

Confessional Coexistence and Perceptions of the ‘Public’

Catholics’ Agency in Negotiations on Poverty and Charity in
Utrecht, 1620s-1670s¹

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The reorganisation of the poor relief system in Dutch cities in the second half of the seventeenth century marked a new manner of confessional coexistence in which dissenting communities were entrusted to care for their own poor co-religionists. In the negotiations to solve the financial problems of Utrecht from the 1620s to the 1670s, which led to the separation of charity along confessional lines in 1674, Catholics did not remain passive. They were one of the actors, along with the Dutch Reformed Church and the political authorities. All the actors attempted to defend their own interests by referring to the term ‘public’ based on their own definition. Catholics actively created room for survival by participating in the delimitation of the ‘public’. The public sphere was a much more dynamic space and Catholics had much more active agency in the delimitation of the ‘public’ than previous studies have assumed.

De reorganisatie van het armenzorgsysteem in Nederlandse steden in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw werd gekenmerkt door een nieuwe manier van confessionele co-existentie waarin religieuze dissidenten de zorg voor hun armen werd toevertrouwd. Katholieken bleven niet passief tijdens de onderhandelingen voor de oplossing van de financiële problemen van Utrecht in de jaren 1620 tot 1670, die in 1674 tot de verdeling van liefdadigheidswerk langs confessionele lijnen leidde. Zij waren één van de actoren naast de Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk en de politieke autoriteiten. Alle actoren probeerden hun belangen te verdedigen door te verwijzen naar de term ‘publiek’ op basis van hun eigen definitie van dat begrip. Door deel te nemen aan de afbakening van het ‘publieke’, schiepen katholieken

ruimte om zich te handhaven. De publieke sfeer was een veel dynamischer ruimte en katholieken hadden veel meer actieve *agency* in de afbakening van het ‘publieke’ dan voorgaande studies doen vermoeden.

Introduction

In November 1675, the burgomasters of Utrecht summoned two prominent Catholic laymen and accused them of the ‘public collection’ (*publijcke collectie*) of alms. The Catholics, in turn, stated that their collection had been done ‘in silence and not publicly’ (*in stilte en niet publijckelyck*). Moreover, they reminded the burgomasters how the Catholic poor had been excluded from municipal charity as part of a reorganisation of relief for the poor shortly after the end of the French occupation of Utrecht (1672–1673). Thereupon one of the burgomasters, Johan van Nellesteyn laid a hand on his breast and vowed that the municipal charity had been re-established ‘not out of religious hatred but only because of the financial shortage’ (*niet uyt haet van religie maer alleen uyt gebreck van finantie*). According to him, in order to save the municipal economy from collapsing, there was no other means than the reorganisation of the poor relief system.²

Early modern multi-confessional societies, among which the Dutch Republic is regarded as a typical case,³ saw religious diversity as a major threat to politico-religious stability. To counter this threat, political authorities attempted to exclude religious dissenters from the public sphere, denying them access to public office, public worship, and public finances. In particular, the financial policies affected the dissenters, the survival of whose confessional community required their own corporate financial base. Thus, studies on solutions for the financial problems of multi-confessional societies are vital for understanding confessional coexistence and dissenters’ tactics for survival. How did Catholics, the most vigorous dissenting community in the Dutch Republic, respond to the policies of the Reformed government, which tried to exclude them from the public sphere?

In the mid-twentieth century, when the Dutch historiography was itself divided into confessional groups of the ‘pillarised’ (*verzuild*) society, the Catholic historian Lodewijk J. Rogier expounded upon the ‘protestantisation’ (*protestantisering*) of the early modern Northern Netherlands. According to Rogier, this gradual but compulsory process was forced by the political, social

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2 Het Utrechts Archief (hereafter HUA), Oude rooms-katholieke aalmoezenierskamer te Utrecht (hereafter O.R.K.A.) 1, 16 November 1675.

3 Thomas M. Safley, ‘Multiconfessionalism: A Brief Introduction’, in: Idem (ed.), *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World* (Leiden 2011) 7, 18.

and economic pressures from the public church (*publieke kerk* or *openbare kerk*), that is, the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*). Among such pressures, Rogier specified publicly funded Reformed charity as a means of recruiting for their church the poor from the non-Reformed communities which were denied the corporate rights.⁴

In the past several decades, however, researchers have attempted to overcome a static confessional and nationalistic historiography. One such attempt in the historiography of the Dutch Republic was the introduction of the framework of 'civic community', which had been developed in studies on the Reformation in German cities.⁵ Several historians working from this perspective, among them Charles Parker and Jo Spaans, undermined Rogier's 'protestantisation' thesis. According to them, even after the Reformation, public welfare remained based on the concept of the unity of a sacral and civic community as well as the charitable activities of various confessional groups.⁶ Eventually, according to Spaans, in the second half of the seventeenth century the poor relief system was reorganised along confessional lines, initiated by city magistrates in numerous Dutch cities. By defining which poor belonged to which church, the city magistrates clarified the boundaries between confessional communities. This policy recognised the dissenting communities as legitimate parts of the civic community with their own corporate financial base.⁷

Most recently, this reorganisation of the poor relief system has been investigated in an attempt to verify the extent to which early modern Dutch society was integrated and/or segregated.⁸ Bertrand Forclaz, for example,

4 Lodewijk J. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme in Noord-Nederland in de 16^e en 17^e eeuw*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam 1945-1947) 1:420-489.

5 For a groundbreaking study on the 'urban Reformation' in German cities, see Bernd Moeller, *Reichsstadt und Reformation* (Berlin 1987, translated into Japanese 1989).

6 Charles H. Parker, *The Reformation of Community: Social Welfare and Calvinist Charity in Holland, 1572-1620* (Cambridge 1998); Joke Spaans, *Haarlem na de Reformatie. Stedelijke cultuur en kerkelijk leven, 1578-1620* (The Hague 1989) 163-189.

