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## **Burghers into citizens: Urban and national citizenship in the Netherlands during the revolutionary era (c. 1800)**

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Citizenship, Charles Tilly has said, is “a continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations uniquely by virtue of 1) the persons’ membership in an exclusive category and 2) the agent’s relation to the state rather than any authority the agent may enjoy.”<sup>1</sup> Three elements are crucial to this definition: the nature of the “persons,” i.e., citizens, the nature of the authority that Tilly foreshortens as “the state,” and finally the reciprocal relationship between these two actors. The importance of this definition is that it allows for variation, through time and space, and presents the bond between citizen and state as one that provides both parties with entitlements on the other. The problem with such a wide definition, however, is that it makes it difficult to distinguish between various types of ties between state officials and inhabitants of the state. In other words, when we let go of the formal aspect in the definition of citizenship, it tends to blur into a very wide range of issues indeed.<sup>2</sup> Instead, this article will define the “exclusive category” from the outset as “citizenship” in the legal sense. Thus, the “people” discussed in this article are citizens. The other party presents problems, too. Under the Old Regime, no such thing as Dutch citizenship existed. The state, i.e., the Dutch Republic, was a federation, composed of seven sovereign provinces. These provinces did not have citizens either, at least in the formal sense. Citizenship in the Dutch Republic was a local, more specifically an urban phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> There was nothing unusual in this: urban citizenship was the norm throughout early modern Europe.<sup>4</sup> This changed radically during the Napoleonic era, in the Netherlands as much as in other European countries.<sup>5</sup> The French revolutionary regime, and its collaborators in the occupied territories, centralized government and administration, and created new ties between themselves and their subjects, in the form of modern citizenship.

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The literature seems to suggest that this new form of citizenship was created in what was more or less a legal void, superficially occupied by the political theorists of the Italian Renaissance and, later on, of absolutism, who took most of their inspiration from antiquity.<sup>6</sup> Such an approach, of course, has the advantage of circumventing any questions concerning the ways in which previous forms of citizenship were transformed or superseded by the citizenship of the French revolution. That this was not at all an obvious development, however, can be deduced from the fact that, in northwestern Europe, the practical applications of early modern citizenship had very little to do with antiquity or Renaissance theories of classical republicanism. Instead, they were a function of the separate status that feudal society had bestowed on urban communities. Ending that privileged status was the mission of the emerging “modern state.” Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume, with Brubaker, that “[t]he modern state and state citizenship was constructed *against* urban autonomy and urban citizenship,” even if he does not make this conflict the focus of his analysis.<sup>7</sup>

This article tries to contribute some elements toward such an analysis. Instead of a simple creation of modern citizenship in the Netherlands around 1800, it seeks to describe a transition from one type of citizenship to another, during the decades around 1800. The basic idea of the article is to demonstrate how citizenship in the Netherlands changed from a local, fragmented, and exclusive phenomenon, which covered a wide range of social activities, into one that was national, uniform, and inclusive, but at the same time restricted in scope to the political and legal domains. To do this, I discuss a local form of citizenship, of the type customary in the Dutch Republic under the Old Regime, and then switch focus toward the new, national type of citizenship introduced by subsequent revolutionary governments in the Netherlands.

### **Urban citizenship under the Old Regime: The Dutch city of Bois-le-Duc**

“The Citizens of Bois-le-Duc,” according to a multi-volume eighteenth-century description of the Dutch provinces, “are of two types: native and acceded.”<sup>8</sup> Native citizens were all people born, or at least baptized, within the town. They had received their citizenship automatically and could never lose it. Other cities were less generous with their right of citizenship. In Amsterdam, for example, or the small city

of Deventer, only children born within a citizen family were assured of immediate citizenship.<sup>9</sup> Of the almost 5,000 heads of households in Bois-le-Duc in 1775, 48 percent gave their residence as place of birth.<sup>10</sup> The other half of the population was either deprived of the benefits of citizenship or was required to obtain it through alternative means. Those who had acceded to citizenship status had bought that status and were therefore usually designated as the “purchased citizens.” The purchase required a mere 17 guilders in Bois-le-Duc, which was modest even by the standards of the time.<sup>11</sup> In Amsterdam, the right of citizenship was up for sale for 50 guilders, in eastern Nijmegen for 48.<sup>12</sup> The citizenship of Bois-le-Duc was also an easy buy, because no extra qualities were required. In Nijmegen or Deventer, Catholics were excluded from the privilege of citizenship.<sup>13</sup> Similar rules in Bois-le-Duc from the mid-seventeenth century were no longer observed in the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Citizenship was confirmed by swearing an oath in the hands of the magistrate. The new citizen promised to remain loyal to the States-General (the government), to the stadholder (an informal head of the state), and finally to the city, “to remain loyal to my co-citizens [male and female form!], until death us do part.”<sup>15</sup> The latter clause should not be taken lightly. In 1787, at the height of the Patriot rebellion, a group of people who introduced themselves as citizens, stated that they were “prepared to defend the city and its privileges in every possible way ... if necessary with their blood and life.”<sup>16</sup>

