁴ However, the French had also made some concessions in this negotiation. The 100 million *gulden* were considered a “liberation fee”, and France promised not to interfere in the domestic affairs of the newly created Batavian Republic in return.¹³⁵

As mentioned previously, the French did not stay on the sidelines indefinitely. In 1797 they were tired of waiting for the Dutch to formulate and approve of a new constitution, and they made their decision in this debate when they joined the *Unitaristen* in a military coup.¹³⁶ But even before that moment, the French helped sway the favour towards the *Unitaristen*. In January 1796,

¹³¹ R.R. Palmer, David Armitage, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, 517-518.

¹³² Thomas Poel and Oscar Gelderblom, *Local Particularism Challenged*, 300.

¹³³ Thomas Poel and Oscar Gelderblom, *Local Particularism Challenged*, 303-304; René Koekkoek, *Revolutionaire tijden*, 170.

¹³⁴ René Koekkoek, *Revolutionaire tijden*, 158.

¹³⁵ Thomas Poel, Oscar Gelderblom, *Local Particularism Challenged*, 299.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 299-300.

for example, the Committee of Public Safety, of which former Patriot-exile Wijbo Fijnje was a member, planned with French representatives a coup in the province of Friesland. To help their cause, the French withdrew all their troops from Friesland to give free way to the civic militias and revolutionary clubs to take control of the provincial government. As a result, the provincial governors of Friesland were dismissed, and a new unitarian assembly was appointed.¹³⁷

When Napoleon took control of France in 1799, the relationship between the Batavian Republic and the French Republic changed significantly. For starters, the French no longer supported the democratisation of the young Republic.¹³⁸ The Batavian Republic slowly lost all sovereignty, as it was turned into a true Sister Republic in the following years. After the victory over Napoleon by the Allied Forces, the Dutch *ancien régime* – like in the rest of Western Europe – was restored at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815. The Batavian Revolution had been reversed. However, not all of its achievements had been lost.

January 19 1795 marked the triumph of the Patriots when the Batavian Republic was founded, which ended the more than 200-year-old *Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden* (“Republic of Seven United Provinces”). Historians today mark this moment in time as the beginning of the modern Dutch liberal democracy. This is because the Batavians radically changed the Dutch political and institutional landscape during their rule, laying the foundations of the modern Dutch state. Among other innovations, the Batavians implemented the teachings of the Enlightenment when they implemented the *Universal Rights of Man and of the Citizen* into their political system, and introduced representative democracy. Moreover, they united the provinces into one state, implored a separation between church and state, and even formulated the first written constitution of the Netherlands.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the Batavians modernised the Dutch army by a process of deprivatisation, centralisation and nationalisation – which we will dive into next.

3.7 The Organisation of the Batavian Military Reorganisation

Before we can dive into the research results of the transition period from the army of the *ancien régime* to the Batavian army it is pertinent to give an overview of the organisation of the reorganisation. This organisation consists of an overview of the installed institutions tasked with this reorganisation and its most important members, and what their first steps looked like.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 301.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 308.

¹³⁹ Franciscus Grijzenhout, a.o, *Het Bataafse experiment*, 27.

Like the French Revolutionaries, the Batavian turned *Staten-Generaal* (“States-General”) erected a special committee on March 4, 1795, to supervise the transition to, and the maintenance of the Batavian army.¹⁴⁰ This committee was called: the *Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande* (“Committee on General Affairs of the Alliance on Land”).¹⁴¹ Despite the major changes that took place during these months, the *Comité te Lande* had basically the same tasks as its predecessor: (1) the organisation of the general defense of the country, (2) the maintenance of the finances of the generality, (3) the management of the Generality Lands and (4) the supervision of military justice. The Committee members were divided evenly among three departments. These three departments were: (1) the *Departement Militair* (“Military Department”), (2) the *Departement van Financiën* (“Department of Finance”), and (3) the *Departement tot de Oproeping en Bebering der Generaliteitslanden* (“Department for the Convocation and Administration of the Generality Lands”).¹⁴² In total, there were 21 committee members, and while most of the members had the best intentions at the start of their appointment, they had little to no knowledge or experience in military matters.¹⁴³ Each of the resolutions, decisions, or declarations published by the Comité was headed by the slogan of the Batavian Republic: *Vryheid, Gelyheid, Broederschap* (“Freedom, Equality, Fraternity”). This was obviously something they had borrowed from the French credo *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. The Committee would only be the beginning of the resemblance of the Dutch military reorganisation to the French one.

Only three short days after the instalment of the Comité, five bureaus were established within the Committee on March 7, with the task of reorganising the remnants of the *Staatse Leger* of the *ancien régime* into a new Batavian army. Each of the bureaus oversaw a different part of the army, which were (1) the infantry, (2) the cavalry, (3) the habillement, (4) the engineers and artillery, and (5) the hospitals. On July 18 of that same year, the first three of these agencies were already disbanded.¹⁴⁴ In addition to these bureaus, the Committee also elected a board consisting of three members from within, who would draft the *Plan tot Reorganisatie* (“Plan of Reorganisation”), and appoint the necessary commanding officers to ensure its success. The three board members were, Lestevenon, Van Hylcema, and Pijman.¹⁴⁵

Willem Anne Lestevenon (1750-1830), had become a patriot despite his descent from the upper class of Amsterdam. He was already active in a multitude of administrative positions

¹⁴⁰ J.P.C.M. Hoof, *Militairen in de Bataafs-Franse tijd*, 1.

¹⁴¹ J. Roelevink, *Onderzoeksgids: bestuur en administratie van de Bataafs Franse tijd 1795-1813* (2019), 22.

¹⁴² Willem Maurits de Brauw, *De departementen van algemeen bestuur in Nederland, sedert de omwenteling van 1795* (1864), 34-35; Nationaal Archief, 2.01.14.01, *Inventaris Comité te Lande*, 5-18.

¹⁴³ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 158.

¹⁴⁴ Willem Maurits de Brauw, *De departementen van algemeen bestuur in Nederland*, 34-35; Nationaal Archief, 2.01.14.01, *Inventaris Comité te Lande*, 5-18.

¹⁴⁵ Jan Gerrit Pijman, *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van Nederland* (1826), 45.

during the Patriot period, which he all lost after the Orangist upheaval of 1787.¹⁴⁶ To discredit Lestevenon even further after his dismissal, the Orangists circulated a fake letter in which he denounced the Patriot cause.¹⁴⁷ After the outbreak of the Batavian Revolution in 1795, he returned to the board of Haarlem and became part of the Comité in 1795. All in all, Lestevenon had no experience in the field of national defence. However, he did have a lot of practice in politics. After his time at the Comité he joined the First National Assembly. However, he had to cut his time short here due to a sex scandal, which even resulted in him fleeing the country to France.¹⁴⁸ Jan Gerrit Pijman (175-1839) was an officer within the Staatse Leger who in 1787 rose to commander of Zwolle. However, due to his patriotic disposition, he had to flee abroad after the invasion of Prussia. In 1794 he returned as a technocrat, serving in several administrative positions during the Batavian period.¹⁴⁹ He joined the Comité in 1795 and was – as mentioned above – part of its internal board writing the Plan of Reorganisation. After his time as part of the Comité he became *Agent van Oorlog* (“Minister of War”), a member of the *Uitvoerend bewind* (“Executive Branch”) en the *Staatsbewind* (“State Reign”), and eventually also became *Secretaris van Staat voor Oorlog* (Secretary of War). Unlike Lestevenon, Pijman actually possessed some military experience, prior to his election to the Comité. Moreover, he proved to be a rather successful politician with a specialisation in warfare during the Batavian-French period.¹⁵⁰ Less is known about Johan Petrus van Hylcema (1749-1816). He became a member of the Committee on behalf of Friesland on March 4, 1795, and resigned on July 10, 1795, because he stood for election as a representative of the people of Friesland. Not much else is known about him both about his time before and after the Comité.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ https://www.parlement.com/id/vg09llviinui/w_a_lestevenon

¹⁴⁷ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 14.

¹⁴⁸ https://www.parlement.com/id/vg09llviinui/w_a_lestevenon

¹⁴⁹ https://www.parlement.com/id/vg09llzo0fwj/g_j_pijman

¹⁵⁰ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 267.

¹⁵¹ Nationaal Archief, 2.01.14.01, *Inventaris Comité te Lande*, 11.

Figure 5: A critical cartoon of the “Committé van Bondgenootschap”, in *Hollandia Regenerata*, 1795.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

3.8 The First Steps of Military Reorganisation

The creation and formulation of the Plan of Reorganisation thus lay in the hands of three men – of which only one has proven military experience. Despite these drawbacks, the three-headed board quickly got to work. However, before they could present their Plan of Reorganisation to the *Hoog Mogende Heren* (“High and Mighty Gentlemen”) a couple of steps were necessary. One of these tasks was taking a large-scale inventory of the remains of the *Staatse Leger*.

As mentioned earlier, the remaining Dutch army after the Batavian Revolution and the French invasion was in a deplorable state. After this chaotic time of revolution and war, an overview of the army had been lost. To recover this, the Committee made a major inventory of the remains of the *Staatse Leger*. This inventory covered three different domains. First, the Committee wanted an inventory of all army personnel. Second, it wanted an overview of all unfinished monetary matters. Third, the Committee hoped for a comprehensive picture of all assets held by the battalions. To get an inventory of all these areas, the Committee wrote dozens of resolutions. Most of these were issued in the period April-May of the First Year of the Batavian Revolution.¹⁵² Some of these were supplemented by large comprehensive lists for the new unit commanders to complete and return. Others were less complete and had to be followed up by even more resolutions to explain them further. A more in-depth discussion of this inventory about the deprivatisation of the army will be provided in the next chapter.

Another task essential before the Plan of Reorganisation could be presented was to convince the other Batavians of the need for change. This occurred on March 25, 1795, when the committee presented a damning report about the state of affairs of the remnants of the *Staatse Leger* to the *Hoog Mogende Heren*. They opened their plea with a lyrical overview of the “*Extrêmement faible*” state of the army, starting with the notion that when they looked at the state of their tortured Fatherland, they encountered nothing more but the sad and almost completely shattered remnants of a once renowned commonwealth. They continue with an appraisal of the dreadful condition of the state finances, declaring that they could only find empty coffers.¹⁵³ Besides the fact that one could easily inspect the bottom of the state treasury, the report highlights other problems afflicting the nation. Its navy, for example, was a national disgrace, according to the Committee. They declared that when they inspected the navy, they noticed many wrecked smocks. This made them realise how a stranger would no longer get the impression of that glorious section of Dutch history, which contaminated the innumerable heroic deeds of the Dutch Mariners, they argued.¹⁵⁴ The Batavians’ critique of the state of the

¹⁵² Krijvenaar, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795*, 14-15.

¹⁵³ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “State of the Army Committee Report”, 26-03-1795.

¹⁵⁴ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, “State of the Army Committee Report”, 26-03-1795.