7 Joke Spaans, *Armenzorg in Friesland 1500-1800. Publieke zorg en particuliere liefdadigheid in zes Friese steden. Leeuwarden, Bolsward, Franeker, Sneek, Dokkum en Harlingen* (Hilversum 1997) 227-282; Idem, 'Katholieken onder curatele. Katholieke armenzorg als ingang voor overheidsbemoeyenis in Haarlem in de achttiende eeuw', *Trajecta* 3 (1994) 111-120; Idem, 'Religious

Policies in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic', in: Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and Religious Tolerance in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge 2002) 82-85.

8 Benjamin J. Kaplan, 'Integration vs Segregation: Religiously Mixed Marriage and the "verzuiling" Model of Dutch Society', in: Idem et al. (eds.), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands, c. 1570-1720* (Manchester 2009) 52, 62. This debate was stimulated by Simon Groenveld, who ascribed confessional coexistence to the segregation of Dutch society, theorising a prefiguration of the patterns of 'pillarisation' (*verzuiling*) from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries. Simon Groenveld, *Huisgenoten des geloofs. Was de samenleving in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden verzuild?* (Hilversum 1995). Especially on the confessional 'pillarisation' of charity, see *ibid.*, 26-31.

analysed confessional coexistence in seventeenth-century Utrecht, focusing on Catholics in particular, and detected a tendency towards confessional segregation at the institutional level in the second half of the seventeenth century. One of his examples was the establishment of the Catholic *Aalmoenzienskamer* (chamber of charity) in 1674. However, he emphasised the integration of civic community beyond confessional differences, referring to the multi-confessional reality in the parish charity and hospices as an example.⁹ Likewise in his study on the Catholic nobility in Utrecht, Jaap Geraerts revealed that Catholic nobles continued to donate money to general funds for the local poor irrespective of confessional affiliation, although, after the establishment of the Catholic *Aalmoenzienskamer* in 1674, they seemed to find it easier to give money to their poor co-religionists. By serving the local community regardless of religious convictions, Geraerts argued, ‘Catholic nobles were able, in spite of their religious allegiance, to assert their continuous presence in the public space of seventeenth century Dutch society’.¹⁰

However, the reorganisation of the poor relief system along confessional lines has been studied mainly at the institutional level from the perspective of city magistracies. There has been no attempt so far to investigate the agency of Catholics in negotiations on poverty and charity of the civic community, which eventually caused their exclusion from public welfare, although recent research on Dutch Catholics has corrected their passive image.¹¹ Therefore, this paper analyses the course of such negotiations in Utrecht from the 1620s to the 1670s in the framework of civic community from the perspective of Catholics. Utrecht was a stronghold for both the Reformed and the Catholic Churches in the Northern Netherlands.¹² In particular, remnants of the pre-Reformation ecclesiastical organisations and of their endowments in Utrecht offered Catholics a power base for rebuilding a confessional community.¹³ Thus, Utrecht lends itself to being a unique case study of Catholics’ agency.

Furthermore, this paper discusses the mechanisms of confessional coexistence from the viewpoint of the negotiations to solve the financial

9 Bertrand Forclaz, *Catholiques au défi de la Réforme. La coexistence confessionnelle à Utrecht au XVII^e siècle* (Paris 2014) 244-262.

10 Jaap Geraerts, *The Catholic Nobility in Utrecht and Guelders, c.1580-1702* (PhD dissertation; University College London 2015) 95-100, here especially 99-100. I would like to thank Dr. Geraerts for sending me a copy of his dissertation.

11 For an innovative work which has reoriented scholars’ attention on Dutch Catholics from nationalistic victimisation, see Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge 2008).

12 Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 31-100.

13 *Ibid.*, 42-48; Adrianus J. van de Ven, *Over den oorsprong van het Aartsbisschoppelijke Kapittel van Utrecht der Oude-Bisschoppelijke clerezij* (Utrecht 1923) 40-61.

problems of the multi-confessional civic community. For the past two decades, the 'public/private' distinction has been seen as a key element in understanding early modern toleration at the practical level.¹⁴ Arguments on such distinction in the Dutch Republic can be roughly classified into two types.¹⁵ First, scholars, such as Christine Kooi argued that the boundary between 'public' and 'private' would be clarified over time, especially in the second half of the seventeenth century, thanks to the political authorities.¹⁶ Thus, she represented dissenters as recipients of toleration granted by magistrates and played down dissenters' role in the process of distinguishing between 'public' and 'private'. Second, Willem Frijhoff and Benjamin Kaplan maintained that the line between 'public' and 'private' essentially remained vague and thus open to struggles and negotiations.¹⁷ However, in his article 'Fictions of Privacy', Kaplan stated that 'dissenters participated in the fiction [of privacy] by refraining from challenging the monopoly over public religious life'.¹⁸ Here again, dissenters were passively depicted, and their agency for the realisation of a multi-confessional society was underestimated. In seventeenth-century Utrecht, were Catholics passive recipients of toleration granted by the political authority? Did they escape from the public sphere, conforming to the existing norm of the 'public/private' distinction? In order to answer these questions, this paper attempts to clarify perceptions of the 'public' which the participants, especially Catholics, possessed in the negotiations on poverty and charity in Utrecht.

Before the French Occupation

In the Dutch Republic, although the Dutch Reformed Church was called the 'public church', church membership was voluntary. Many remained

- 14 Willem Frijhoff, 'Dimensions de la coexistence confessionnelle', in: Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, Jonathan Israel and Meyjes Posthumus (eds.), *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden 1997); Idem, *Embodied Belief: Ten Essays on Religious Culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum 2002) 39-65; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines: Confessions and Community in Utrecht, 1578-1620* (Oxford 1995), 38, 263, 266-267, 270-272, 295, 302; Idem, 'Fictions of Privacy: House Chapels and the Spatial Accommodation of Religious Dissent in Early Modern Europe', *American Historical Review* 107 (2002); Christine Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics during Holland's Golden Age: Heretics and Idolaters* (Cambridge 2012); Idem, *Liberty and Religion: Church and State in Leiden's Reformation, 1572-1620* (Leiden 2000) 162-195, 203-204, 213-214.
- 15 Genji Yasuhira, 'Interconfessional Relations and the Function of Toleration: The Struggle for the Practice of Faith in Utrecht during the 1670s', *The Shirin or the Journal of History* 98:2 (2015, written in Japanese) 5-6, 8, 31-35.
- 16 Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics*, 90-129, 217, 221-222.
- 17 Frijhoff, 'Dimensions', 228-237; Idem, *Embodied Belief*, 57-65; Kaplan, 'Fictions of Privacy', 1036, 1056.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 1061.