To swear the citizens’ oath was to become a full member of the urban community of Bois-le-Duc. What did that mean for those involved? Why would anyone bother to become a citizen of a town like Bois-le-Duc? Contemporaries would probably list at least three obvious advantages of citizenship. First, they would point out that only citizens were admissible as members of the guilds, which in turn held a monopoly in the production of and trade in a wide range of goods. “Whoever is no citizen, cannot occupy himself in the burgher trades,” was the brief and very clear expression of one commentator, whose opinion was echoed by many more.<sup>17</sup> The expression “burgher trade” was significant by itself, because in Dutch the word for citizen is actually “burger.” In the fourteenth century, the guilds of Bois-le-Duc, as those of many other towns in Europe at that time, had also gained seats on the local government and even required every head of household to become a member of a guild, so as to ensure that all elements of the community were represented politically.<sup>18</sup> Since the fourteenth century, the political rights attached to citizenship had gradually diminished in Bois-le-Duc, but not completely disappeared. The old

rule, that only “native or purchased citizens” could be elected to the city’s more important offices, still applied.<sup>19</sup> Access to political office was thus a second clear advantage of citizenship in Bois-le-Duc. The third advantage of the citizen over non-citizens was, that he (or she) could only be tried by a local court.<sup>20</sup> After one Martinus Dijkmans had been arrested on January 1788, suspected of murdering a Jew in Amsterdam, he went to great lengths to prove his citizenship of Bois-le-Duc, to avoid his extradition to Amsterdam. Dijkmans’s wife was indeed able to produce an extract from the local register of baptisms, thereby proving that her husband was entitled to citizenship status. The complicating factor, however, was that he was also a citizen of Amsterdam. In the latter city Dijkmans had worked as a brazier, an occupation that required guild membership, and by implication citizen status. On these grounds the Amsterdam magistrates insisted on bringing Dijkmans to trial before their own law-court.<sup>21</sup>

Citizenship was not only a privilege, it also implied some obligations, as Tilly’s definition of citizenship might lead us to suspect. This, at least, is what various authorities suggested, even though they were not always very clear about what these duties were. Some writers seemed to think that the citizens were responsible for the maintenance of the community in every conceivable way, e.g., paying taxes, performing duties in the citizen militias, helping out in case of fire.<sup>22</sup> If this had ever been the exclusive duty of the citizens, that, however, had become a thing of the past by the eighteenth century. Such “onerous duties” were by then shouldered by citizens and ordinary inhabitants alike. References to any special burden on the citizens were ideological, a way to emphasize the special bond between citizen and community, perhaps also a justification of the privileges of the citizen.

Some symbolic gestures, however, did in fact underscore that special relationship between the citizen and his town, i.e., for those who had purchased their citizen status. The rite of accession, including the citizen’s oath, is a case in point. Even more obvious, perhaps, was a proposal by the commission overseeing the fire-equipment, in 1783. Fire was still a serious threat to cities like Bois-le-Duc; one only has to think of the Great Fire in London, of 1666. In the eighteenth century, the magistrate presented medals of honor to any house-owner who changed his wooden façade into stone. Bois-le-Duc did not have a professional fire-brigade. In case of fire, large sections of the community were called up.<sup>23</sup> The commission’s idea was, to demand from every new citizen that he (or she) present a fire-basket to the town.<sup>24</sup>

Beside citizens, the population of Bois-le-Duc, like that of other Dutch cities of the Old Regime, consisted of a second legal category: the inhabitants. Inhabitants were not legally protected by the local courts in the way citizens were. Inhabitants were not eligible for any major office. Inhabitants had no access to the guilds, nor could they therefore establish themselves as independent craftsman or shopkeeper in the trades covered by the guilds. To put it somewhat oversimplified: the inhabitant was without legal, political, and economic rights. In real life, however, the position of the inhabitants was not that bad. They did have access to normal juridical procedures; their rights of property would be respected like those of the citizens. Whereas in many German towns only citizens could own real estate,<sup>25</sup> no such restrictions were imposed in Dutch towns. Even if citizens had formal access to all local offices, the great majority of the citizens went without one. Unlike, for example, German or Belgian guilds, those of Bois-le-Duc (and most other Dutch towns) did not have seats in local government.<sup>26</sup> In terms of direct advantages, the major difference between citizens and inhabitants thus boils down to membership of the guilds. It is, in fact, quite probable that most outsiders took up membership with the specific purpose to enter a guild.<sup>27</sup>

But when all is said and done, differences between citizens and inhabitants did exist, juridically but also socially. The fact that everyone born (or baptized) in Bois-le-Duc, was by definition a citizen, to some extent obscures social differences. But if we look at the immigrants, who had to make a conscious effort to raise themselves from inhabitant to citizen, one cannot fail to notice the divide. A ledger from 1775, listing all heads of households with their place of birth, combined with a tax register from the same year, enables us to classify immigrants according to their wealth, as well as their status as citizens or inhabitants.<sup>28</sup> Whereas both the native and the immigrant halves of the population are remarkably alike in the way their wealth is distributed, the figures also clearly show a social differentiation within the immigrant community of Bois-le-Duc. The citizens among the immigrants are on average much better-off than the mere inhabitants. Whereas the citizens are over-represented among the upper-middle class and the elite, the inhabitants are clearly over-represented among the lower-middle class and the poor.