Dutch navy was in line with the earlier statements about this subject by the Patriots.¹⁵⁵ Additionally to this criticism regarding the state of the Dutch navy, the Batavians also disapproved of the current state of the army. They described it to resemble an instrument wholly paralysed, which was only moved by the resilience of an imperious Captain General. The Committee claimed that the army of 1795 could be of no service to the free Fatherland without a complete reorganisation.¹⁵⁶

After sketching the state of both the navy and the army, the Committee turns their argument towards accusing the guilty parties of the disparaged state of the Dutch defence: *Stadbouder* Willem V and his ruling elite. To demonstrate their failings, the Committee used the metaphor of a ship, which represented the state. This particular ship dwelled amid a fierce surf, and swayed in the violent splashes of the effervescent billows, while the anchor of Freedom and Patriotism remains unused. The Committee was appalled to see this true yet terrifying scene. The Dutch blood, sweat and treasures had been recklessly wasted by a faithless *Stadbouder* and his base followers, the Committee accused. Furthermore, the Committee wrote how they were shocked to witness how the Orangists could thrust a dagger into the heart of the Fatherland, and dare to hide this lust for power with a mask of Religion and a veil of virtue and patriotism from the eyes of the public.¹⁵⁷

The Committee concluded their report with an appeal for a reorganisation of the state army. According to them, it was imperative to start with the army, instead of the navy, because it was useless to the Republic without a total reorganisation.¹⁵⁸ Apart from a reorganisation, the army would have a new objective. Its new role was also described in the report as “being a wall against foreign violence”, additionally it would function “for the maintenance of peace, order, and loyalty to the lawful government of the country”.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 135.

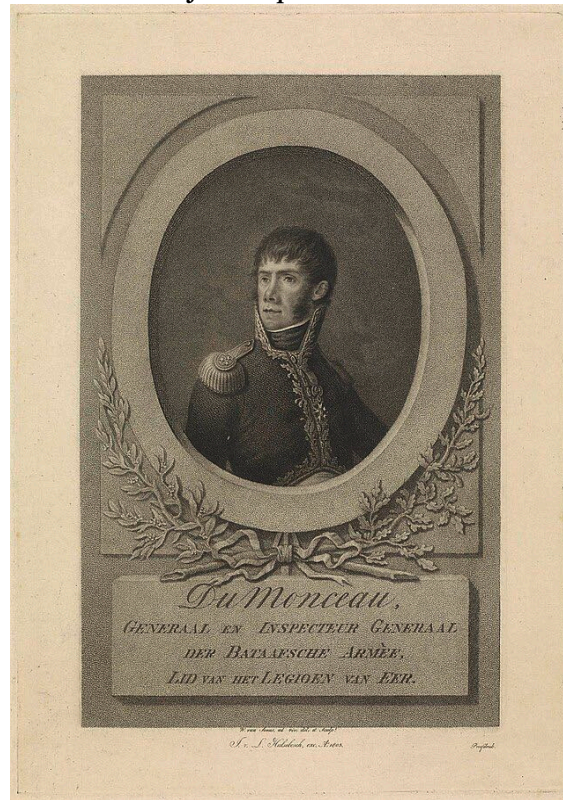
¹⁵⁶ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, “State of the Army Committee Report”, 26-03-1795.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-03-1795.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 26-03-1795.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-03-1795.

Figure 6: A Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Dumonceau made in 1805.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Figure 7: A Portrait of Herman Willem Daendels dated between 1808 to 1810.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

3.9 The Plan of Reorganisation

Three months later, on June 8 – half a year after the creation of the Batavian Republic – the three-headed board had completed the Plan of Reorganisation. Four days after the Plan of Reorganisation of the Army was issued by the Committee, it was discussed at the Meeting of Provisional Representatives of the People of Holland on Friday, June 12, 1795. The Plan contained an overview of the main points and several appendices where different parts of the plan were discussed in detail. The total plan contained 66 pages. The biggest changes were listed first.¹⁶⁰ The Plan stated that the new army would count just over 34,000 professional soldiers and have a completely new form of organisation.¹⁶¹ The infantry was to be modelled after the French example: into six half brigades, each with three battalions, and four battalions of fighters. Half a brigade counted 98 officers and 1,995 non-commissioned officers and regular infantry soldiers.¹⁶² The Committee estimated that the reorganisation of the army would amount to a total of 4,733,355 *gulden*, 19 *stuivers* and 9 *duiten*. But in the long run, this reorganisation would save 1.3 million *gulden*, the Committee claimed.¹⁶³ All in all, the Committee had big plans for the new army. After a month of consultation, the representatives agreed to the proposal, subject to a few minor adjustments, regarding the intended pay of the Grenadiers, and an assurance to keep all that concerned the territorial sovereignty of the various provinces completely in its entirety after the military reorganisation. These adjustments were discussed by the Committee in an extraordinary meeting at seven o'clock the following evening and incorporated into their plans.¹⁶⁴

To implement these new plans, a new bureau was set up within the Committee in Lande on 17 July called the *Bureau der Generaals* (“The Bureau of the Generals”). This bureau had the task of actually implementing the decisions of the Committee about the reorganisation of the army. The two generals – officially both lieutenant generals – of the Batavian army at the time were Daendels and Dumonceau.¹⁶⁵ Herman Willem Daendels (1762-1818), was a Dutch patriot who had already been crucial in 1787 for the Hattem rebellion against the Orangist army.¹⁶⁶ After the Prussian army had saved the Orangists, Daendels was punished for his crimes of insurrection with “a sword above his head”. In this symbolic punishment, a sword is held above

¹⁶⁰ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, gehouden op Vrydag den 12 Juny 1795, “Plan Committee for Army Reorganisation”, 828.

¹⁶¹ J.P.C.M. Hoof, ‘Militairen in de Bataafs-Franse tijd’, 194.

¹⁶² F. G. de Wilde a.o., *De uniformen van het Nederlandse leger*, 28.

¹⁶³ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, “Plan Committee for Army Reorganisation”, 830.

¹⁶⁴ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 3, “Committee meeting minutes on the response to the Plan of Reorganisation”, 09-07-1795.

¹⁶⁵ Willem Maurits de Brauw, *De departementen van algemeen bestuur in Nederland*, Nationaal Archief, 2.01.14.01, *Inventaris Comité te Lande*, 5-18.

¹⁶⁶ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 143.

the neck of the perpetrator, which condemned them to eternal banishment.¹⁶⁷ Afterwards, Daendels fled the country. Like many Patriots, as aforementioned, he settled in the North of France. There he shared a castle with the aforementioned family Fijnje. Later on, he would be of great importance to the revolutionary cause in France. For example, he had founded the Batavian Legion within the French ranks and eventually would become *luitenant-generaal* (“lieutenant-general”) of the Batavian army.¹⁶⁸ Jean Baptiste Dumonceau (1760-1821) was originally a master stonemason from Brussels. However, his heart was more in martial arts than bricklaying. During the Brabant Revolution (1789-1790) he became a republican and eventually had to flee to France. Here he quickly made a career in the army. This led to his being given authority over The Hague after the French invasion. After this, he held several high positions within the various successive regimes in the Netherlands. He was eventually even included in the Dutch nobility after the return of the royal family.¹⁶⁹

The Bureau of Generals and the Committee worked hard on the reorganisation in the months that followed. Among these changes, three themes have appeared to me while reading through their records. I will argue that under the guidance of Daendels and Dumonceau, the Dutch army was (1) deprivatised, (2) centralised and (3) nationalised. In the next chapters, these themes will be explored in detail, starting with the deprivatisation of the Dutch army.

¹⁶⁷ R. van Gelder, *Patriotten in ballingschap*, 13.

¹⁶⁸ Marc van Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 143.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

4. Theme 1: Deprivatisation

In this chapter, I will refer to a collection of actions performed by the Batavian rulers under the denominator: deprivatisation. These actions will all have in common that the new Batavian rulers wanted (and succeeded) in transferring ownership of tasks and goods from the private sector to the public sector. The choice to deprivatise can be for various reasons: be it political, strategic or economic. I have deliberately chosen to stay away from the term “nationalisation”, as in nationalising a business or industry, as used by communists across the globe, unlike other historians, because it would be anachronistic to apply this terminology when discussing 1795.

The deprivatisation I refer to in this chapter is in regards to the military entrepreneurs who were a big part of the organisation of the military system of the *ancien régime*. The two military entrepreneurs who were part of the management system of the troops I will discuss here were the *kapitein eigenaars* and the *solliciteurs-militair*. The former were military contractors, whereas the latter could be categorised as military brokers. Who these military entrepreneurs were, and how they operated within this old system is discussed first. After the how and the why behind the deprivatisation of their practices are outlined.

4.1 Military Entrepreneurs in the *Staatse Leger*

Before the Batavian Revolution, Dutch captains – like in many other European countries at the time – owned their companies, making them *kapitein eigenaars* (“captain owners”). These companies were seen as an investment as they could be sold for hefty sums.¹⁷⁰ As part of this ownership, the captains were responsible for the clothing, feeding, paying, and equipping of their soldiers.¹⁷¹ This obligation required a lot of money. Part of this money came from one of the seven provinces which was appointed paymaster of the company if the company was aligned with a province. The total amount the company was owed by the province was determined by the *Raad van State*. Other companies – which were not aligned with a province – were paid by the federation. The rest of the money was invested either by the captain himself, or by another military entrepreneur. Often, captains would loan the funds needed for these responsibilities from private bankers known as *solliciteurs-militair* (“military solicitors”).¹⁷² After the money had been received by the captain, he would divide it amongst his men for all of their needs.

Like the *kapitein eigenaars*, *solliciteurs-militair* were military entrepreneurs, who made money from the barebone management of the Dutch military. In addition to loaning money to captains,

¹⁷⁰ Zwitzer, *Comptabiliteit in uniform*, 15; Krijvenaars, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795*, 9.

¹⁷¹ Zwitzer, *Comptabiliteit in uniform*, 15.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 15.

the *solliciteurs-militair* also aided the government with the payment of their troops. In essence, the *solliciteurs-militair* were a financial intermediary between the government and the soldiers. It was their job to collect the money from the provincial *comptoir* (“counter”) and transport it to the captain-owners so that they could distribute the money, and take their own earnings. However, if there was no money in the *comptoir* to distribute, the *solliciteur-militair* guaranteed the payment of the troops. This meant that he (or she!) essentially provided this money by means of a personal loan to the state.¹⁷³ For their service, *solliciteurs-militair* received both financial compensation, in the form of a salary and interest on the amount of money they had loaned the state by paying out of their own funds, and informal compensation, consisting of but not limited to access to the high political arenas in which they operated as early modern lobbyists for their own interests.¹⁷⁴

The origin of the *solliciteur-militair* in the Netherlands is unknown. The first mention of the position was discovered by Zwitter during his research on the *Staatse Leger* in which he encountered it in sources dating back to 1610-11.¹⁷⁵ As expected, one could not easily become a *solliciteur-militair*. To become eligible one had to play a prominent role in the fields of political administration, finance and the country’s military.¹⁷⁶ Over the years, the pool of *solliciteurs-militaires* had become increasingly smaller. In 1794 – the last year of the Republic of United Provinces – only 31 *solliciteurs-militair* were still active for the entire armed forces.¹⁷⁷

None of them would still hold their position after the Batavian Revolution. This was because the new regime concluded that the old system – including both the captain owners and the *solliciteurs-militair* – should be abolished as this system was not beneficial for the state at all. The Batavians were not the first to have the wish to end the old system. Between 1673 and 1721, several attempts were made by the province of Holland to end the power of the *solliciteurs-militair*. Although they were not successful, the province of Holland did gain more and more control over its *solliciteurs-militair* over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example, they installed a maximum on the number of active *solliciteurs-militair* for the province of Holland. Moreover, the *solliciteurs-militair* had to be approved by the Committed Councils before they could start work, and they had to suffer from a maximum percentage of interest, which continued to decrease over time.¹⁷⁸ But limitations and obstacles were the only tools the province could use

¹⁷³ Pepijn Brandon, *War, capital, and the Dutch state*, 66, 246.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. 67.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 67.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 252.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 262.