‘sympathisers’ (*liefhebbers*) of the Reformed Church; they attended the religious services of the public church but were not subject to its discipline.¹⁹ When the Union of Utrecht was concluded in January 1579, the city council of Utrecht endorsed the ‘religious peace’. This created a bi-confessional system, which allowed both Reformed and Catholic believers to hold public office and use public church buildings.²⁰ Nevertheless, although in the general population of Utrecht, the number of Catholics was at least comparable with that of the Reformed throughout the seventeenth century,²¹ Catholics were deprived of the aforementioned rights in the public sphere in the 1580s.²²

Starting in 1578, the Reformed diaconate began providing alms in cash and commodities to the working poor (*huiszittende armen*), regardless of religion. Besides the diaconate, Utrecht had charitable institutions which dated back to mediaeval times, such as hospitals, hospices, orphanages and free apartments.²³ However, the diaconate suffered from a chronic lack of money – deacons felt obliged to lend money from their own pockets but could not be reimbursed.²⁴ Thus, in 1627 the Reformed consistory appealed to the city council to reduce the ‘excessive burden’ on the diaconate.²⁵ In the session of the city council that discussed this appeal, burgomaster Johan Florisz. van der Nijpoort stated that Catholics had their own illegal means to support their poor and that some rich Catholics skimmed on their contributions to the collection for the diaconate, favouring the charity within their community.²⁶ By that time, collections by and for Catholics had already been outlawed. Utrecht accepted a harsh anti-Catholic edict issued by the States-General in 1621 that prohibited Catholics from collecting money, possessing a communal fund and sending money to the religious in Catholic lands.²⁷ However, at least

19 Arie Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen. Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt* (Assen 1974) 128-160.

20 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, 262-264.

21 Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 83-87.

22 Johan van de Water, *Groot Placaat-Boek vervattende all de placaten ... der Staten 's lands van Utrecht* (hereafter, G.P.U.), 3 vols. (Utrecht 1729) 1:158-160, 350-351, 3:466-467.

23 For the history of charity in Utrecht, see Johannes H. Adriani, *De Stads-Aalmoezenierskamer te Utrecht 1628-1928* (Utrecht 1928); Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 244-262; Geraerts, *The Catholic Nobility*, 95-100; Ton H.M. van Schaik and Karin Strengers-Olde Kalter, *Het arme roomse leven. Geschiedenis van de katholieke caritas in de stad Utrecht* (Hilversum 2016); Daniëlle Teeuwen,

Financing Poor Relief through Charitable Collections in Dutch Towns, c. 1600-1800 (Amsterdam 2016) passim; Idem, “‘Vande groote swaricheyt der armen dezer stad’”. De reorganisatie van de armenzorg in Utrecht, 1580-1674’, *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* (2010); H.J.W. Verhey, *300 jaar aalmoezenierszorg. Geschiedenis van de Roomsche Katholieke Aalmoezenierskamer te Utrecht, (1674-1746) en van de Oude Roomsche-Katholieke Aalmoezenierskamer te Utrecht, (1746-1974)* (Rotterdam 1974).

24 HUA, Nederlandse hervormde gemeente Utrecht, kerkeraad (hereafter, KR) 3, 8, 15, 22, 30 July 1627.

25 *Ibid.*, 5 August 1627; HUA, Stadsarchief II (hereafter, SAII), 121-12, 6, 27 August 1627.

26 *Ibid.*, 6 August 1627.

27 Water, G.P.U., 1:397-400.

around 1630, the consistory and the political authorities in Utrecht learned from a converted ex-priest that the Catholic community in the city had its own fund and held a weekly collection.²⁸ On this matter, nevertheless, Catholics evaded legal sanctions until 1640.²⁹

In 1628, as a result of the aforementioned appeal from the consistory, the city council established a municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* for serving the working poor who did not hold membership in the Reformed Church but had resided in the city for four years (in the same month, this regulation was modified to six years). Henceforth, the Reformed diaconate was to care only for members of their community. The sixteen posts for the trustees (*regenten*) of the *Aalmoezenierskamer* (excluding a bookkeeper) were to be distributed in equal numbers between Reformed and Catholic 'qualified persons'. The inclusion of Catholic administrators was expected to stimulate Catholics to contribute substantially, and more generously than before, to public welfare.³⁰

However, this bi-confessional administration of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* was short-lived. Hospices for the elderly and the sick in Utrecht retained their Christian character even after the Reformation and remained accessible to Catholics.³¹ Under pressure from the Reformed Church, the city council decided in 1615 and again in 1620 that the trustees and servants of hospices had to be Reformed. Nevertheless, this regulation was disregarded; hence, the city council reissued the same edict once again in August 1637.³² One month later, three Catholic laymen, who had just been chosen as new trustees of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*, appeared before the city council. They argued that if they, as Catholics, were eligible as trustees of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*, they should also be allowed on the boards of hospices. In the end, the city council decided that these three Catholics would be discharged because of this proposal and that three Reformed should be appointed in their place.³³ In the next year, the magistracy decreed that the trustees of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* were to be elected only from among Reformed.³⁴

Around the mid-seventeenth century, the shortage of money became a more serious problem for the public welfare in Utrecht, and the influx of 'foreigners', which included many non-Reformed indigents, was regarded as a major cause of this matter. In 1648, the same year when the Peace of Westphalia was concluded to end the Eighty Years' War against Spain, the

28 Samuel Muller (ed.), 'Getuigenis van een afvalligen priester over de organisatie der rooms-katholieke kerk in Nederland omstreeks 1630', *Archief voor de geschiedenis van het aartsbisdom Utrecht* (hereafter A.A.U.) 14 (1886) 242-243.