Citizenship, in the eighteenth century no less than nowadays, was not just a right, but also an instrument of social regulation. By raising or lowering the fee to be paid when one purchased citizenship status, or

creating other obstacles, the authorities might try to vary the attractiveness of citizenship.<sup>29</sup> Established citizens of Bois-le-Duc in fact recommended such a policy in 1786, when they proposed to admit new citizens only after a two-year residence in the town. This was rejected, however, by the magistrate, who argued, on the authority of “all political writers,” “that it was absolutely necessary for the welfare of the town, to provoke and stimulate outsiders and aliens to establish themselves within the city.” Merchants and artisans would be ruined if excluded from the guilds, and by implication from their trade, for two years.<sup>30</sup> This, of course, was precisely what the citizens’ proposal hoped to achieve. It was even harder to regulate the influx of lower-class immigrants. As any resident became an inhabitant without administrative ceremony, the authorities could not control the settlement of the poor, much to the despair of the directors of the welfare institutions. In the early 1770s they complained that the city was flooded with “poor aliens and beggars,” who exhausted the financial resources of their institutions.<sup>31</sup> In 1772, it was stipulated that one could only be treated in the Great Hospital (an institution for the poor) after ten years of residence in town. To get accepted by the municipal welfare institution, one had to prove fifteen years of residence.

Such negative reactions to outsiders point to a reflex that was central to the whole concept of early modern communities: the sharp distinction between “us” and “them.”<sup>32</sup> When the city was looking for a new municipal architect in 1773, the advisory committee of the local government was of the opinion that an indigenous candidate “is far preferable to an alien of equal, and even of superior qualities, because he who has always lived here, knows the pros and cons of every contractor, the best suppliers of building materials and finally the town’s works.”<sup>33</sup> When some years later the bakers’ guild complained about competition from the surrounding villages, they argued that this was very hard on the “established burghers, who help carry the burdens of the town and whose help the city enjoys in every incident, such as fire, etc.”<sup>34</sup> A regulation concerning the goldsmiths and silver-smiths was repealed in 1757, “as too favorable to the aliens.”<sup>35</sup>

Aliens were a threat, but also a pest to society, an inferior social type. Although diatribes against outsiders could be expressed generally, they were often specifically targeted at Jews, and couched in terms that are shocking to twentieth-century sensibilities. The deans of the shopkeepers’ guild of Bois-le-Duc claimed in 1775 that the established merchants



and shopkeepers in the city were “undercut and disadvantaged ceaselessly by the illegal practices of aliens, particularly of the Jewish nation, who come and go, do not pay any taxes and carry stolen goods, from bankrupt estates into the city.” To these people it made no difference where they lived, and “they do not care about moving from one place to another, leaving behind their debts.” The guild’s directors demanded that Jews be banned from citizenship in Bois-le-Duc.<sup>36</sup> Two years later they repeated their request<sup>37</sup> and this time they got their way: the admission of Jews, as it had been re-established in 1768, was terminated again.<sup>38</sup> In those ten years that Jews had been admitted into Bois-le-Duc, seven had gained citizenship.<sup>39</sup> In fact, three had become members of the shopkeepers’ guild.<sup>40</sup> Although the guild had clamored for their deportation, no documents suggest that this actually happened. Samuel Joseph claimed in 1790 that he had lived in the city for over twenty years, and had his marriage ceremony ratified by the aldermen in 1786.<sup>41</sup> Simon Hartog (or Hartogensis), who did leave town in 1777, returned there in 1787. According to his own testimony, he “was known publicly by everyone as an established resident of the city, who has exercised his affairs, paid his taxes and truly owns three houses within the town.”<sup>42</sup> In 1780, the magistrate itself had already noticed that the number of Jewish inhabitants kept growing, in spite of the prohibition of their establishment.<sup>43</sup>

### **Citizenship in the age of the Democratic Revolution**

During the 1770s and 1780s, new ideas about citizenship began to emerge among radical opponents of the regime then in power. This regime was headed by the Orange stadholder, who was nominally a servant of the sovereign provinces, but in fact was pulling the strings of the provincial Estates through his patronage-based influence on major political appointments.<sup>44</sup> Against the hierarchical model of clientelism, opponents of the stadholder developed a model of participatory citizenship. Sources of inspiration were found among political essayists abroad, particularly in the writings of such British Enlightenment philosophers as Price, Priestley, and Hutcheson, whose ideas were disseminated through the traditional broadsheets and also discussed in the popular political press, that developed more or less overnight in the early 1780s, building on an earlier tradition of political pamphleteering.<sup>45</sup> The new conception of citizenship was no longer corporate and local, but general and national. Citizens now became “the people of the Netherlands,” to whom an instantly famous pamphlet in 1781



addressed itself.<sup>46</sup> Instead of the mere membership of some corporate institution, the new citizenship required active participation in the affairs of the community, particularly in public administration. Citizenship, in other words, became strongly politicized, where before it had been just as much an economic and social institution. The political debate about citizenship linked up with the tradition of classical republicanism, as it had been developed in the Italian city-states of the Renaissance, and later on picked up by English political theorists of the seventeenth century.<sup>47</sup> The influence of classical republicanism was clearly visible in the appearance of authors and actors from Greek and Roman antiquity, who played no role whatsoever in the tradition of the “ancient constitution,” but were now presented as exemplary models.<sup>48</sup>