¹⁷⁸ Zwitter, *Comptabiliteit in uniform*, 16-17.

against the *solliciteurs-militair*. The Batavians did not have the same problems and ended their careers in one stroke, along with the captain-ownership.

4.2 The Argument for Deprivatisation

As far as I can tell, most complaints regarding the privatised management system of the Dutch forces by the Batavians are aimed at the captain-owners. According to Krijvenaar, the deprivatisation of this group lay at the centre of all thoughts and ideas which had initiated the Batavian military reorganisation, in the first place.¹⁷⁹ The dislike of their operations thus ran deep through the Batavian ranks. This also becomes clear when one reads the Plan of Reorganisation, which had been published on June 8, 1795. In this influential document, the Committee describes why the captain owners system could have been detrimental to the Dutch military defence. All of their arguments boil down to the fact that captain owners could have very different interests at heart than the state that employed them. This was all because the company he oversaw was an investment to him. And investments are only worth money if you protect them from danger. For example, captain owners would often show up late to battle on purpose, or retreat their troops in the heat of fire, to spare them costly injuries or the loss of valuable equipment. Moreover, the captain owners would often be too soft on their soldiers as desertion would cost them a lot of money.¹⁸⁰ In addition to these risk-averse tactics, captain-owners would also not refrain from lying to their superiors for financial gain. Often, captain-owners would lie about the number of men in their company so that the cash flow from the state would increase, while their expenses would remain the same.¹⁸¹

These were all reasons that the Batavians wanted to deprivatise their army. This decision more or less resulted in a domino effect for the *solliciteurs-militair*. Because with the companies now in possession of the state – *solliciteurs-militair* were no longer needed to be middle-men between the parties. This particular decision meant that the state would have to step in with its own new bureaucracy. We will return to this topic in chapter 5.

All in all, in the future – the Committee decided – their soldiers would be paid and cared for by a central body within the army, and not by private military entrepreneurs.¹⁸² In essence, the Dutch army would be deprivatised.

¹⁷⁹ Krijvenaar, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795*, 12.

¹⁸⁰ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, “State of the army committee report”, 26-03-1795.

¹⁸¹ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, “Plan committee for army reorganisation”, 828-829.

¹⁸² Krijvenaar, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795*, 28.

4.3 An Inventory of Military Entrepreneurs

However, the end of the *solliciteurs-militair* and captain owners also meant the end of income out of military entrepreneurship for a lot of families. One of the affected parties was a widow of a former *solliciteur-militair*, who was afraid she would lose the investment her husband had made. On July 13, 1795, she wrote the Committee a request from Middelburg explaining her situation. It used to be customary in the province of Zeeland, she began her story, for the new captain owner to pay the old captain owner 1000 guilders for the weaponry of his company. Because not every captain owner has this kind of money, this amount was usually advanced by *solliciteurs-militair*, such as her husband, she continued. She was afraid that because of the reorganisation there would be no new captain owner that would repay her husband's investment of 1000 guilders in the current captain owner. This would mean a big loss for her financially speaking. She thus appealed to the Committee that they repay these creditors after the reorganisation.¹⁸³ The Committee responded favourably to her petition in due course. In their detailed reply, they ended on the promise that they would write to all of the *solliciteurs-militair* and the former captain owners, that none of the latter would be repaid, before the *solliciteurs-militair* had been, so long they would have the money to do so.¹⁸⁴

Even though the *solliciteurs-militair* would get priority in getting their invested money back, the captain owners were not left to their own devices at all. This is an interesting decision, considering that these captain owners had served the *Stadhouder* before the Batavian Revolution, and many of them would not return to the Batavian Army. Still, the Committee insisted on paying the former captain owners back. They explained their reasoning behind this decision in an appeal to parliament. The first reason is that if these officers had died in battle or of natural causes, the state would have also paid their debts after their service. The second reason was that the Committee recognised that most of the former captain owners would not return to the army, and additionally knew that their pensions would not cover the costs of their debts. This would put the former captain owners in a difficult situation with paying off their debts, which would also inconvenience others. The third reason for paying back the former captain owners was because the state would benefit from the forced take-over of their companies, as they would return to the "bosom of the state". The Committee argued that the state thus should compensate the former captain owners, who had had no say in the matter. And the final reason

¹⁸³ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 3, "Petition to Committee from a widow of a military applicant their including decision", 13-07-1795.

¹⁸⁴ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, "Petition to Committee from a widow of a military applicant their including decision", 13-07-1795.

was on a humanitarian basis, as the Committee was of the opinion that the former captain owners should not be ruined financially after their dismissal from the army.¹⁸⁵

However, to be able to hold there their promise to pay back all grieved parties, the Committee first had to make an inventory of all unfinished monetary matters. There were unpaid invoices, unsettled debts, and delayed payments all over the system. Some captain owners still owed money to their *solliciteurs-miliair*, and some *solliciteurs-militair* still owed money to the government, the government on all different levels owed money to *solliciteurs-militair*, some *solliciteurs-militair* still owed money to captain owners, and lastly, all of the aforementioned parties could still owe money to individual soldiers that served them in the *Staatse Leger*. If one wanted to settle all the scores, like the Committee intended to do, one first had to construct an overview of all of these debts.¹⁸⁶

To accomplish this, the Committee swiftly got to work. The very first resolution to get an overview of all unfinished monetary matters of the *Staatse Leger* was published on March 14, 1795. In this particular resolution, the newly appointed captains of the companies were instructed to report to the new regime the state of their company treasury within four days. They were expected to do this by using the lists used in the *Staatse Leger*, with the addition of two new columns. In the first column, they were expected to note the amount of money owed to prisoners of war, and in the second the amount of money owed to soldiers still missing in action. They were also asked to share these numbers with their *solliciteurs-militair*, to keep everyone informed of the state of each company's treasury.¹⁸⁷ After the publication of this first resolution, dozens would follow each aimed at clarifying one more aspect of the unfinished monetary matters. Most of these resolutions were accompanied by blank lists, which the newly appointed captains were expected to fill out. Some of these blank lists have been added to the resolutions in the archive. Unfortunately, I have not encountered any completed lists from any of the companies, on any of the topics during this reorganisation. Perhaps future research could uncover and study these.

4.4 The Monetary Liquidation of Military Entrepreneurs

After this taking of inventory, the next task of the Committee was to liquidate the military entrepreneurs. What emerges from the sources collected from the archive *Ingekomen resoluties van*

¹⁸⁵ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 37, "Letter substantiating the takeover of the debts of captain owners by the state", 11-04-1795.

¹⁸⁶ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, "Plan Committee for army reorganisation", 835.

¹⁸⁷ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 132, "Resolution regarding inventory compagnie treasury", 14-03-1795.

bet Comité te Lande betreffende de liquidatie van de oude armee (“Received Resolutions of the Committee te Lande regarding the liquidation of the debts of the *Staatse Leger*”) – which is part of the general archives of the Committee te Lande – is that the compensations granted by the Committee with regards to the liquidation of the old army were processed without any predetermined plan. This is quite contrary to the inventory phase of the military reorganisation. One could argue that this was the case because creating an inventory of the remnants of the old army was for the benefit of the new regime, whereas the proper liquidation of the former army was less beneficial, as it would cost them a lot of money. Despite this lack of initiative, the new Batavian rulers did decide on paying and repaying these former employees and entrepreneurs.

The system I observed for this process was as follows. First, the creditor wrote the new regime about their request. Next, their case was reviewed and discussed amongst the Committee. Lastly, they made a recommendation for the Committee of Finances to hand over either the requested amount of money or the sum granted by the Committee. This entire process appeared to me after reviewing the case of M.C.W. van Halm. As opposed to many other cases processed by the Committee, most of the steps have stood the test of time as they have been included in their archive.

M.C.W. van Halm was an old clerk in the employment of the *Staatse Leger*, who had yet to receive money from the state after the Batavian Revolution. This fact led Van Halm to formulate a formal request, which he sent to the Department of Finance. After the department reviewed his case, Lieutenant Colonel H. Hogerwaard sent the Committee the department’s report on the matter. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find more information about Lieutenant Colonel H. Hogerwaard who appears to be one of the newly appointed officers, solely concerned with military administration. His story should be studied in future research, as his name frequently appears in the minutes of the Committee. In any case, the message of Lieutenant Colonel H. Hogerwaard spoke of the situation M.C.W. van Halm had found himself in. Before the Batavian Revolution, he had been in the employment of the company of Captain Peter van Hart, which was part of the Regiment Von Wartensleben. When their account was frozen on June 17, 1795, the company had spent an amount of 1360 *gulden* and 16 *stuivers* more than it had received. Van Halm wanted to use his liberty in his narrow circumstances to request some money from the new rulers to settle this matter.¹⁸⁸ In his letter addressed to the Committee, dated May 13, 1795, Van Halm described how this matter had personally affected him. He wrote how he had been unable to support his wife and his three children because he had not received his pensions, and that he hopes himself not to have been rendered unworthy by his conduct to receive one at all.

¹⁸⁸ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 171, “First Letter to Committee from H.W.C. from Halm”, 13-05-1796

He thus hopes that this sum would be restituted to him. He concluded the letter by wishing the recipients the best and with a reference to Salvation and Brotherhood.¹⁸⁹ These closing phrases are rather surprising as this letter has been sent from Munster. This means that Van Halm had left the Netherlands after the Batavian Revolution and took up residence in the German States. This could mean that Van Halm was an Orangist.

A couple of days later, Van Halm wrote another letter, requesting the same. In this second letter, he elaborated on how the lack of money affected his living situation. He described that he was troubled with a considerable household consisting of a wife and four children. This is in contradiction with his old letter, which stated three children. If Van Halm had been blessed by the arrival of another child in these couple of days, or if he had been mistaken in the previous letter, or if he was lying in this second letter to gain empathy, remains uncertain. In addition to the costs of sustaining his family, he also owed people money. In his letter, he mentioned how they had been pestering him daily about repaying them, and that he no longer saw a way to hold them off. Considering all of these troubles, Van Halm ended his letter requesting an advance on the 1360 *gulden* and 16 *stuivers*, of 600 *gulden*. The rest of the loan could be repaid another time, he offered. However, if he were able to receive a portion of it now he would be rescued from his precarious circumstances.¹⁹⁰ In the end, the Committee partially complied with his request, despite the fact that he probably was an Orangist. They determined he would receive 300 *gulden*, so half of what he had requested. The Committee sent an extract of this decision to Lieutenant Colonel H. Hogerwaard regarding how to mark this cost in the administration of the aforementioned balance of the company.¹⁹¹

In the archive *Ingekomen resoluties van het Comité te Lande betreffende de liquidatie van de oude armee* (“Received Resolutions of the Committee te Lande regarding the liquidation of the debts of the *Staatse Leger*”) dozens of requests are filed away. This also includes the requests of the *solliciteurs-militair*. Most of their cases were dealt with at the same time and followed a different pattern than the other requests. This becomes apparent from the received report from Lieutenant Colonel H. Hogerwaard, which deals with the accounts of ten *solliciteurs-militair*. In the reply of Committee they stated that in the case of the *solliciteurs-militair*, C.F. Meyer, Macalester Loup, J.G. Heneman, P. Guicherit, J. Vintcent, Myné en Jochems, C. Roodbeen, J.C.W. Daehne, C.C. Zanders and Jochems, a procedure for reimbursement would be honoured. This procedure was outlined in the same letter as follows. First, they were to complete a set of forms and send them over to the

¹⁸⁹ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, “First letter to the Committee from H.W.C. from Halm”, 13-05-1796.