29 Jan Hallebeek, 'Godsdienst(on)vrijheid in de Gouden Eeuw? Het proces tegen Johan Wachtelaer (1583-1652)', *Trajecta* 23 (2014) 129-134.

30 HUA, SAII, 121-12, 5 May, 6, 27 August 1627; HUA, SAII, 121-13, 1 September 1628; HUA, SAII, 1824, 1 September 1628; Water, G.P.U., 3:556.

31 Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 253-256.

32 HUA, SAII, 121-6, 4 December 1615; HUA, SAII, 121-8, 29 May 1620; HUA, SAII, 121-17, 28 August 1637.

33 *Ibid.*, 27 September 1637.

34 HUA, SAII, 121-18, 14 August 1638.

Reformed consistory drew up a petition to the city council demanding strict countermeasures against Catholics, who injured the ‘prosperity of the City’. The next year, two Reformed ministers intervened in a session of the city council and pushed the magistrates to exclude Catholic newcomers from citizenship, which conferred some economic advantages and even limited political influence.³⁵ In 1651, the trustees of the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer* saw themselves compelled by financial problems to advance a proposal to the city council to dissolve their chamber and once again centralise the charity for all working poor under the Reformed diaconate.³⁶ This was not realised, but after 1654, people had to testify that they had lived in the city for more than eight years without obtaining any alms in order to secure a residence permit in the city.³⁷ Furthermore, the city council decided in 1654 that applicants for citizenship, especially Catholics, had to provide testimony of ‘their religion and comportment’. The next year, after receiving complaints from the consistory about the influx of Catholics into Utrecht, the city council prescribed that Catholic newcomers could not acquire citizenship unless the city council approved them ‘unanimously because of some evident reasons’ – that is, unless their usefulness for and loyalty to the civic community were beyond doubt.³⁸

Nevertheless, the financial problems of the public charitable institutions could not be solved. Thus, on several occasions in 1655, the Reformed consistory suggested the separation of charity along confessional lines.³⁹ On 29 October 1655, the consistory drafted a petition to the city council complaining that the number of Catholics was growing because of their ‘private alms’ (*private bedeylinge*). Supported by these alms, indigent Catholics from elsewhere could settle and stay in the city illegally until they were entitled to receive alms from the municipal charity. In other words, the petition insisted, the Catholic poor received their ‘secret alms’ (*heimelijke bedeylinge*) as well as the ‘public alms’ (*publijcke bedeylinge*) of the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer*. In addition, Catholics contributed little to the ‘public collection’ (*publijcke collecten*) but instead sent money illegally to Brabant and Flanders to maintain their religion there. According to the petition, all this was harmful to the ‘Public good and the [public] church’ (*Gemene best en kercke*). In order to solve these problems, the consistory proposed the separation of charity along confessional lines, limiting the alms of the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer* to the ‘sympathisers’. This would allow the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer*

35 HUA, KR, 5, 28 February 1648; HUA, SAI, 121-23, 17, 19 December 1649. On citizenship and newcomers in Utrecht, see Maarten Prak, ‘The Policies of Intolerance: Citizenship and Religion in the Dutch Republic (Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries)’, in: Hsia and Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*; Ronald Rommes, *Oost, west, Utrecht best? Driehonderd jaar migratie en*

migranten in de stad Utrecht (begin 16^e – begin 19^e eeuw) (Amsterdam 1998) 36-62.

36 HUA, SAI, 121-24, 8 September 1651.

37 Water, *G.P.U.*, 3:559.

38 HUA, SAI, 121-25, 21 August 1654, 12 June 1655; Water, *G.P.U.*, 3:271.

39 HUA, KR, 6, 12 February 1655; HUA, SAI, 121-25, 7 May 1655.

and the diaconate, both of which were 'public' in character, to improve their finances. Catholics were to support their poor co-religionists only by their own alms. Thus the conversion of wavering poor to 'Papists' could be prevented.⁴⁰

It should be noted that in Utrecht, it was not the city magistrates but the Reformed consistory that attempted to reorganise the poor relief system along confessional lines. By separating charity, they expected to curb the harmful effect on the 'public good' caused by Catholics. Here the term 'public' meant the confessionalised community, characterised by a close relationship between the official church and the government. However, the city council ignored the wishes of the consistory.⁴¹ No institutional reforms were introduced, although an important change can be seen at the practical level. Starting around 1650, Catholics were to be appointed as trustees of the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer* again.⁴² Perhaps this was done to induce Catholics to contribute more to the 'public collection'. Although a numerical balance in the administration of municipal charity was out of the question, Catholics were not totally excluded from the public welfare, in spite of the demands of the public church.

During the French Occupation

On 13 June 1672, Utrecht was occupied by the French army.⁴³ In a letter dated 10 September, the apostolic vicar (the highest Catholic prelate in

40 HUA, KR, 6, 29 October 1655. Here the consistory thought that the number of 'sympathisers' should be increased, but they attempted to defend the purity of the communion against the 'hypocrites' who would seek membership in the Reformed Church only in order to receive alms from the diaconate. Thus this petition does not prove Rogier's 'protestantisation' thesis.

41 Two years later, the consistory urged the city council to carry out the plan suggested by the consistory in 1655. HUA, SAIL, 121-26, 23 March 1657. For competing concepts of poor relief based on the different understanding of the concept of community between the Reformed Church and the political authorities, see Parker, *The Reformation of Community*, especially 155-188.

42 For the Catholic trustees elected in 1648/49, 1651 and 1655/56, see Marten Jan Bok and Marcel Roethlisberger, *Abraham Bloemaert and His Sons: Paintings and Prints*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk 1993) 1:611.

For those elected from 1655 to 1673, see HUA, SAIL, 464, 1825-3, 1825-4, 1825-5.