These new ideas sat somewhat uncomfortably side-by-side with the urban citizenship that was in many respects alive and well in the cities of the Dutch Republic. Urban citizenship, based on privileges and other texts of the “ancient constitution,” had in the past provided a rallying point for radical opposition movements.<sup>49</sup> The Patriots, even had they wanted to, could not afford to disregard this tradition. Political expediency dictated that attacks on the stadholder and his clients would be legitimized by arguments that appealed to the tradition at least as much as to the new ideas.

As a consequence, elements common to both traditions came to be highlighted, both in the discourse and in everyday practices of the Patriot revolutionaries, during the 1780s. In particular the citizen militias provided a common ground.<sup>50</sup> In the tradition of classic republicanism – one has only to think of Machiavelli – the citizen’s virtue was exemplified by his arms, which at one and the same time established him as an independent individual and as a member of the community willing to participate in the defense of the commonwealth. In the tradition of ancient constitutionalism, citizen militias signified the capacity of the urban community to maintain its independence. Hence, the militias could be, and in times of political troubles were, put forward as representing the body of the community, i.e., the burghers of the town.

In most cities, Patriot demands contained, almost without exception, a large dose of good old urban constitutionalism. In the city of Deventer, a radical draft-constitution (1787) managed to offend the guilds but nevertheless reserved the franchise for those who held (urban) citizen-

ship status.<sup>51</sup> In radical Utrecht, similar requirements were included in the Patriot program. In Bois-le-Duc, the local militias re-articulated their traditional rights and contribution to the community. Citizens, and more particularly the “native citizens,” pleaded their right to preferential treatment over those of alien stock.<sup>52</sup> All these local movements demonstrated that, for them, urban citizenship, even if it did not give the franchise to the citizenry, did provide a basis for collective action. This was the situation when the Patriot movement was forcefully suppressed in the late summer of 1787.

### **The national citizenship of the revolutionary era**

In the winter of 1794–1795 the Dutch Republic was occupied by French revolutionary forces, an event that was going to change the nature of the entire political system in the Netherlands.<sup>53</sup> Perforce, “transactions between persons and agents of state” went through a fundamental transformation as well. “Transformation” is perhaps the wrong word, because the men who came to power acted, as far as citizenship was concerned, as if they were confronted with a vacant lot. The new constitutions for the Batavian Republic, as they were put together in successive forms in 1796, 1797, and 1798, never ever referred to urban citizenship. They simply created a category of people that so far did not exist: the citizens of the Netherlands. Although one could assume that citizenship in the Batavian Republic was of French making, nothing in fact points in that direction. The goal of the French occupation was to extract a maximum of financial support from the Dutch.<sup>54</sup> To this end, French policy was to leave the Dutch politicians to look after the details themselves. Of course, the Dutch were aware of the example the French had set. Quite a few Dutch revolutionaries had actually been in France in 1789 and subsequent years. There is, however, no evidence of the French pushing their own political creations as models for the Dutch.

Remarkably, the national citizen, as he began to take shape in the first constitutional draft of 1796, was not a well-defined character. The second article of the draft simply stated that “[t]he sovereignty rests with the People of the Netherlands,” immediately followed by a third article that bound citizenship to the exercise of political rights: “3. This [sovereignty] is exercised by the enfranchised citizens....”<sup>55</sup> The qualities that were required of a citizen were therefore spelled out in a chapter devoted to the franchise. Citizenship was there defined as the

registration as a voter. Article 9 of the draft explicitly stated: "Every Citizen of the Netherlands who registers as voter ... thereby agrees to renounce all relations with other nationals, and to belong to no other than the Dutch Nation." Two further articles then went on to list who could be registered as voters, and who could not. Acceptable as voters, and implicitly as citizens (article 10) were those who 1) had been born within the Dutch Republic and had permanent residence there, and were 22 years of age; 2) aliens who had lived in the Republic for ten years, or 3) five years when married to a woman born in the Netherlands. A fourth clause stated that in ten-years time it would be required of voters that they could read and write. The list of reasons for exclusion (article 11) was much longer; it consisted of no less than nine categories: 1) those who went to live in another country; 2) those under legal restraint; 3) bankrupts; 4) those indicted, or dishonored by a legal judgement; 5) everyone in the service of a foreign power, either ecclesiastical or secular, or receiving pensions from such powers; 6) members of foreign corporations that require their members to take an oath; 7–8) everybody supported by ecclesiastical or public welfare, or living in welfare institutions; and finally 9) those who had bought or sold votes. Although this was not stated explicitly, the largest category excluded from citizenship, of course, consisted of women.