¹⁹⁰ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 171, “Second letter to the Committee from H.C.W. Halm”, 17-05-1796.

¹⁹¹ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, “First letter to the Committee from H.W.C. van Halm”, 13-05-1796

Committee. Second, the Committee would approve these forms, and send proof of both steps to the Bureau of Liquidation.¹⁹² Afterwards the Bureau of Liquidation would pay the *solliciteurs-militair*, and report this fact to the Committee. Why their case followed a different pattern than the other requests, remains unclear. However, not all *solliciteurs-militair* were enclosed in this decision. For example, *solliciteurs-militair* Wijn¹⁹³ en Heijnen¹⁹⁴ each requested repayment on their own terms, which were both granted by the Committee. Why they were not included in the group liquidation of the ten *solliciteurs-militair* remains unclear.

Moreover, in the dozens of requests I have looked at, I have not come across a single example of a rejected request. Whether this means that requests were never declined, or that these requests were not filed in their archives at all, I am not sure. Hopefully, future research can also explain this. All in all, while the liquidation process of the military entrepreneurs and other former employees of the State Army appears to have occurred very chaotic, the Committee made their final decision on a request on December 14, 1797. I assume that this means that the entire liquidation process of the old army had taken the Committee just under two years, which, given the size of the assignment and the lack of a proper bureaucracy at the start of the process, is an impressive feat.

4.5 Conclusions on the Deprivatisation of the Batavian Army

Tensions about military entrepreneurs had been rising for quite some time in the United Provinces. Several attempts were made to gain more and more control over the wealthy *solliciteurs-militair*, who profited from the lack of state bureaucracy. Despite this growing discomfort, the number of *solliciteurs-militair* slunk, as those who were left over exponentially gained influence and wealth as they covered the entire army with fewer *solliciteurs-militair*. These concerns were carried over into both the Patriot Revolt and the Batavian Revolution. The Committee clearly stated the intent to end all military entrepreneurship within the Batavian Republic in their plea to their fellow revolutionaries. Afterwards, the Committee included this wish in their Plan of Reorganisation. In this plan, not only the *solliciteurs-militair*, but also the captain-owners would bite the dust.

¹⁹² Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 132, “Resolution Committee on liquidation of *solliciteurs-militair*”, 30-05-1796.

¹⁹³ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 132, “Decision of Committee regarding the liquidation of *solliciteur-militair* Wijn”, 21-06-1796.

¹⁹⁴ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 132, “Decision of the Committee regarding the liquidation of *solliciteer-militair* Heijnen”, 18-07-1796.

In order to deprivatise the management and care system of their military, the Batavians first had to make an inventory of the unfinished business with these military entrepreneurs. Afterwards, the Batavians repaid them their dues, before dismissing them. This is quite a decision, which they argued for based on morals. This indicates that the new Batavian rulers practiced what they preached. Moreover, it seems like they made no distinction between loyalists of the House of Orange, fellow revolutionaries, or all of those who fell in the middle of these camps. This decision is in line with the Batavians' other lack of violence directed at loyalists, despite the fact that their vengeance after the Patriot Revolt had been anything but forgiving. Despite this fairness in the repayment of these military entrepreneurs, the Batavian rulers did not make it easy for them to reclaim their money. For instance, the creditor was tasked with stepping forward themselves. All in all, the deprivatisation of the Batavian army was completed on December 14, 1797.

5. Theme 2: Centralisation

The deprivatisation of the military entrepreneurs left a big hole in both the management and care systems of the Dutch military. This was solved by the next theme I encountered: the centralisation of the Dutch army. With this term I refer to the process of transferring tasks to the center of the organisation; in this instance the state. So all decisions made in the effort to take away power from either the provinces or the individual military units, in favour of the state, are included in this theme. This is in addition to the tasks that were previously outsourced to military entrepreneurs. How this came to be and why these decisions were made will be explored in the next chapter.

5.1 Military Organisation in the Ancien Régime

Unlike other armies at the time, the Dutch army of the *Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederland* (“The Republic of the Seven United Netherlands”), also referred to as the *Staatse Leger* (“State Army”), was inherently decentralised in nature. The *Staatse Leger* was founded in 1588 after the Dutch successful revolt against the Spanish King Philip II.¹⁹⁵ In its organisation it resembled the rest of the newly created structure of the Dutch Republic: decentralised. This decentralised formula was the result of the *Unie van Utrecht* (“Union of Utrecht”) in 1579, where the seven provinces agreed to an alliance. From then on they would work together as equals in a partnership overseen by a small federal body. Because there was no detectible centre of power in the Dutch Republic, there was also no central army. This fragmented approach to military business resulted in a lack of a military-bureaucratic system in the Netherlands until the Batavian Revolution.¹⁹⁶ To make up for this decentralised system, the *Staatse Leger* relied on a lot of military entrepreneurs, as outlined in the previous section. However, after abolishing them, this decentralised structure could no longer continue. Going forward, the army would have a centre: in Den Haag. Moreover, all of the previously outsourced responsibilities, which were deprivatised would now be fulfilled by a central bureaucratic system.

Additionally, the decision was made to centralise the organisation of military health care, as it was not up to the Batavian standards. The history of military healthcare in the Netherlands is riddled with stages of progress, followed by periods in which the entire system was once again dismantled. In short, it was only in 1673 that the States-General proclaimed something that

¹⁹⁵ Zwitzer, *Comptabiliteit in uniform*, 13.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1795-1995, 13.

could be construed as the beginning of a centralised military healthcare system.¹⁹⁷ Over the years, a system slowly grew, including guidelines and standardised salaries. However, like many other countries, the United Provinces made the poor decision to fire all of their health care personnel after the conclusion of a war. This meant that next time around they had to retrain all of their healthcare personnel yet again. This was a strange decision considering the Dutch had been early in the game in maintaining a standing army.¹⁹⁸ The Netherlands would only progress to a year-round standing military healthcare service in 1795, during the Batavian Revolution. According to J.A. Verdoorn, who studied the evolution of military healthcare in Europe, this decision was influenced by the French Revolution.¹⁹⁹

5.2 The Argument for Centralisation

The centralisation of the Batavian army took place on multiple levels of the military organisation. The first sphere that was centralised was the payment system. Where in the old system the different troops were paid by one of the provinces, this would no longer be the case in the new organisation.²⁰⁰ This decision was made on the basis that the Committee found this old system to be problematic. In the Plan of Reorganisation they stated why. Their first argument was that in the old system, the provinces would regularly fight over the command of the companies. The Committee continued that all this fighting resulted in the ruin of plenty of brave officers. Secondly, not all of the provinces paid their troops on time, or in some cases, at all. This resulted in feelings of jealousy among the companies. Because of these reasons, the Committee deemed it “highly necessary” for the “good discipline” and the “preservation of our precious Freedom” that from then on all the troops would be paid from the same treasury.²⁰¹

Additionally to the payment of the troops, the equipment would also be centralised in the new structure. Where before the money needed for equipment would be deducted from the payment of the soldiers, now, there would be a separate account within each unit to take care of these additional costs.²⁰² In the Report of the Committee, which they published before their Plan of Reorganisation, the Committee explained why it was important to do so. First of all, if the state would oversee the clothing of their troops, they would be better prepared for the

¹⁹⁷ J.A. Verdoorn, *Arts en Oorlog: Medische en sociale. Zorg voor militaire oorlogsslachtoffers in de geschiedenis van Europa* (1995), 104-105.

¹⁹⁸ J.A. Verdoorn, *Arts en Oorlog*, 106-107.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 107-108.

²⁰⁰ Alphen a.o., *Krijgsmacht en handelsgeest*, 267.

²⁰¹ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, “Plan Committee for army reorganisation”, 829.

²⁰² J.P.C.M. Hoof, ‘Militairen in de Bataafs-Franse tijd’, 195.

“inconveniences of the weather and the season”, which would better prevent them from catching a cold. Moreover, if the state invested in the clothing of its soldiers from the start, this would save money in the long run. This is because in the old system, the captain-owners provided the clothes for their soldiers, and if they fell sick because they were insufficient to face the weather conditions, the costs of their sickness would fall on the state anyway. So, the budget cutting of the captain owners – which benefitted them financially – always bounced back to the state treasury.²⁰³ The new system would prevent this from happening at all. Moreover, in addition to enabling the payment and clothing of their soldiers, the new centralised body would also recruit, arm and equip them in the future.²⁰⁴

In addition to the centralisation of the tasks previously outsourced to two groups of military entrepreneurs, the previously unorganised healthcare system would now also be centralised. In their Plan of Reorganisation, the Committee argued for the centralisation of this field as it would both be “useful” and “humane” if the state would take over the care of the entire army. They argued that the healthcare of the state’s soldiers had been neglected for too long. The soldiers had been left to the devices of “ignorant” and “selfish” doctors, who made their living out of selling “cheap” and “poor” medicine. Not only did their practice deteriorate the state’s army, but it also jeopardised the lives of its soldiers.²⁰⁵ They described their vision for the new healthcare system in their report. In the new system the hospitals would ideally not cost the state more money than the previous system, they opened their argument. Moreover, this new system would be designed for the life and preservation of the valiant defenders of their Fatherland. During this process the Rules of Mankind – probably referring to the Rights of Man – would be followed and acknowledged.²⁰⁶

5.3 New Personnel

The Committee’s plan to centralise the care, management and payment of their soldiers, as opposed to the private and decentralised system before the Revolution meant that the state would need an extensive military administration body. In fact, they would create the very first in the Netherlands.²⁰⁷ All of these central bodies required a lot of new personnel. This was a real snag for the Batavian regime, as they had dismissed a lot of Orangist personnel from their duty

²⁰³ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, “State of the army Committee report”, 26-03-1795.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-03-1795.

²⁰⁵ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, “Plan Committee for army reorganisation”, 830.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 830.

²⁰⁷ H. Ringoir, *De Nederlandse Infanterie*, (1968), 41.

in addition to the military entrepreneurs, as they could not be trusted by the new rulers. This meant that the new rulers were in dire need of new trustworthy personnel. Especially Batavian-minded civil servants were in high demand, because of the gigantic task of the centralisation of the army. These new civil servants – as well as the remaining ones – were required to swear an oath to the Batavian regime starting in 1796. In this oath, they swore loyalty to the Dutch Nation, and the National Convention, which was its representative. Moreover, they swore to obey the laws of the country, and the orders of the Committee, their superiors and martial discipline. Lastly – which is most interesting – they had to promise to prevent riots, always act in favour of peace and all that is good, and finally be in accordance with the police.²⁰⁸

In addition to new civil servants, the Committee was also experiencing a shortage of loyal officers as the Organists had mostly deserted either by quitting the military and remaining in the Netherlands or by leaving the country with the *Stadhouder* and his family. Moreover, finding new officers was complicated by the fact that they could no longer be captain owners. This meant that a big motivator behind taking this job had vanished. The Committee recognised they needed to entice officers to join the new army structure, now that the promise of ownership of their own companies was out of the question. They did this by enlarging the pay of officers significantly.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, to make sure that these new officers would not threaten the new army with a counter-revolution, they were also expected to take an oath. This oath was significantly more political in nature than its counterpart for civil servants. In this oath, the officer was expected to acknowledge the supremacy of the Dutch people. Moreover, they had to swear loyalty to these people, and their representatives in the National Convention, and all other forms of government. Finally, they had to promise to never either directly or indirectly aid the reintroduction of both the *Stadhouder* and all other hereditary offices.²¹⁰

Lastly, regarding the hiring of new medical and surgical professionals, the Committee published a resolution on April 13, 1795, stating that all of the former surgeons of the *Staatse Leger* were invited to return to resume their work for the Batavian Army. If they wished to take their leave, they were asked to make that known to the Committee so they could be honourably discharged. Additionally, the resolution encouraged young people who aspired to join the army

²⁰⁸ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “Oath of allegiance for officials and servants”, 27-05-1796.