43 For the French occupation in Utrecht, see Suzanna Jessurun-ten Dam Ham, *Utrecht in 1672 en 1673* (Utrecht 1934); Jan den Tex, *Onder vreemde heren. De Republiek der Nederlanden 1672-1674* (Zutphen 1982). For Catholics during the occupation, see Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 181-225; Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, 2:203-215; Idem, 'Neercassel en het vaderland in 1672', *Verslag van de Algemeene Vergadering der leden van het Historisch Genootschap gehouden te Utrecht op 31 oktober 1949* (1950); Matthieu G. Spiertz, *L'Église catholique des Provinces Unies et le Saint-Siège pendant la deuxième moitié du XVII^e siècle* (Leuven 1975) 115-125. Concerning the date, the present paper refers only to the Julian calendar, which was employed in Utrecht until the eighteenth century, although the Gregorian calendar was utilised during the French occupation.

the Northern Netherlands since 1592) Johannes van Neercassel, who stayed in Utrecht during the occupation, begged Louis XIV to grant ‘liberty and public temples for Catholic worship, stipends to their priests, and honourable offices to the aristocrats’.⁴⁴ Indeed, some public church buildings, including the former cathedral, the Dom, were ‘returned’ to Catholic use.⁴⁵ However, the French army did not allow Catholics access to public offices.⁴⁶

On 12 August 1672, the city council decided, upon a request from Catholics, that the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* would henceforth be administered by an equal number of Reformed and Catholic trustees.⁴⁷ Indeed in September, of the sixteen posts in the chamber, the Reformed occupied eight, although seven Catholics had to share their half of the board with one Remonstrant. The same confessional ratio was preserved the next year.⁴⁸ Although it is not clear whether pressure from the French army motivated this institutional change, it seemed to follow the same direction as the French army’s policy of distributing public church buildings both to the Reformed and the Catholic communities, based on the design of the ‘religious peace’ concluded a century earlier in this city.⁴⁹

Utrecht was forced to offer a great deal of money, commodities and billets to the French army. Heavy taxes were levied almost every month during the occupation without any consideration for religion. One day a Catholic priest went to Governor Pierre Stoupe, who ruled the city during the occupation, to explain the indigence of his community. Stoupe told him that ‘as they [inhabitants of Utrecht] ate and drank together equally, they had to pay equally what they were taxed on’.⁵⁰ Catholics needed to realise that the French king was not the saviour they had expected.⁵¹ On 9 October 1672, the Provincial States of Utrecht drew up a petition to Louis XIV in order

44 For the transcription of this letter, see *ibid.*, 160-161.

45 For the struggles over church buildings and rituals in Utrecht during the French occupation, see Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 188-202; Angela Vanhaelen, *The Wake of Iconoclasm: Painting the Church in the Dutch Republic* (University Park 2012) 130-158; Yasuhira, ‘Interconfessional Relations’, 17-25.

46 There was only one Catholic advocate Cornelis van Wijckersloot, who was appointed as a councillor in the Provincial Court of Utrecht by the French shortly before the end of the occupation. HUA, Familie Van Wijckerslooth, 51; HUA, SAII, 121-28, 1 November 1673, HUA, Staten

van Utrecht (hereafter svu) 232-36, 1, 2 November 1673.

47 HUA, SAII, 121-28, 12 August 1672.

48 HUA, SAII, 1825-5, 16 August, 7 September 1672, 26 August, 3 September 1673.

49 Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 211; Yasuhira, ‘Interconfessional Relations’, 21.

50 Tobias van Domselaer, *Het Ontroerde Nederlandt, door de wapenen des Konings van Vrankryk ...*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam 1674-1676) 2:233; Petrus Valkenier, *Vervolg van 't Verwerd Europa of Politijcke en Historische Beschryving ...* (Amsterdam 1688) 324-325.

51 For the Catholics’ utopian expectation, see Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, 153-213.

to bring Utrecht's financial situation to his attention.⁵² According to the diary of the regent Everard Booth, when the nobleman Jean Louis Godin van Maarssebroek was elected to lead a delegation from Utrecht to Paris on 12 October, someone proposed that the apostolic vicar Neercassel accompany Maarssebroek. However, out of fear that Neercassel would ask the French king for more churches for Catholics, this proposal was rejected.⁵³ Given the 'bitter poverty' in the city and a remonstrance from the bookkeeper of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*, the city council decided in November 1672 to organise an extraordinary collection of alms from the whole city during the winter for the poor and especially for those who were forced to offer billets to French soldiers.⁵⁴ After that, the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* appealed to the city council for the repayment of substantial loans that they had tendered since the French occupation began, as they could not continue to support the poor otherwise. The city council took the matter seriously; hence, they decided to refund the payments to the trustees and required the wealthy to provide a certain amount of money for the poor each week.⁵⁵

Demands from the French army escalated even further. Around the end of 1672, the local magistrates offered the 'chimney tax' (*haertstedegelt* or *schoorsteengelt*) for 1671 and 1672, which had not been collected at that time, to the occupants, and the latter got a list of defaulters on this tax.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the French army's requirement could not be satisfied. Thus, Intendant (the highest civil servant in the occupied area) Louis Robert declared the levying of an additional 'chimney tax' (called *le droit des cheminées* in French), which was imposed on every fireplace in all houses, and poor soldiers were billeted with unwilling families until the families paid this tax. According to Booth's diary, Neercassel heard that a pharmacist called Vosch was pressed to pay although he had declared his indigence. Neercassel then made a direct appeal to the Duke of Luxembourg and succeeded in obtaining his promise that people would be permitted to reduce their tax payments to their financial means and that, for the poor, it would be sufficient to declare their indigence. When Neercassel explained this from the pulpit, he received plenty of applause from

52 Gisbert Brom (ed.), 'Neercassel's zending naar Lodewijk XIV in 1673', *A.A.U.* 22 (1895) 108-109; Christian W. Moorrees and Petrus J. Vermeulen, *Vervolg van Mr. Johan van de Water's Groot Plakkaatboek 's Lands van Utrecht. Van den vroegsten tijd af tot het jaar 1810*, 2 vols. (Utrecht 1856-1860) 1:273-274.

53 Everard Booth, 'Dagelijksche aantekeningen gedurende het verblijf der Franschen te Utrecht in 1672 en 1673', *Berigten van het Historisch Genootschap te Utrecht* 6 (1857), 38-43, 46.