The 1796 draft never even got beyond the national parliament, which in itself was a product of the revolution too. This Constitutive was roughly divided between federalists and those in favor of a unified state. In 1796 the federalists still held the high ground. It is all the more remarkable that no reference was made to urban citizenship, and the way it might relate to national citizenship. Nonetheless, some important elements of citizenship as previously understood, did survive, particularly in the categories of exclusion. Their attempt to restrict voting, and by definition also citizenship, to those inhabitants who were economically and otherwise "independent," strongly resembles similar overtones in the urban traditions of citizenship. At the same time, various new elements were introduced, that were a far cry from the urban traditions. From a social point of view there was definitely much continuity. But politically, the picture suggests rupture, much more than a development from one type of citizenship to another.

A new draft, presented in 1797, changed some details as far as citizenship was concerned, but not the overall picture.<sup>56</sup> Aliens were now admissible to citizenship status after six years of residence, instead of ten. And when married to a Dutch woman, three years would do.

Newly added were four articles designed to make citizenship not merely a right, but in fact an obligation: anyone who had the qualities to vote, would have to register. Those who did not register would lose whatever public office or pension they had. Another addition was the requirement, on registration, to swear an oath, condemning the previous regime. This draft was put before the electorate in August 1797 – and rejected out-of-hand by a clear majority. The reasons for this rejection are not as yet well understood. Most historians seem to think that the draft was not radical enough, i.e., contained too many traces of federalism.<sup>57</sup> Some contemporaries, however, were of the opinion that it was the other way around: the destruction of the guilds announced in the constitution had discredited it with the electorate.<sup>58</sup> After a few months, in January 1798, the deadlock created by the rejection of the constitution was broken by the radicals. With the help of the French army, they executed a *coup d'état* on January 22, and immediately proclaimed the unified state, in which all other authorities, i.e., provinces and cities, were reduced to “mere administrative bodies.” The new state of affairs was to be legitimized shortly by a constitution, which proved to be acceptable to a thoroughly purged electorate.

The constitution of 1798 seemed to say that citizenship was of a very general nature, but could only be exercised after one had registered as a voter.<sup>59</sup> To this end, the same qualities were required as had been listed in the previous drafts, albeit again with minor variations. Aliens now had to be able to read and write the Dutch language. And the oath required a declaration of adherence to the new regime and of abhorrence of federalism. To the list of excluded was added a new category: private servants living with their masters.<sup>60</sup> Another new element was the formal certification of citizenship in the shape of an Act of Citizenship, that every one would receive who registered as voter.<sup>61</sup>

One remarkable aspect of the new conception of citizenship was the absence of any reference to the Jews. As we saw in section two, the urban constitutions considered them as the outsiders *par excellence*. Even if Jews were admitted to urban citizenship, they often remained subject to special clauses, such as a prohibition from joining a guild (Amsterdam), or a special tariff for registration. This special status was lifted in 1796, when the National Assembly decided that Jews could become citizens of the Batavian Republic. The debates on this issue were significant in at least two respects.<sup>62</sup> First, because they established that citizenship was an individual quality. As one member re-

marked: a well-ordered civil society should consist of “collected individual citizens and not of collected corporations.” Therefore, Jews were not admissible as a people, but only individually. The second significant aspect was the firm decision not to allow the provincial or local bylaws concerning the Jews to interfere with this national policy.

The new citizenship<sup>63</sup> defined the citizens’ claim on the state very widely and at the same time provided very little in terms of practical arrangements, outside the realm of politics, that is. The constitution of 1798 promised to “all members of society..., without distinction of birth, wealth, estate or rank, an equal claim on society’s advantages” (art. iii). Freedom of speech (xvi), the right to petition the government (xvii), the right of assembly (xviii), of public worship in any church (xix), and so on, were all granted, rights that were not self-evident or in fact explicitly missing (public worship outside the Dutch Reformed Church) from citizenship under the Old Regime.<sup>64</sup> Urban citizenship, on the other hand, had provided much more specific claims on the authorities, such as access to the guild-trades, trial before a local court, sometimes also privileged access to welfare institutions, that were absent from the new citizenship.

Significantly, the struggle between the old and the new citizenship was not battled out on the issue itself, but in relation with the institutional corollaries of urban citizenship: urban political autonomy, the organisation of the judiciary, and the guilds.<sup>65</sup> The political autonomy of Bois-le-Duc was reduced step-by-step from 1798 onwards. One significant phase, in 1803, demonstrates the process well. In 1802, all communities in the province of Brabant had received orders to draft a new local code. The draft from Bois-le-Duc contained such references to the old regime as “city,” instead of the neutral “community” now in vogue, it still demanded that members of the town council be citizens of Bois-le-Duc, it insisted on the continuation of the local court of law, and so on. All these elements were carefully removed when the provincial authorities edited the draft in January 1803. The council of Bois-le-Duc then refused to comply with these changes. It was only prepared to do so after several weeks of negotiations, which came to an end when the province threatened to publish the new code-book on its own authority, as well as “take such measures, the woeful consequences of which will harm the persons and families of the council and they will live to regret it.”<sup>66</sup> By gradually limiting the scope of urban autonomy, the central government of the Dutch state and its provincial agencies

indirectly subverted urban citizenship, which was withering away while national citizenship gained in significance.