²⁰⁹ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, “Plan Committee for army reorganisation”, 831.

²¹⁰ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “Oath of allegiance for officers”, 08-07-1796.

as *Aide-Chirurgyns* to report to the Bureau of Healthcare in Den Haag before the first of May to register for the upcoming exam.²¹¹

5.4 Military Administration Regarding Pay and Management

At the same time as the Committee was arguing in favour of centralisation, and recruiting new personnel to man these new centralised institutions, they worked hard to set up these centralised institutions. Page after page they wrote detailing the new maintenance and management systems which were to take care of the Batavian army in the future. All the new positions and offices, including their job description and salary, were described in detail by the Committee in their publications.²¹²

The head of the new entire organisation of administration was the *Agent van Oorlog* (“Agent of War”), who resided in The Hague. Together with the new *solliciteurs-militair*, he formed the central body of the whole organisation. The first difference between the old and the new *solliciteurs-militair* was that they were no longer private parties with their own interests, but civil servants.²¹³ They also had slightly different tasks than their predecessors, although there are some similarities. For starters, the new *solliciteurs-militair* would maintain communication between the executive body of the government and the various companies. They also transported the many lists and all of the money between all the parties. However, this time around they were not allowed to charge extra for this second task. This meant that they made no profit from moving the funds back and forth between the state and the companies. However, like in the old system, the *solliciteur-militair* could still be asked to advance money. For their service, the new *solliciteurs-militair* received 3400 guilders per year for all of these tasks.²¹⁴

In addition to the central administration in Den Haag consisting of the *Agent van Oorlog* and de *solliciteurs-militair*, every *Halve Brigade* had its own internal administration unit. The first important part of this internal administration unit was the *Commissaris van Oorlog* (“Commissary of War”). It was his task to visit all of the different companies of his Brigade at least four times a year for inspection. This inspection encompassed the auditing of the various checking accounts, verifying if the orders of the state were being executed, establishing if all of its soldiers got what

²¹¹ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 132, “Extract from the Committee's Resolution on hiring new surgeons”, 13-04-1795.

²¹² Krijvenaer, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795*, 28-29.

²¹³ Vergadering der provisioneele Repraesentanten van het Volk van Holland, “Plan Committee for army reorganisation”, 829-830.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 829-830.

they were promised, and lastly finding out if the interests of the country at large were taken to heart. After checking up on all of these matters, the commissars were expected to write a report, which included an oath of the writer himself, and to send it over to the executive powers.²¹⁵ Every commissioner of war received a yearly sum of 2500 guilders for his services, as described in the addendum of the Plan of Reorganisation.²¹⁶

Moreover, besides the Commissar of War, each Half Brigade had a Lieutenant Quartermaster at its disposal. These lieutenant quartermasters were part of the first group of officers in the Netherlands who “served exclusively functions within the army in the field of financial and material management, now officially called military administration and intendance”.²¹⁷ Thus, they had no military rank related to actual combat, but only its administration. It was the task of the lieutenant quartermaster to ensure that the necessary funds were received from the *Bureau van Betaaling* (“Bureau of Payments”) and to actually make the payments to the troops.²¹⁸

Lastly, each Half Brigade was decked out with a *Conseil van Administratie* (“Administrative Board”). These Boards were tasked with the actual administration of the paying, clothing, equipping and recruiting of the Half Brigades. The Boards would consist of seventeen voting members, in addition to the aforementioned lieutenant quartermaster, who would function as a secretary on this board. The Committee had already outlined who would take part in these boards: 1 colonel, 3 lieutenant generals, 1 Adjutant Major, the eldest Captain, the 2 eldest Lieutenants, the two eldest *Sous-Lieutenants* (“Second Lieutenants”), the eldest Sergeant-Major, the eldest Sergeant, the eldest Corporal *Fourier*, the eldest Corporal, and from every Battalion one common soldier (3 in total). An additional condition for these members to take part of this board was that they were all required to be able to write and read.²¹⁹

5.5 Military Administration System Regarding Military Healthcare

As mentioned previously, the Committee was complemented by five additional bureaus. One of these was the *Bureau van Gezondheid* (“Bureau of Healthcare”), also located in Den Haag. Of the

²¹⁵ Ibid., 829.

²¹⁶ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “Appendices, Litt. A. Instructions to the Commissioners of War”, 08-06-1795.

²¹⁷ Krijvenaer, *De reorganisatie van het Staatse leger tot het Bataafse leger in 1795*, 28-29.

²¹⁸ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 132, “Instruction for the Quartermaster”, date unknown.

²¹⁹ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “Detailed Plan of Organisation of the Armée of the Republic of the United Netherlands”, 26-03-1795.

members of this bureau at least three of them had to be medically or surgically trained. Moreover, the bureau had to make room for one or two of the most accomplished *Chirurgyn Majors* (“Surgeon Majors”) and a Secretary. Their pay would range between 1200 *gulden* and 2000 *gulden* yearly depending on experience and function.²²⁰ One of the tasks of this particular bureau was the production of the concept instructions for the *Chirurgyn Majors* and their *Aide-Chirurgyn* (“Aide Surgeons”) and *Elèves* (“Students”). After they had drafted these instructions, the Committee examined their concept version and decided to approve it, emphasising the usefulness of these instructions for such a humane profession. This usefulness was exacerbated by the fact that this healthcare was provided to soldiers, who deserved better care, because they could lose their lives fighting for the good of the Fatherland, and the protection of its Freedom, argued the Committee. In addition to approving the concept, the Committee decided that these instructions should be distributed across the entire army, so all would be aware of their directive.²²¹

The first article of these instructions read that each Battalion in the Batavian army would have one *Chirurgyn-Major*, one *Aide-Chirurgyn* and two *Elèves* at their disposal. Before they could get to work all of the *Chirurgyn-Majors* had to be approved by the Bureau. Part of this approval depended on references from previous medical experience. If approved for the job, the *Chirurgyn-Majors* would earn 1200 *gulden* per year. For this money, they were expected to always be present with their Bataillons and to care for its soldiers, and their wives and children. They were expected to record all of their patients on a *Lyst van Visitatie* (“List of Visitation”), which would be sent over to the Bureau of Healthcare at the end of every month. This is also how they could request specific medicine and additional instruments to their kit. Additionally, the *Chirurgyn-Majors* were expected to educate their *Aide-Chirurgyns* and *Elèves* and report on their progress and behaviour to the Bureau. Furthermore, the *Chirurgyn-Majors* were tasked with keeping the commanding officer of the Battalion up to date on the number of their patients. The *Aide-Chirurg* would do the same but with the Captains of all of the companies of the Battalion. *Chirurgyn-Majors* needed to wear a uniform, its details were also specified in the instructions.²²²

²²⁰ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “Appendices, Litt. C. Instruction for the Bureau of Health, belonging to the Armée of the State”, 08-06-1795.

²²¹ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “Extract from the Committee's Resolution on the draft version of the bureau's surgical instructions”, 20-05-1795.

²²² Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité tot de Algemene Zaken van het Bondgenootschap te Lande, 1795-1798*, 131, “Instruction for the Chirurgyn-Majors of the Battalions belonging to the Armée of the State”, 20-05-1795.

5.6 Conclusions on the Centralisation of the Batavian reorganisation

The centralisation of the Dutch military was a natural outcome of the first theme: the deprivatisation of said army. Because this had left such a gap in both the management and healthcare systems of the Dutch army, this centralisation was mostly focused on fixing that aspect. In doing so, the Batavians created the first Dutch military administration system. The reason why this had taken the Dutch so long was because of the unique set-up of the United Provinces. Because there was a lack of a political centre, there had also been no way for the United Provinces to devise a comprehensive administration of any kind, including a military one.

The Batavians set out to change this. Even though the Batavians were split on the decision between centralising the government, or keeping the federal structure in the known *unitariërs* versus *federalists* feud, plans to centralise the army moved along swiftly. Arguments raised for this plan all had to do with the greater good of the state.

The first point of business for the Batavians to enact this centralised structure was to hire new personnel. Both civilian administrators and military officers with an administrative role were in high demand. This was because the pool of experienced administrators had been diminished after the Batavian takeover. Moreover, military officers with only administrative roles had never existed in the first place. Additionally, all of the new officers and civilian administrators had to swear an oath before the revolutionary Committee.

Luckily, the Committee had already drafted the plans for how to organise this new centralised structure before this hiring process even began. In short, with regard to the management system, they created a central body based in Den Haag, which would craft the policy, and they implemented civilian administrators and officers with administrative ranks within each Halve Brigade. Lastly, they had tasked commissars with the inspection of the latter, and reporting their findings to the former. With regards to the healthcare system, the Committee decided upon also having a central body in Den Haag, which would have to approve every admission. Additionally, every Half Brigade would have surgeons of different levels at their disposal, which in their turn would report to both the central body and the commanding officers of their own regiments and companies.

All in all, the management system of the Dutch army referring to its payments, its recruiting, equipping, and caring were now centralised and institutionalised.

6. Theme 3: Nationalisation

The third – and final – theme I have encountered during my study of the transition period between the *Staatse Leger* and the *Bataafse Leger* during the Batavian Revolution is the nationalisation of the Dutch army. With this term, I do not refer to nationalisation in an economic sense, nor a modern political sense. With nationalisation, I refer to the institutionalisation of proto-nationalism during the Batavian Revolution. During this time the Dutch government and the military had more and more to do with the nation, as opposed to only the state. The active role of civilians in citizenship within the nation also became increasingly important. This section of the thesis will describe what this nationalisation entailed, why the Batavians argued in favour of it and how they implemented it in their new state.

6.1 Nationality in the *Staatse Leger*

In addition to its lack of a centralised state administration and a nationalistic character, the Republic of the Seven United Provinces also lacked a rich national military tradition, which was present in other European countries. Even the Dutch aristocrats had a real aversion to a military career. This led to the fact that the States army consisted mainly of (foreign) professional soldiers instead of aristocrats and other Dutch volunteers, as mentioned previously.²²³

²²³ M.D. Feld, *Middle-Class Society and the Rise of Military Professionalism: THE DUTCH ARMY 1589- 1609* (1975), 421.

At this moment in time, it is important to explain why I have chosen to refer to these soldiers as “(foreign) professionals” instead of “mercenaries” throughout this entire thesis. The term “mercenary” dates back to the Middle Ages and refers to a soldier who fought for a monetary reward instead of being motivated to join the fight because of social duty, such as was the case when he was part of a hereditary warrior caste.²²⁴ Furthermore, it is anachronistic to speak of a mercenary army when one speaks of a standing army consisting of (foreign) professionals. From the moment onwards that permanent contracts became a thing mercenaries transitioned to professional soldiers.²²⁵ It is also important to distinguish between *nationale* (“national”) and *vreemde* (“foreign”) regiments in the Dutch army. Whereas both Dutch and foreign professional soldiers were accepted to serve in the former, only foreign soldiers could join the latter.²²⁶ In the rest of the chapter, most changes I will highlight were specifically designed to impact foreign professional soldiers who served in *vreemde* regiments, who were often recruited in bulk.