54 HUA, SAII, 121-28, 2, 4 November 1672. See also Booth, *Dagelijksche aantekeningen*, 54-55.

55 *Ibid.*, 61, 64-65, 68; HUA, SAII, 121-28, 23 November 1672; HUA, SAII, 936, 18 November 1672.

56 Booth, 'Dagelijksche aantekeningen', 62, 64-65; HUA, SAII, 121-28, 29 November, 5 December 1672; HUA, SAII, 232-35, 27 November, 5, 13 December 1672; Abraham de Wicquefort, *Journal, of dagelijksch verhael van de handel der Franschen in de steden van Uytrecht en Woerden...* (Amsterdam 1674) 122-129; Water, *G.P.U.*, 2:574-575.

Catholics, and money was restored to the aforementioned Vosch. After that, Neercassel and some magistrates pleaded with Intendant Robert to suspend the chimney tax. However, Robert hardly listened to the appeal and even suspected that the inhabitants were concealing their property and secretly sending money to Stadholder William III.⁵⁷

On the same day as the appeal was made to the Intendant, Neercassel decided to go to Paris to join the delegation, whose negotiations had not gone smoothly, to beg the French king for mercy concerning the financial situation of Utrecht.⁵⁸ The Provincial States of Utrecht, sceptical of Neercassel's motivation for leaving the city, ordered Maarssebroek to keep his eye on him.⁵⁹ According to Neercassel's own reports to the Provincial States of Utrecht in February and March 1673, he succeeded in having audiences with Louvois, the minister of war, and Louis XIV himself, and in obtaining a promise to reduce the burden imposed on inhabitants in the occupied area. Then on 14 March, he left Paris for Utrecht.⁶⁰ In Neercassel's absence, the magistrates in Utrecht continued to try to extract a concession from the occupants on the taxes. However, according to a report by Lambert van Velthuysen (a member of the city council and a famous defender of the dissenters' status) dated 10 February, Intendant Robert refused to listen to the complaints from the locals. Robert defended changing his mind about the aforementioned discount on the chimney tax on grounds of an abuse he found in the list of alleged defaulters of this tax for 1671 and 1672. According to Robert, this list consisted mainly of Catholics, many of who could prove that they had paid the tax but whose names were nonetheless recorded there 'unequally'. Although Velthuysen insisted that this had happened by accident, Robert regarded it as an intentional 'bias' against Catholics and ordered rigorous collection of the chimney tax without any reduction.⁶¹

Although magistrates in Utrecht trusted the result achieved by the aforementioned petition in Paris, Intendant Robert did not compromise sufficiently on the amount of taxes.⁶² However, he changed the way such taxes were levied. On 8 March 1673, he mandated that the city council, not French soldiers or servants, would decide how much to levy from whom. The city council organised a commission that assessed the tax. Members of this commission were selected from every confession, probably on the basis of the ratio of each congregation in the city's population, namely eight Reformed,

57 Booth, 'Dagelijksche aanteekeningen', 74-80; HUA, SAII, 232-35, 29, 30, 31 December 1672, 4, 7, 8 January 1673; Wicquefort, *Journal*, 135-147, 151-157.

58 Booth, 'Dagelijksche aanteekeningen', 77; Brom (ed.), 'Neercassel's zending', 110-111; HUA, Familie Van der Muelen, 359, 7 January 1673.

59 HUA, SAII, 232-35, 7 January 1673.

60 Brom (ed.), 'Neercassel's zending', 111-114.

61 HUA, SAII, 121-28, 10 February 1673. After the French evacuation, Velthuysen was purged from the government. Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 216.

62 Booth, 'Dagelijksche aanteekeningen', 129-130; HUA, SAII, 121-28, 23, 24 September 1673.

seven Catholics, four Remonstrants, three Mennonites and two Lutherans. Inhabitants were classified into seven grades on the basis of their financial means, but many people regarded this distribution as 'unequal' and grumbled about it. On 5 April, the city council showed the list of taxpayers to Neercassel, who had returned to Utrecht the day before, and asked him to reassure Catholics who complained about the tax. According to Booth, Neercassel complied.⁶³

Until the French army evacuated from Utrecht on 13 November 1673, they stole as much money as they could from the locals.⁶⁴ During the occupation, while Catholics were allowed some rights in the public sphere, they suffered financial burden equally with the others. Concerning taxes, the French army forbade any unequal treatment of different confessional communities. The Reformed magistracy never came to trust Catholics entirely, but eventually, they had to admit that Neercassel represented the financial interests of the multi-confessional civic community. At the same time, the political authorities interpreted the city's financial situation along confessional lines. As representatives of the confessional community, Neercassel and some prominent Catholic laymen, to whom the magistrates entrusted a part of governance, contributed to the maintenance of public order. The logic behind such policies seemed to coincide with the separation of charity along confessional lines, which would be partly realised soon after the French evacuation.

After the French Evacuation

Utrecht was liberated by the Dutch army, but was initially occupied by them and put under military rule. Finally, on 16 April 1674, William III reinstated civil government in Utrecht. Under the newly installed government, which strengthened relations with Willem III and strict Calvinists,⁶⁵ more than a few anti-Catholic edicts were (re)issued.⁶⁶ From an economic perspective, Ronald Rommes noted that 'the Golden Age for Utrecht definitely came to an end' because of the war and the occupation.⁶⁷ Indeed, the city's financial problems,

63 Booth, 'Dagelijksche aantekeningen', 96-106; HUA, SAII, 121-28, 11, 13 March, 1, 2, 4 April 1673; HUA, SAII, 857; HUA, SAII, 232-35, 8, 12, 13 March, 1 April 1673; Wicquefort, *Journal*, 185-186.