## Conclusion

The Dutch Republic had a rich civic tradition, not least because it was one of the most urbanized countries of early modern Europe. With as much as 35 percent of the population living in cities,<sup>67</sup> and assuming that between a quarter and half of the inhabitants of towns were in fact citizens, urban citizenship may have covered as much as between 9 and 18 percent of the people of the Netherlands in the late eighteenth century. The example of Bois-le-Duc demonstrates that urban citizenship was a living institution. Although the Age of Enlightenment did add new elements to the idea of citizenship, the radical Patriot movement of the 1780s still worked to a large extent within the boundaries set by this urban tradition of citizenship.<sup>68</sup> Only after the French revolution and the invasion of the Dutch Republic by French revolutionary armies, in the winter of 1794–95, did new conceptions of citizenship emerge, to dominate the debate henceforth.

The new national citizenship was neither a transformed version of the older, urban citizenship, nor a full break with the past. Socially, the two types displayed some distinctive common traits, particularly in the emphasis on “independence” as a qualification for citizenship. Bankrupts, servants, and the poor could not be assumed to be able to decide for themselves. On this point, notions from the urban tradition were continued by the new regime. At the same time, citizenship was thrown open to rural folk, as well as urbanites. But the national citizenship that was bestowed on them was also of a more restricted character than its urban predecessor had been. Instead of an institution covering political, economic, social, and legal spheres, the new citizenship was restricted to the citizen’s political capacities. Given this combination of old and new elements, it is remarkable that the emergence of the new citizenship in the Netherlands did not lead to a genuine confrontation with the urban tradition of citizenship. Contrary to Brubaker’s statement that national citizenship was “constructed against urban autonomy and urban citizenship,” the Dutch experience suggests that the two floated past each other, almost without taking notice of each other, it seems. In this sense, the political rupture overrode the social continuities. The reason for that, I suggest, is that national citizenship in the Netherlands – and probably everywhere else in (continental)

Europe during the Revolutionary Era – was part of an effort to create something that had not existed before, i.e., domestic, in the sense of national, politics.

Before the French Revolution, “the state” had provided legal and military protection to its subjects, in exchange for a financial contribution, in the form of taxes or loans. Relationships between subjects and the state’s agents were usually indirect, as Tilly has pointed out. The revolutionary state, instead, sought to provide general “well-being” to its population, and without the intermediate services of corporations and individual brokers. The national citizen became both the object of the state’s new domestic services and the ultimate source of legitimacy of the state’s policies. In the end, national citizenship would prove to be incompatible with urban citizenship, and the local political autonomy implied in it. It was not, however through direct confrontation that the *Stadtbürger* was superseded by the *Staatbürger*, but through the creation of an alternative political domain. Within the national arena, new types of policies were appropriate, as well as new types of political strategy. Democracy, if that is what we want to call the rights given to the Dutch citizens, was not the product of demands put forward by an oppressed population, but a new institutional environment, imposed upon them by revolutionary elites.

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### Notes

1. Charles Tilly, “Citizenship, Identity, and Social History,” *International Review of Social History* 40 (1995, supplement 3): 8; also published by Cambridge University Press as Charles Tilly, editor, *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History*.



2. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 21–23.
3. Some villages in the province of Holland had inhabitants that were known as “citizens.” It is not entirely clear if there were special rights attached to this status. A. Th. van Deursen, *Een dorp in de polder. Graft in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1994), 192.
4. See the papers collected in Simona Cerutti, Robert Descimon, Maarten Prak, editors, “Cittadinanze,” *Quaderni Storici* 30 (1995, no. 89): 281–513; and in Marc Boone, Maarten Prak, editors, *Statuts individuels, statuts corporatifs et statuts judiciaires dans les villes européennes (moyen âge et temps modernes) – Individual, corporate and judicial status in European cities (late middle ages and early modern period)* (Leuven/Apeldoorn: Garant, 1996).
5. Derek Heater, *Citizenship: The civic ideal in world history, politics and education* (London: Longman, 1990), 37–52.
6. See the selection of primary texts in the reader by Paul Barry Clarke, editor, *Citizenship* (London: Pluto Press, 1994). T. H. Marshall, in his classic essay, acknowledged urban citizenship as “genuine,” but considered it irrelevant for the development of national citizenship: *Citizenship and social class and other essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 12.
7. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 42.
8. *Teegenwoordige Staat der Nederlanden*, vol. 12: Generaliteitslanden (Amsterdam: Isaac Tirion, 1740), 47.
9. Hubert Nusteling, *Welvaart en werkgelegenheid in Amsterdam, 1540–1860. Een relaas over demografie, economie en sociale politiek van een wereldstad* (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1985), 146; Maarten Prak, “Cittadini, abitanti e forestiere. Una classificazione della popolazione di Amsterdam nella prima età moderna,” *Quaderni Storici*, 30 (1995, no. 89): 335; G. Dumbar, *Het kerkelyk en wereltlyk Deventer*, vol. 1 (Deventer: Lucas Leemhorst, 1788), 22.
10. These data have been reconstructed on the basis of Municipal archive Bois-le-Duc (Stadsarchief 's-Hertogenbosch), Old archive (Oud archief), C 106, “Blokboeken” 1775. The exact number was 2,315 heads of households born in Bois-le-Duc, on a total of 4,817 households.
11. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 560, Register Van Heurn.
12. Prak, “Cittadini”: 336; J. A. Schimmel, *Burgerrecht te Nijmegen 1592–1810. Geschiedenis van de verlening en burgerlijst* (Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van het Zuiden van Nederland, vol. vii) (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 1966), 38–39.
13. F. M. H. C. Adriaens, *De magistraat van Nijmegen en de armenzorg (1825–1846)* (Bijdragen tot de sociale en economische geschiedenis van het Zuiden van Nederland, vol. ii) (Tilburg: Stichting tot bevordering van de studie der sociale en economische geschiedenis, 1956), 32–35; Wayne Ph. te Brake, *Regents and Rebels. The Revolutionary World of an Eighteenth-Century Dutch City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 93.
14. National archives in North-Brabant (Rijksarchief Noord-Brabant), Collection Martini 63, Collectanea Van Heurn, fol. 426r.
15. Printed in *'s-Hertogenbossche Comptoir en Schryfalmanach*, 1784, 112.
16. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 314, Letters and reports, May 16, 1787.
17. National archives in North-Brabant, Collection Martini, 62, Collectanea Van Heurn, fol. 122 (ii).
18. N. H. L. van den Heuvel, *De ambachtsgilden van 's-Hertogenbosch voor 1629*