Over the centuries, the *Staatse Leger* has employed many foreign professional soldiers. Zwitter's estimate puts this number at between 40 and 60 percent of the entire army.²²⁷ These foreign troops were glad to serve the United Provinces. It was the Dutch love for trade which made them ideal paymasters. This love caused the military to be treated like a business, by its leadership. This resulted in a unique situation where the basis of the army did not rely on honour and loyalty of the men to the absolute ruler, but instead on respect for mutual contracts. The (foreign) professional soldiers, who preferred serving contracts instead of people, favoured this structure considerably. Additionally, this specific Dutch culture of trade had other benefits. For example, unlike other countries, the Republic gave their foreign troops a payment guarantee. Moreover, the Dutch preferred to keep on their troops year-round instead of only hiring troops when in need of them. The Dutch favoured paying a lower fee over a longer time, than coughing up money to pay the high recruitment and disposal costs each and every war. All in all, the United Provinces were a Walhalla for foreign troops.²²⁸

However, during the Batavian Revolution a lot would change about the nationality and the role of soldiers within the community during the nationalisation of the army.

²²⁴ H.L. Zwitter, "*De milite van den staat*", 41.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

²²⁸ M.D. Feld, *Middle-Class Society and the Rise of Military Professionalism*, 422-423; H.L. Zwitter, "*De milite van den staat*", 42; Adriaan van Puffelen, *Subsidieregimenten en immigratie : buitenlandse militaire dienstneming in de Republiek, en immigratie mede in de tweede helft van de achtende eeuw* (1975), 13-14.

6.2 Military Organisation and State/Nation-Building

Before we can study how the Batavian Revolution changed the nationality and the role of the soldier in its community it is important to note the considerable amount of studies that have specialised in uncovering the relationship between revolutions, state-building, nation-building and military organisation.

In his essay, “State- and Nation-Building in Europe: the Role of the Military”, in the overarching work edited by C. Tilly, G. Ardant and L. Pye, called *The formation of national states in Western Europe*, Samuel E. Finer has studied the relation between the development of the “modern” state and the development of the military “format”.²²⁹ He defines this concept as “the service basis of the forces; i.e., whether they were native or foreign, paid or unpaid, *ad hoc* or permanent”.²³⁰ He goes on to explain that the state-building process and the choice of military format have a reciprocal influence on each other.²³¹ To substantiate this claim Samuel E. Finer refers to the *Format-Options Cycle* to explain why states change their military format. This decision – according to him – is based on three considerations; efficiency, expense, and loyalty. Depending on which of these three considerations a ruler finds most important, a format is chosen. This leads to there being three different types of forces, which can be employed both in an *ad hoc* or a permanent state as visualised in the following table²³². Samuel E. Finer, briefly refers to the impact of the French Revolution as a “watershed” on the relationship between state-building and the military format in France, as the French army adopted a new format and fought a new kind of war after their major state-altering revolution.²³³

The impact revolutions have on military format is certainly something to consider. This relationship is also highlighted by J. Ellis, who – even though their research had more to do with revolutionary armies than with armies formed after revolutions – wrote the guiding words about the two problems common to all revolutions: “how [does] military policy [affect] the development of a particular revolution and how [do] the social roots of that revolution [affect] methods of war and military organisation [in turn]”.²³⁴ In the case of the Batavian Revolution, the latter problem is more prevalent, as the army was only formed after the completion of the revolution. Subsequently, questions about the mix of the new revolutionary ideology and the military organisation arose. J. Ellis notes the following core questions posing revolutionaries after

²²⁹ Samuel E. Finer, “State- and Nation-Building in Europe: the Role of the Military” in, C. Tilly, G. Ardant and L. Pye (eds.), *The formation of national states in Western Europe* (1975), 84-163, 84.

²³⁰ Samuel E. Finer, “State- and Nation-Building in Europe: the Role of the Military”, 90.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

²³² *Ibid.*, 94-95.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 144-155.

²³⁴ John Ellis, *Armies in Revolution* (2022), 1.

taking control: “How important is it that the armies’ organisation and modes of combat reflect the concrete cultural and political preoccupations of the rank-and-file?” And “how far can revolutionary notions of liberty and equality be equated with the maintenance of adequate military discipline?”²³⁵ Consequently, these are all questions to consider while researching the military changes after revolutions.

Table 1: The *Format-Options Cycle*

Consideration	[Military Format]	Ad Hoc [Variant]	Permanent [Variant]
Efficiency	Foreign Paid Volunteers	“Mercenaries”	“Subsidy Troops”
Expense	Native Obligatory Service	Feudal Host, Popular Militia	Universal Military Service
Loyalty	Native Paid Volunteers	[...] Indentured Companies	“Regular Troops”

Closely related to the notion of state-building, is the concept of nation-building. In the collection work *Nation-building* edited by Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz, the former refers back to one of the founding fathers of the concept of nation-building: Carl Friedrich. He defined nation-building as “a matter of building group cohesion and group loyalty for international representation and domestic planning”.²³⁶ Like state-building, nation-building is commonly studied by researchers in relation to revolutions. One of these researchers, David A. Wilson, explains this relationship with examples of multiple Asian military revolutions, such as those in China, Thailand and Laos. His argument starts with the assumption that “the process of nation-building [...] is associated with nationalism”.²³⁷ David A. Wilson explains that nationalism, with its inherently high level of public participation, leads to social mobilisation, which will result in nation-building if it is properly “organised and routinised”.²³⁸ This process of nation-building is already underway during the revolutionary struggle, but after they take control is when the nation-building gets established in practice.²³⁹ Most of their new policies are created to distinguish them from the regime that came before. However, how does this fit in with Early Modern revolutions, such as the Patriot, French and Batavian Revolutions? Especially when considering that “nationalism” as a concept is rather modern.

²³⁵ Ellis, *Armies in Revolution*, 1-2.

²³⁶ Karl W. Deutsch, “Nation-Building and National Development: Some Issues for Political Research, Introduction”, in Karl W. Deutsch, William J. Foltz (eds.), *Nation-Building* (1966), 1-16, 10.

²³⁷ David A. Wilson, “Nation-Building and Revolutionary War”, in Karl W. Deutsch, William J. Foltz (eds.), *Nation-Building* (1966), 84-94, 85.

²³⁸ David A. Wilson, “Nation-Building and Revolutionary War”, 85-86.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 92.

6.3 (Proto)-Nationalism in Early Modern Europe

Most of the modern definitions of the nation and nationalism are rooted in political agendas, based on nineteenth-century theorists who argued for definitions of the nation based on matters such as “ethnicity, common language, religion, territory and common historical memories”.²⁴⁰ An even more contemporary definition of a nation was created by Benedict Anderson, who disregarded any of the old characteristics posed by nineteenth-century thinkers. Instead, he defined the nation as an “imagined political community” which was “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”.²⁴¹ Despite his effort to create a more inclusive definition of a nation, it is still inapplicable to the Batavian Republic, for the same reason that the nineteenth-century definition could not be applied: the revolutionaries of the Patriot, French and Batavian Revolutions regarded the nation in a very different light.

It was Eric Hobsbawm, who was one of the pioneers of tracing the concepts of nation and nationalism all the way back to the eighteenth century. In his work *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, he explains that the meaning of the nation during those revolutionary years was political. Furthermore, he elaborates by stating that at that moment in time “the nation” equated to “the people”, at least ideally.²⁴² He does distinguish between the American and French Revolutions, because they understood this equation differently. The American revolutionaries preferred to use terms such as

‘the people’, ‘the union’, ‘the confederation’, ‘our common land’, ‘the public’, ‘public welfare’, or ‘the community’ in order to avoid the centralising and unitary implications of the ‘nation’ against the rights of the federated states.²⁴³

The French did not have the same objections as they argued that the nation should be “one and indivisible”.²⁴⁴ However, both revolutions did underscore the importance of choice with regard to citizenship and mass participation, which united a people into a “nation”, even if they did not use this term specifically.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ Eric John Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*, (1985), 20.

²⁴¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (2016), 3.

²⁴² Eric John Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780*, 18-19.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

In addition to these conditions for an eighteenth-century definition of “nation”, a defined territory was also pertinent as becomes clear from the French Declaration of Rights of 1795 which read:

Each people is independent and sovereign, whatever the number of individuals who compose it and the extent of the territory it occupies [...] This sovereignty is inalienable.²⁴⁶

Lastly, Hobsbawm refers to historian Pierre Vilar who pointed out the last and final component of the eighteenth-century definition of the nation: the fact that it “represented the common interest against particular interests [and] the common good against privilege”.²⁴⁷ This last condition is most candidly in accordance with the ideology of the Patriot, French, and Batavian Revolutions.

Unfortunately, Eric Hobsbawm does not refer to either the Patriot or the Batavian Revolutions in his display of eighteenth-century definitions. However, the Batavians did speak about the relationship between the nation and citizenship and how they envisioned their union. In a declaration of the central conference of patriotic societies meeting at Den Haag in September 1795, the Batavians stated the following:²⁴⁸

Is the seven-headed monster of the Union of Utrecht not a mere combination of special interests? It is more than time to put an end to this ruinous situation, so that a political system can be built upon new ground in the Netherlands, securing the unity and indivisibility of all the various pieces of territory in the Republic. A National Assembly, a legal code founded on natural right, guaranteeing to each inhabitant his place as a citizen and member of society, are the only means of saving the Netherlands. Without the National Convention our country will never be confirmed in its right to be One and Indivisible.

The Batavians thus – like the French – believed that their nation should be “one and indivisible”. Furthermore, they argued that a system should not be built on a “mere combination of special interests”, but on a legal code based on natural rights, which would make each inhabitant not only an inhabitant but also a citizen and a member of society. This was in contradiction with how things were organised in the *ancien régime*. In that system, a lot of people were regarded as outsiders. Except for regents no one was expected to be involved with public affairs.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 19.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 20.

²⁴⁸ R.R. Palmer, David Armitage, *The age of the democratic revolution*, 505.

Furthermore, these outsiders were simply referred to as *burghers* (“civilian”) as there was no Dutch citizenship at all.²⁴⁹

All of these components – nationality, military format, state-building, and nation-building in combination with revolution – are related to the final theme of the Batavian military reorganisation of 1795, in which we can observe a motif of (proto)-nationalism. In this chapter, all instances related to the nationalisation of the Batavian army are elaborated upon.