64 Booth, 'Dagelijksche aantekeningen', 145-149; Wicquefort, *Journal*, 227-230.

65 Daniel Jeen Roorda, 'Prins Willem III en het Utrechtse regerings-reglement. Een schets van gebeurtenissen, achtergronden en

problemen', in: Huib Leeuwenberg and Louise van Tongerloo (eds.), *Van standen tot staten. 600 jaar Staten van Utrecht, 1375-1975* (Utrecht 1975) 108-128; Coen Wilders, *Patronage in de provincie. Het Utrechtse netwerk van stadhouder Willem III* (Amsterdam 2015) especially 41-51, 53-54, 58-71.

66 Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 127-130, 217-218.

67 Rommes, *Oost, west*, 103.

which predated the French occupation, had only grown worse. The city council saw itself reduced to begging William III for mercy. In a petition, they explained to their new stadholder how the city's economy had been devastated by the French army. This directly affected the poor and the trustees of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*, who had had to lend large sums of money.⁶⁸

Soon after the new government was launched, the city council on 27 April 1674 proposed to the Reformed consistory the consolidation of the diaconate and the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*.⁶⁹ However, on 20 July, the consistory rejected this proposal. Referring to the aforementioned petition drafted in 1655, the consistory stated their opinion: it was impossible for the diaconate to support all working poor regardless of religion again because they already regarded their current financial burden as 'unbearable'. In addition, if the diaconate were to utilise their endowments for the poor outside their confessional community, they would be disobeying the wills of endowers who had wished to give alms only to 'poor members of the true Christian Reformed religion'. The consistory proposed once again the separation of charity. The indigents of the 'sects', especially Catholics, were to be excluded from the public support in order to reduce the burden of civic finances. The consistory insisted that the city council could entrust the task of caring for such indigents to someone else or establish a separate institution for them.⁷⁰ One week later, on 28 July, the city council decided to dissolve the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* temporarily in order to prevent the 'total destruction' of the civic finances. Although the poor 'sympathisers' of the Reformed religion were given charity by a provisional commission (composed of a bookkeeper, eight trustees and three substitutes) without any financial support from the municipal treasury, Catholics were to be abandoned by all the public institutions for the working poor.⁷¹ Here the magistrates finally lent an ear to the public church.

On 1 October 1674, ten prominent Catholic laymen responded by drawing up a provisional charter for a Catholic *Aalmoezenierskamer*.⁷² Of these ten founders, five had previous experience as trustees of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*, including the advocate Gerard van Wijck and the wine merchant Nicolaes van Wenckum, and three had served on the commission which assessed the French tax in the spring of 1673.⁷³ The opening phrases of this charter stated that it was unjust to exclude only the Catholic poor from municipal charity, because Catholics had contributed to the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* 'generously as well as the Reformed'. According to the ten men, 'Christian compassion' now required the establishment of a separate

68 HUA, SAII, 121-29, 22, 25 June; HUA, SAII, 755, 25 June 1674.

69 HUA, SAII, 121-29, 27 April 1674.

70 HUA, KR, 10, 20 July 1674.

71 HUA, SAII, 121-29, 28 July 1674; HUA, SAII, 1825-6, 28 July 1674; Water, G.P.U., 3:566.

72 HUA, O.R.K.A., 1, 1 October 1674.

73 Booth, 'Dagelijksche aantekeningen', 96, 98; HUA, SAII, 1825-5. For the name list of the trustees of the Catholic *Aalmoezenierskamer*, see HUA, O.R.K.A., 23.

Catholic *Aalmoezienierskamer*. The provisional charter stipulated the regular collection of money, probably inside their – again, clandestine – churches.⁷⁴ However, according to the minutes of the Catholic *Aalmoezienierskamer*, on 27 October 1674, the trustees realised that because of the urgent needs of the poor, they had to organise a weekly door-to-door collection throughout the city in addition to the regular collection.⁷⁵ One month later, two men carrying collection boxes held this new collection for the first time.⁷⁶ According to the visitation report on the state of the Northern Netherlands that Neercassel sent to Rome in 1675, more than 600 poor Catholic families resided in Utrecht, constituting about a quarter of the Catholic community in the city. He admired the founders of the Catholic *Aalmoezienierskamer* who prevented the poor from ‘digress[ing] into heresy’.⁷⁷

In April 1675, the aforementioned provisional commission for the poor ‘sympathisers’ regained its administrative structure as the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer* with sixteen posts (excluding a bookkeeper) and subsidies from civic finances.⁷⁸ Finally, on 6 November, the city council promulgated a rule for defining the confessional affiliation of the poor. According to this rule, poor families in which the husband or father was a member of the Reformed Church would be supported by the Reformed diaconate, while poor families in which the husband or father was neither a member of the Reformed nor the Catholic Church would be cared for by the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer*. Dependents of Catholic heads of families were denied any support from these public institutions and were tacitly left to the care of the newly created Catholic *Aalmoezienierskamer*.⁷⁹ In this way, the separation of charity along confessional lines, upon which the Reformed consistory had insisted since the 1650s, was, at least partly, realised.

On 6 September 1675, the city council was informed by representatives of the municipal *Aalmoezienierskamer* about a ‘thief’ – that is, the Catholics who ‘secretly’ collected alms for their poor from the whole city.⁸⁰ In the same month as the reorganisation of the poor relief system was fixed (November 1675), a Catholic alms gatherer for the weekly door-to-door collection was arrested for collecting money without a licence. Then two Catholic trustees of the Catholic *Aalmoezienierskamer*, Wijck and Wenckum, were summoned before the burgomasters. The report by Wijck and Wenckum on the negotiation with the burgomasters is particularly interesting. Primary sources concerning poor relief were mainly produced by public institutions; hence, it is hard for historians to investigate how those who were excluded from such charitable

74 HUA, O.R.K.A., 1, 1 October 1674.

75 *Ibid.*, 27 October 1674.

76 HUA, O.R.K.A., 55, 27 November 1674.

77 Gisbert Brom (ed.), ‘Neerkassel’s bestuur van 1662-1676’, A.A.U. 18 (1890) 274.

78 HUA, S.II, 121-29, 6 April 1674; HUA, S.II, 1825-6, 16, 28 April 1674.

79 *Ibid.*, 3, 10 November 1675; Water, G.P.U., 3: 570-571.