- ('s-Hertogenbosch: Kemink, 1946), 277; B. C. M. Jacobs, *Justitie en politie in 's-Hertogenbosch voor 1629* (Brabantse Rechtshistorische reeks, vol. 1) (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986), 59–60, 206n60. Cf. also Knut Schultz, "Die politische Zunft. Eine die spätmittelalterliche Stadt prägende institution?" in Wilfried Ehbrecht, editor, *Verwaltung und Politik in Städten Mitteleuropas. Beiträge zu Verfassungswirklichkeit in Altständischer Zeit* (Städteforschung, vol. A34) (Cologne/Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 1–20.
19. National archives in North-Brabant, Collection Martini 123m, Codex Instructionem, fol. 28.
  20. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A560, Register Van Heurn, fol. 64v–65r.
  21. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A161, Resolutions, February 5, 1788, fol. 37r–42r.
  22. Municipal archive BLD, Bossche schuttersgilden (Archives of the citizen militias) 66a, Memorie by forme van Replicq gedaen maeken ... wegens de capiteijn en verder officieren van de Jonge Schuts Bogaert, 1768.
  23. *Brandt-keure der stadt 's-Hertogenbosch* (Bois-le-Duc, 1739).
  24. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A310, Letters and reports, March 5, 1783.
  25. Gerald L. Soliday, *A Community in Conflict: Frankfurt Society in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hanover N.H.: University Press of New Hampshire, 1974), 54–55; Dietrich Ebeling, *Bürgertum and Pöbel. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Kölns im 18. Jahrhundert* (Städteforschung, vol. A 26) (Cologne/Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1987), 33, 111.
  26. E.g., Karin Van Honacker, "De politieke cultuur van de Brusselse ambachten in de achttiende eeuw: conservatisme, corporatisme of opportunisme?" in Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, editors, *Werken volgens de regels. Ambachten in Brabant en Vlaanderen, 1500–1800* (Brussels: VUBPress, 1994), 179–228.
  27. Cf. Prak, "Cittadini," 344.
  28. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, C 106, "Blokboeken" and "Tauxen," 1775; Collection of additions, 8087, Citizens' register 1742–1775.
  29. Nusteling, *Welvaart en werkgelegenheid*, 146–147; Prak, "Cittadini," 336–337.
  30. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 313, Letters and reports, December 6, 1786.
  31. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, Inventory Van Rooy, Resolutions of the "Blok"masters: Blok A, January 26, 1770, fol. 34r–v.
  32. Maarten Prak, "Individual, corporation and society: the rhetoric of Dutch guilds," in Boone and Prak, editors, *Statuts individuels*, 255–279.
  33. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 146, Resolutions, November 10, 1773.
  34. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 316, Letters and reports, October 21, 1789.
  35. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 148. Resolutions, December 20, 1775, fol. 467r.
  36. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 148, Resolutions, October 25, 1775.
  37. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 304, Letters and reports, March 12, 1777.
  38. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 150, Resolutions, March 26, 1777.
  39. Municipal archive BLD, Collection of additions 8087, Citizens' register: Isak Moses (May 4, 1768), Jacob Joseph Cohen (May 30, 1769), Salomon Levi Oppenheim (June 14, 1769), Gerson Abraham Demorhansch, or de Morhansch (June 15, 1769), Simon Israel Ulman (February 11, 1771), Isak Benedictus (September 17, 1771), Marcus Levi (May 17, 1774).
  40. Municipal archive of BLD, Guilds' archives BLD, 185, Masters register of the shopkeepers' guild: Isak Moses 1768, Gerson Abaraham de Morhansch 176, Isaak Benediktus 1772.

41. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 317, Letters and reports, December 15, 1790.
42. Ibid.
43. Municipal archive BLD, Old archive, A 153, Resolutions, April 5, 1780, fol. 100v–103r.
44. A. J. C. M. Gabriëls, *De heren als dienaren en de dienaar als heer. Het stadhouderlijk stelsel in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw* (Hollandse Historische Reeks, vol. 14) (The Hague: Stichting HHR, 1990).
45. Nicolaas C. F. van Sas, "The Patriot Revolution: New Perspectives," in Margaret C. Jacob, Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, editors, *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992), 99–106.
46. Joan Derk van der Capellen, *Aan het volk van Nederland. Het patriottisch program uit 1781*, H. L. Zwitter, editor (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1987, orig. 1781).
47. Cf. J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment. Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). See also Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: the Career of a Concept," *Journal of American History* 7 (1992): 11–38.
48. S. R. E. Klein, *Patriots Republikenisme. Politieke cultuur in Nederland (1766–1787)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 212–214.
49. Maarten Prak, "Citizen radicalism and democracy in the Dutch Republic. The Patriot movement of the 1780s," *Theory and Society* 20 (1991): 73–102; Wayne Ph. te Brake, "Provincial Histories and National Revolution in the Dutch Republic," in Jacob and Mijnhardt, editors, *The Dutch Republic*, 60–90; Marc Boone, Maarten Prak, "Rulers, patricians and burghers: the Great and the Little traditions of urban revolt in the Low Countries," in Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen, editors, *A miracle mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 99–134.
50. Klein, *Patriots Republikenisme*, ch. 5; also Paul Knevel, *Burgers in het geweer. De schutterijen in Holland, 1550–1700* (Hollandse Studiën, vol. 32) (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), ch. 10.
51. te Brake, *Regents and rebels*, 136n9.
52. Municipal archive BLD, Old archives, A 159, Resolutions, January 4, 1786.
53. For the general history of these years, see Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators. Revolution in the Netherlands 1780–1813* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977).
54. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, 195–207.
55. Facsimile edition of the draft constitution, included in L. de Gou, editor, *Het plan van constitutie van 1796* (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, kleine serie, vol. 40) ('s-Gravenhage, 1975).
56. Facsimile of the draft of the constitution of 1797, included in L. de Gou, editor, *Het onderwerp van constitutie van 1797*, vol. III (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, kleine serie, vol. 57) ('s-Gravenhage, 1985), article 8–14.
57. E.g., Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, 270.
58. According to a pre-printed petition, to be signed by "Citizens of the Netherlands," "No doubt, among the reasons why the draft-constitution, that was recently put before the People of the Netherlands, has been turned down by such a large majority, not the least important has been the general destruction of all Guilds, Corporations and Brotherhoods of Trades, as it was included in that draft." Municipal archive Amsterdam, Amsterdam Library, B 1798, no. 6.
59. Article X of titel II reads: "Nobody, however, can, as a Batavian Citizen, exercise an immediate influence on the administration of Society, unless he has registered in

- the public Pollbook of the Community he belongs to.” L. de Gou, editor, *De staatsregeling van 1798. Bronnen voor de totstandkoming*, vol. 2 (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, kleine serie, vol. 67) ('s-Gravenhage, 1990), 114.
60. Ibid., p. 115, titul II, art. XIII.d.
  61. Ibid., p. 114, titul II, art. XII.
  62. This section is based on A. Huussen, Jr., “De Gelijktelling der Joden met andere Nederlandse Burgers in 1796,” in Reender Kranenborg, Wessel Stoker, editors, *Religies en (on)gelijkheid in een plurale samenleving* (Louvain/Apeldoorn: Garant, 1995), 149–160; quotation at 155.
  63. Further constitutions did not diverge significantly from the pattern established in the 1790s, as is demonstrated by Eric J. M. Heijs, *Van vreemdeling tot Nederlander. De verlening van het Nederlandschap aan vreemdelingen (1813–1992). Een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de rechtsgeleerdheid* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1995), ch. 2.
  64. De Gou, editor, *Staatsregeling van 1798*, 106–109; quote on 106.
  65. On the suppression of the guilds: C. Wiskerke, *De afschaffing der gilden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Paris, 1938).
  66. Municipal archive BLD, New archives, 4, Minutes, February 24, 1803. Cf. Maarten Prak, “Van stadsregering naar gemeentebestuur. De veranderende plaats van de stad in the staatkundig bestel 1770–1848,” in Aart Vos, editor, *Bestuurders in het archief. Symposium ter gelegenheid van het 150-jarig bestaan van het Stadsarchief 's-Hertogenbosch* (Publicaties van het Stadsarchief van 's-Hertogenbosch, vol. 3) (Den Bosch: Stadsarchief, 1991), 16.
  67. Estimate on the basis of data from the first national census in 1795, provided in A. M. van der Woude, “Demografische ontwikkeling van de Noordelijke Nederlanden 1500–1800,” in D. P. Blok et al., editors, *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, vol. 5 (Bussum: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1980), 139.
  68. Cf. Prak, “Citizen radicalism.”