6.4 Nationalisation of the Batavian army: Four Examples

The first example of the nationalisation of the Dutch army was their dismissal of foreign troops. As mentioned previously, the French revolutionaries did not look kindly at foreign mercenary troops. After taking control of the state, the revolutionaries promptly broke off all contracts with the subsidy troops hired by the *ancien régime*.²⁵⁰ The Batavians shared this sentiment. As aforementioned, Van der Capellen – one of the leading figures of the Patriot Revolt – had been inspired by Andrew Fletcher on this matter. Later on, the Batavians also shared the belief that the introduction of mercenary armies in Europe in the Late Middle Ages had gradually undermined freedom. Moreover, they also believed that though professional armies had become a requirement of some sort in their “modern times”, it was not wise to rely entirely on them.²⁵¹

Where the French revolutionaries had abruptly broken all contracts with foreign troops, the Batavians approached this subject from a different standpoint. Ever the tradespeople – for whom all contracts are sacred – the Dutch simply waited until the end of the contracts, and then swiftly got rid of the troops. However, this did not mean that the payment of these foreign troops was sacred as well. Especially the Swiss troops encountered a lot of waiting for their payday. In response, the troops refused to leave the country. This mistreatment of the foreign troops was mostly the fault of the individual provinces because they were unwilling to longer pay these troops.²⁵² After a while, Daendels was personally tasked with getting rid of these increasingly disruptive troops.²⁵³

The fact that the Batavians let go of various paid foreign troops did not mean they quit this practice altogether. This is contrary to the statement made by Zwitter, who stated in his revered book *De militie van den staat: het leger van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden* that the end of the

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 509.

²⁵⁰ Frederick C. Schneid, *European Armies of the French Revolution 1789-1802* (2015), 16.

²⁵¹ Franciscus Grijzenhout a.o., *Het Bataafse experiment*, 58.

²⁵² Unknown, *Mecklenburgers onder Nederlandsche vlag: 1788-1796*, (1942), 18.

²⁵³ Paul van 't Veer, *Daendels: maarschalk van Holland* (1983), 62.

United Provinces also meant the end for subsidy-regiments in the Netherlands.²⁵⁴ This statement is untrue seeing that the Batavians decided on keeping on one Half Brigade worth of soldiers from Saxony-Gotha and other German states.²⁵⁵ Why the Batavians chose to keep these particular troops, and not the Swiss, is unclear.

To replenish these dismissed troops the Batavians devised two plans. First, they would supplement their army with more national recruits. However, because there were not enough eligible men to join the army full-time, without disturbing the working force, and because their beliefs were derived from the Patriots: they also actively armed the civilians. Both plans are described below.

The first way in which the Batavians attempted to replenish their troops after the dismissal of most of the foreign professional soldiers, was by upping the ante with national recruitment for the army. This tuppence of national recruitment is the second example of the nationalisation of the Dutch army. As mentioned previously, recruiting new soldiers used to be the job of the old Captain Owners. Now, after the centralisation of the military system, this job befell the new military administration, as discussed in the previous chapter. Because of this change in executive, the desired qualifications of the soldiers and their future role in society also changed. The Committee imagined that in the future, soldiers would be stationed in one place. They argued that this could not be done in the old system because those soldiers had been foreign and if they were not moved around frequently dangerous liaisons between civilians and soldiers were imminent. But now that recruiting was in the hands of the state most of the soldiers of the Batavian Army would exclusively be of Dutch origin. Because of that difference in origin, the soldiers of the new army could stay in one place in times of peace, the Committee proposed. In their minds, this would better the relationship between the military and the civilians. Moreover, the soldiers would have a more consistent and wider existence, in this new system. All of this would be possible now that most of the recruitments would be from “the children of the Land”.²⁵⁶

The second way the Batavians tried to replenish the dismissed foreign troops was by arming civilians. This is also the third example of the nationalisation of the Dutch army. This decision was in line with Patriot ideology. According to Wyger Veleman, this was even one of the ways the Batavians wanted to cultivate republican citizenship amongst the Dutch populace.²⁵⁷ To

²⁵⁴ H.L. Zwitter, *"De militie van den staat"*, 24.

²⁵⁵ J.P.C.M. Hoof, 'Militairen in de Bataafs-Franse tijd', 194.

²⁵⁶ Nationaal Archief, *Het Archief van het Comité*, "Detailed Plan of Organisation of the Armée of the Republic of the United Netherlands", 36-03-1795

²⁵⁷ Wyger Veleman, "Republikeinse democratie: De politieke wereld van de Bataafse Revolutie 1795-1798", in Fransiscus Grijzenhout a.o. (eds.), *Het Bataafse experiment: politiek en cultuur rond 1800* (2013), 27-63, 57.

institutionalise this effort, the Batavians implemented this ideal in the *Staatsregeling* of 1798. From then on it was mandatory for every Batavian citizen to carry a weapon. Despite the politicians' efforts, the citizens were difficult to convince of this republican valour. The fact that the Prussians had crushed the Patriotic militias so easily in 1787 had dampened their spirit on this subject. They had even come to question the need for citizen militias. Moreover, the Dutch had become lazy after decades of prosperity. In the same spirit, the Dutch were simply not interested to join a citizen militia, as they were far more interested in trade than in military matters. Also, the Batavians critiqued the Dutch spirit, as they had none of the passion that possessed the French. Despite these hurdles, the Batavians kept trying to change the minds of the people. In a public debate held in 1796, which was held to inspire the masses to talk about the state of the country, a citizen called Piet stepped forward. In the minutes of the meeting, he was referred to as a *warm Vaderlander* ("fervent Patriot"). He said on the subject of civilian armament:²⁵⁸

Zo de burgerbewapening niet doorgaat,	If civilian armament does not continue,
kan gene Vrijheid stand houden,	no liberty can stand,
want dan wordt het Militaire ras baas,	for then the Military race will be boss,
en geven ons dan een groot Heer	and then give us a great Lord
tot onzen meester,	as our master,
zo als my wel gezegd is,	as I have been told,
dat by de Romeinen zou plaats	what would take place
gehad hebben.	with the Romans.

The arming of the citizen was not only to protect their freedom but also to make the Dutch people better republicans. This was an opinion mostly held by the Republican-minded papers of the time. The paper *De Republikein*, for example, dubbed citizen armament the way how a *Vrijman* ("Free man") would feel connected with the entire state and its freedom. The authors of the paper *De democraten* went even further when they rhetorically asked their readers when they had most felt their Republican values. The answer: when one wears a weapon.²⁵⁹ All in all, most Batavians held the opinion that civil armament would be best for both the protection of the country and to ensure the involvement of the populace in their republican values. I have not encountered any reference to the organisation of the arming of the citizens amongst the papers of the Committee, as they were not concerned with this part of the country's defense.

²⁵⁸ Wyger Veleman, "Republikeinse democratie", 27-63, 58.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 58-59.

The fourth example of the nationalisation of the Dutch army I encountered during my study was the nationalisation of military symbols. A phenomenon that has already noted by other historians was the change in military uniforms. During the entire eighteenth century, there had been hardly any regulations, rules or standards regarding the clothing of the troops of the *Staatse Leger*. This all changed with the arrival of the Batavian Republic, which imposed a general set of regulations for the clothing, armament, and equipment of its troops.²⁶⁰ All of these rules could be found in the so-called *Jassenboekje* (“Jacket booklet”) published in 1795.²⁶¹ While this seems more in line with the process of centralisation, the actual content of this booklet has more to do with the nationalisation of the Dutch army, as all references to the *Stadhouder* which had been worn during the time of the *Staatse Leger* were replaced. Both the orange sash and the orange cockade that the Dutch soldiers had proudly worn, were replaced by fabric showing the tricolour of the Revolution.²⁶² In short, no longer was the *Stadhouder*’s colour worn, but those of the public. This was because the public now equaled the nation, whereas the *Stadhouder* had equaled the state in the centuries before the Revolution. This change in whose army it was, is also notable in its name. Whereas before the army was called the *Staatse Leger*, because it belonged to the state, now it would be the *Bataafse Leger*, because it belonged to the Batavians. Both of these phenomenons capture the nationalisation of symbols in the Batavian army. This example also illustrates that not every change during this transition was based on practical reasons. Ideology is always an important factor in a (military) reorganisation, especially after a revolution.

²⁶⁰ F.G. de Wilde, a.o., *De uniformen van het Nederlandse leger*, 17.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁶² H. Ringoir, *De Nederlandse Infanterie*, 41.

6.5 Conclusions on the Nationalisation of the Batavian Army

This chapter dealt with the theme of nationalisation during the Batavian military reorganisation. First, it was outlined how nationality was not regarded as important in the Dutch military prior to the Batavian Revolution. This all changed after the Batavians took over. Inspired by both the Patriot Revolt and the French Revolution, the Batavians implemented their ideology on the nation also in the organisation of their military. This is not surprising when one considers that revolutions are often followed by a military reorganisation. This time one of the big adaptations was the military format: in short – who made up the soldiers in the army, and how are they related to the regime?

After the Batavians took over, they no longer wanted to make decisions on the basis of efficiency: which had led the *ancien régime* to hire foreign professional soldiers. The Batavians prioritised loyalty over efficiency. This led them to the decision to nationalise the defence of the state. This nationalisation of the defence of the Batavian Republic was carried through the army as exemplified by the four actions of nationalisation discussed in this chapter. First, the Batavians dismissed most of the formerly hired foreign professional soldiers. Second, now the army had been deprivatised and centralised, the state could reduce the recruiting of new soldiers to citizens. Third, the Batavians – ever wary of the military and its power – actively encouraged citizens to arm themselves against authoritarianism. Despite the fact that this last trend took place outside of the military sphere of influence, it is important to note it as part of the Batavian Revolution's influence on the organisation of the Dutch army. Lastly, the nationalisation of the army was visualised by the change of uniforms, which now represented the nation which equaled the people and not the *Stadhouder* who had always only equaled the state.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Denouement

In 1795, the French General Jean Victor Marie Moreau had described the Dutch army to be “*extrêmement faible*”. He had been right. The army had disintegrated after the invasion of the revolutionary army, who had come to the aid of their revolutionary brethren: the Batavians. In the following years – partly because of practical reasons, and partly because of ideological reasons – the new Batavian rulers would reorganise the Dutch military. Such a reorganisation is not uncommon after successful revolutions, as it is an excellent way to institutionalise revolutionary ideology.

There have not been any published studies about this particular reorganisation. However, there have been studies about the organisation of both the organisation of the *ancien régime*, and there have been studies about aspects of the organisation of the revolutionary Batavian regime. However, a gap remains as far as the transition process from the former to the latter. The only work that focuses on this transition – prior to this one – is an unpublished stack of papers I encountered in the library of the Ministry of Defence. This thesis set out to validate the findings of Krijvenaar’s unpublished work, by conducting new primary research, and by contextualising the findings in the context of the Patriot Revolt, the French and the Batavian Revolutions. All three movements are important for this contextualisation because the latter was more than a result of the former two, as they had influenced each other’s trajectory. This led to the fact that the Batavian Revolution’s ideology consisted of a mishmash of the Enlightenment’s ideals, Dutch political culture, and the *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* of the French Revolution. Moreover, even this explanation simplifies reality, as not all Batavians subscribed to the same ideas, and often feuded about the cornerstones of their revolution’s ideology.

Despite these disclaimers, these three movements had a lot in common concerning their beliefs on how the military should be organised. Important similarities in their ideas about their military philosophy are: (1) that they all were inspired by a military disgrace (either in the form of defeat or a general sense of a loss of power) to reorganise, (2) that all these revolutionaries saw an increased role of the citizen in the defence of the state (though conscription which ruled in France after the Revolution never took root in the Netherlands), (3) that they distrusted foreign professional soldiers, and (4) that they valued promotion because of merit over promotion based on hereditary. How these movements implemented these ideals – or wanted to implement them in the case of the Patriots as their revolt had not turned into a successful revolution – differed. After studying the reorganisation of the Batavian army during this period I have distilled their

decisions regarding the institutionalisation of their military philosophy into three themes: (1) the deprivatisation of the military entrepreneurs, (2) the centralisation of the military administration, and (3) the nationalisation of the troops themselves.

The first of these themes – that of deprivatisation – is a theme I have not yet encountered in the current literature on the Batavian Revolution and its military philosophy. This deprivatisation was aimed at the military entrepreneurs who had been part of the Dutch army organisation for centuries. During the eighteenth century, multiple institutions attempted to limit their power, but none succeeded until the eruption of the Batavian Revolution. Targeted during this time were especially the *solliciteurs-militair*. This specific type of military entrepreneurs were private bankers who lent money to both the government and the captain owners – the other military entrepreneurs who met their end after the revolution – for them to be able to pay their soldiers without interruptions. The Patriots and the Batavians were avid enthusiasts of getting rid of these leeches. After they took control in 1795, they swiftly got to work on deprivatising the management system of the Dutch army. First, the Batavian rulers – in the form of a Committee designed to oversee the Dutch army – clearly argued why the military entrepreneurs’ practice had to come to an end. Furthermore, they got to work by making an inventory of the unfinished business between these military entrepreneurs and the state. Lastly, they repaid the money the entrepreneurs lost because of the transition to the new army. This decision was based on morality, as becomes clear from the avid reasoning they used to explain their actions. The entire process of deprivatisation took until December 14, 1797, and was rather unorganised. This is not surprising when one considers the lack of bureaucracy at the start of the Batavian Republic. The deprivatisation of the military did have one downside: it left a hole in the management system of the Dutch army. This problem was solved by the next theme I encountered; the avid centralisation of the Dutch army.

This theme is rather surprising considering that the Batavians did stay on the fence about the centralisation of its government. The Federalists preferred the federalist structure of the old Dutch Republic. The Patriot’s had been of the same opinion. The unitarian Batavians – inspired by the French revolution – were in favour of a centralised government. Because of this impasse, it took years for the Batavians to write their constitution. However, this problem apparently did not exist when it concerned the army, as it was swiftly centralised from its inception. While transitioning from the *Staatse Leger* to the *Bataafse Leger* the Committee created the first military administration system in the Netherlands. On this aspect, the Dutch were far behind any other country in Europe. To create this centralised military administration a great deal of new personnel was needed, especially since loyalists of the House of Orange were not permitted to (re-)join the ranks. Moreover, military officers with only an administrative rank did not exist

before the Batavian Revolution. This particular recruiting thus had to start from scratch. This new personnel would be split up, the first part would end up at the centre of the whole military administration system, based in Den Haag, which would oversee all operations. The other employees were dispersed amongst the Half Brigades, Regiments and Companies. The latter would be inspected by a third party, to keep them honest. Additionally, tasks previously held by the individual provinces – such as the payment of the troops – would now be taken care of by the state on a national level.

The third theme – often combined or confused with the second, but distinctly different – was the nationalisation of the Batavian army. In line with the ideologies of the Patriot Revolt, the French Revolution, and the Batavian Revolution, paid foreign professional soldiers were distrusted. This was the case because these troops had often been used by the rulers of the *ancien régime* against their own population. This led the revolutionaries to distrust this military format. After the Batavian Revolution, they wanted to base the hiring of their soldiers not on efficiency but on loyalty to the revolutionary cause. To accomplish this, the Batavians nationalised the defence of their state in four ways. First, they dismissed a part of the foreign professional soldiers previously employed by *Stadhouder* Willem V. Second, after completing the centralisation of the management of the troops, they gained access to the recruiting process of the Dutch military. From then on, they increased the recruitment of Dutch citizens. In their opinion, this would also improve the relations between the public and the military. Third, the Batavians minimised the power of the Dutch military, by actively encouraging the arming of citizens. Fourth, the Batavians implemented national symbols in the army. For example, the soldiers would from then on wear the tricolour of the revolution, instead of the *Stadhouder's* orange. Moreover, whereas the Dutch army had previously carried the name *Staatse Leger*, it would change to *Bataafse Leger*. Both examples show the institutionalisation of the nationalisation of the army. No longer would the soldiers belong to the *Stadhouder*, but to the revolution. And no longer would the army be of the state, but of the nation. All of these changes combined led to the Batavian army being state property, having a central government, and being composed of revolutionary nationalistic-minded soldiers. Additionally, its power was limited by the armament of the citizens, so that the army could not be usurped to suppress the Dutch population. All of these changes were revolutionary in more ways than one.

The Batavian Republic would not survive Napoleon Bonaparte's rule. But its institutionalised mishmash of ideals is still palpable today. The Batavians' implementations of the teachings of the *Universal Rights of Man and of the Citizen* into the Dutch political system, their advancements in representative democracy, the unification of the provinces into one state, the separation between church and state, and the formulation of the first written constitution of the

Netherlands, should not be forgotten. Lastly, their achievement of deprivatising, centralising, and nationalising the Dutch army has been sustained for centuries. However, currently its military philosophy has come under pressure since the rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980s and 1990s championed by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations.²⁶³

This new stream of philosophy has resulted in the fact that outsourcing military tasks to foreign professional soldiers has become normalised again over the last fifty years. Combined with the technological advances of this day and age, this practice creates new complications, especially on ethical grounds. One example of the Dutch state employing professionals in warfare was the case of Uruzgan. While these professionals were merely there for logistical purposes, their employment meant serious political, military, legal and ethical consequences for the Dutch state. The first problem with hiring foreign professionals is that the Dutch democratic system has no control over these parties. Moreover, as these parties hold no accountability towards the Dutch people, they cannot be held accountable via elections. The second problem is that the interests of the private companies may diverge from those of the Dutch state. After all, these contractors remain companies, based on making a profit. It may therefore be the case that a prolongation of conflict is in the interest of these parties, while this is not the case for the Dutch state. This problem is one of the reasons the Batavians deprivatised their army; for the *Staatse Leger* was not operating for the greater good of the nation. The third problem with yet again privatising warfare in our modern age is the fact that it is nearly impossible to take legal action against these contractors if they are involved in criminal offences while in the employ of the Dutch state. After all, which legal system should one choose to try a Russian soldier, hired by an Iranian company, who in turn has been hired by the Dutch state to operate in an African country?²⁶⁴

In addition to the Dutch state hiring foreign professionals to work on and around battlefields, in the effort to minimise the costs of warfare – including loss of life, monetary loss, and the loss of the moral high ground – the Dutch state has also authorised Dutch companies to hire professional soldiers. Since 1 February 2022, Dutch merchant ships have been able to hire armed private security guards under the Merchant Navy Protection Act and take them with them for their journey along the Gulf of Aden for protection.²⁶⁵ This brings the privatisation of warfare back to the glory days of the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (“United East India

²⁶³ Molly Dunigan, *Victory for Hire: Private Security Companies' Impact on Military Effectiveness* (2011), 2.

²⁶⁴ J.M.D. van Leeuwe, 'De inhuur van private militaire bedrijven in operatiegebieden', *MILITAIRE SPECTATOR* 177, nr. 4 (2008): 240–45, 240-242.

²⁶⁵ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/scheepvaart-en-havens/wet-ter-bescherming-koopvaardij>.

Company”), which had the same privilege given to them by the Dutch State.²⁶⁶ In addition to the aforementioned political, military, legal and ethical consequences the outsourcing of warfare poses the modern Dutch state, this outsourcing done by companies has dire consequences for the definition and our understanding of the modern state, as it is often credited to be or at least strive to be *monopolists of legitimate violence*.²⁶⁷

Although attempts have been made to combat the re-privatisation of warfare with international treaties, there have not been any significant breakthroughs in this effort. A UN treaty against the hiring of mercenaries by nations, for example, has only been signed by a mere 36 countries. In another attempt, the European Union has banned the use of mercenaries for military tasks abroad since 2017. However, this prohibition does not apply to mercenaries who provide security or intelligence services. And while these companies sound harmless, that doesn't mean they actually are, as Blackwater in Iraq has shown with its hundreds of shooting incidents.²⁶⁸

So even if the study of the deprivatisation, centralisation and nationalisation of the Dutch military during the Batavian Republic sounds insignificant and too long ago to shine any light on modern warfare, this is not the case. The Batavian revolutionaries, as well as the Patriots, and the French revolutionaries, knew the dangers of a privatised, international, and decentralised army, and effectively changed the course of history. NGOs, as well as policymakers, should know how states have effectively deprivatised armies in the past, to learn from their challenges and repurpose them for modern warfare. And it is the task of military historians to provide them with this knowledge.

7.2 Suggested Future Research

While this study uncovered a lot about the transition period between the *Staatse Leger* and the *Bataafse Leger*, not everything has been brought to the light. Sometimes this was due to the small scope of this thesis, while at other points this had more to do with the availability of the primary sources. Lastly, a possible cause of this was my inability to read documents properly because of the handwriting, or the language used, in particular eighteenth century French. When this occurred, I have proposed possible explanations, and suggested other researchers to delve into

²⁶⁶ Niels Steensgaard, “The Dutch East India Company as an institutional innovation”, in: *Dutch capitalism and world capitalism*, ed. Maurice Aymard (1982), 235-258; J.E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe*, (1994), 35.

²⁶⁷ Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation”, in Max Weber & John Dreijmanis, *Max Weber's Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations* (2008), 156.

²⁶⁸ <https://www.amnesty.nl/wordt-vervolgd/hoe-oorlog-en-geweld-zijn-geprivatiseerd> 17-09-2020, 31-05-2023.

these specific topics in future research. These topics are outlined below for the sake of a clear overview

The first gap in my research was regarding the many lists prepared by the Committee to gain an overview of the remnants of the *Staatse Leger* after the French invasion. During my time at the archives I have not been able to find any filled out lists. This does not mean that they do not exist. Hopefully future research can uncover what these remnants looked like.

Another gap that was the result of my time restricting was unearthing the story of Lieutenant Colonel H. Hogerwaard. Though he appeared often in the military administration of the Committee, I have not been able to find any more information about him and his role during the Batavian Revolution. However, this knowledge could add to our understanding of the Batavian Revolution and how it dealt with the repayment of all the military entrepreneurs of the *Staatse Leger*.

In the same section I also noted how I had not happened upon any requests for repayment of military entrepreneurs of the *Staatse Leger* which had been denied by the Committee. This could mean that none were denied, or that these denied requests were simply not stored in the same archive. Bringing to light which is the case will tell us a lot about the inner workings of the Committee, and about their commitment to being fair towards the former military entrepreneurs.

Moreover, this thesis remarked briefly upon the similarities and differences between the French and Batavian military reorganisation after their revolutions. However, this study does not pretend to be a comparative research project. Instead, it suggests the possibility of such a study in the future. This study should not only focus on the similarities and differences, but also on how the Dutch regarded the French operation, and how they remarked upon it. Had they observed any steps they wanted to imitate? Or did they mention any downfalls they wished to avoid after watching the French fail? These are all questions that could enlighten both reorganisations even further.

Lastly, in this thesis I merely focussed on the transition of the *Staatse Leger* to the *Bataafse Leger* while leaving the rest of the Dutch military out of the equation. How the army and the navy differed on the implementations of the Batavian ideals in the form of the deprivatisation, centralisation, and nationalisation of the military should be studied in the future.

All in all, this study does not claim to be the end-all of the study of the transition period of the Dutch military or even between the *Staatse Leger* and the *Bataafse Leger*. It does admit to its weaknesses, and hopes that future research will validate the outcome of this study, and advance its findings with new material.

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