80 HUA, S.II, 121-29, 6 September 1675.



institutions perceived and reacted to official policies. Partly because of this state of primary sources, the reorganisation of the poor relief system in the second half of the seventeenth century has been described mainly at the institutional level from the perspective of city magistrates. Thus, the report of the trustees of the Catholic *Aalmoezenierskamer* merits extensive analysis. It reveals not only the Catholics' perceptions and tactics for survival but also the amount of agency they wielded.⁸¹

According to the burgomasters, charity and the collection of money were in themselves necessary and permitted because they were 'Christian work'. In addition, they declared that Catholics were counted as 'beloved faithful inhabitants just like the Reformed'. They only criticised the 'public collection', which violated their governance. The Catholics in turn argued that their collection had been done 'in silence and not publicly'. According to Wijck and Wenckum, a collection was 'public' only when it was done by alms gatherers licensed by the city council, who announced their arrival by ringing a bell and used open dishes to collect money. Based on this definition, the Catholics continued to insist that their collection was 'silent' and not 'public'. Moreover, they maintained that it was unfair to exclude only Catholics from the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*, financed from the 'communal and public collection' (*gemeenen ende publijcke collecten*), to which Catholics had also contributed. The burgomaster Nellesteyn found it necessary to state that the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* had been reorganised 'not out of religious hatred but only because of the financial shortage'.

The burgomasters stated that Catholics held their door-to-door collection along the same route on the same day as the alms gatherers of the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer*, just a little earlier. Moreover, they knocked on every door, regardless of the residents' religion. Such a collection was, the burgomasters reiterated, 'public enough' (*genochsaem publyck*). According to them, Catholics collected money as if taking away 'the fat of the kettle' (*het vet vande kettel*), which meant the richest portion of the collection. As a consequence, according to the burgomasters, Catholic inhabitants gave little to the municipal collections even in a 'mocking manner'. Wijck and Wenckum in turn retorted that most Catholics were too poor to give more because they were deprived of public support. However, Catholics seemed to be aware that

81 HUA, O.R.K.A., 1, 16 November 1675. Despite its importance, this report has not been analysed sufficiently. For previous studies' remarks on this source, see Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 250-

251; Schaik and Strengers-Older Kalter, *Het arme roomse leven*, 43-44; Teeuwen, 'Vande groote swaricheyt', 62; Verhey, *300 jaar aalmoezenierszorg*, 49-51.



they were taking a risk, because one of the Catholic alms gatherers had even been observed hiding his collection box beneath his coat. Behind a facade of normative arguments, both the Catholic trustees and the burgomasters realised that they had to stretch the limits set by law and custom to get what they needed.

The Catholic trustees demanded equal opportunity in the collection of alms. They said that because the Reformed poor received financial benefit from Catholics, the Catholic poor should be allowed to collect money from the Reformed. Wijck and Wenckum justified their collection from Lutherans, Mennonites and ‘good Reformed’ by referring to the financial situation of the Catholic community. At this point, a formal decision had to be made about the borderline between ‘public’ and ‘non-public’, about forbidden and permitted, to achieve a workable solution. The Catholics demanded clear guidelines for what the burgomasters considered acceptable, and even offered to collect their alms at night and proposed to submit an official request. The burgomasters, however, declined to give a straight answer.

Wijck and Wenckum left the city hall and immediately informed their fellow trustees about this negotiation. For several days after that, they circulated among the members of the city council with the draft of an official request and solicited comments. According to the existing copy of this request, the Catholic trustees petitioned the burgomasters to permit them to continue collecting money ‘in silence’ on a different day than the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* held its ‘public collection’.⁸² According to the report by Wijck and Wenckum, the burgomasters summoned them again on 29 November 1675. The secretary of the city council said to Wenckum that the militia captains and the members of the city council were still complaining about the ‘public collection’ of the Catholics. Wenckum repeated that their collection was not ‘public’ and explained the aforementioned new manner of collection. In addition, he stated that the Catholics were ready to submit an official request if required. The secretary responded that the Catholics did not need to submit this and guaranteed Wenckum that he would inform the burgomasters about the Catholics’ decision. Here ends the report by Wijck and Wenckum. No formal decision was taken, but the Catholic *Aalmoezenierskamer* was able to continue their service thereafter.

In this way, the Catholic *Aalmoezenierskamer* gained a completely new and ambiguous character after the heated discussion on what was the ‘public’. The burgomasters accused the Catholic collection of being ‘public’ enough and thus worth requiring modification. For them, the term ‘public’ meant the supra-confessional civic community, which was confessionally divided into sub-communities. In using this term, they strongly criticised the Catholics’ behaviour, which violated the governance of the burgomasters. In

their opinion, the Catholics were not allowed to transgress the confessional boundaries drawn by the policy of separation of charity. It seems to be impossible to deny the existence of anti-Catholic sentiment in Utrecht after the French occupation, but the burgomasters denied this and defined the relation between the Catholic community and the larger civic community as a financial one. The burgomasters expressed worries about a decline in the amount collected for the municipal *Aalmoezenierskamer* due to competition with its Catholic equivalent, as they both solicited from all inhabitants. At almost the same time, starting in 1674, Catholic newcomers from the Province of Utrecht became eligible for citizenship of the city of Utrecht if a majority of the members of the city council approved them.⁸³ Although the political authorities excluded poor Catholics from public welfare, they attempted to attract rich Catholics, who could buy citizenship and support their indigent co-religionists, into the city, which lost much of its population and financial means during the occupation. In the negotiation, the Catholic trustees tried to defend their right to collect money actively and even aggressively. They maintained that their collection was 'silent' enough and not 'public', and thus should be permitted. Most importantly, the Catholics defined the term 'public' on the basis of perceptibility by the human senses – audibility and visibility – by referring to the sound of a bell, the shape of collection dishes and the time of collection.⁸⁴ Based on this concrete and material definition, the Catholics insisted that their collection was not 'public', although at the same time, they emphasised their contribution to the supra-confessional civic community, which the burgomasters defined as the 'public'. In the end, in an unofficial manner – that is, by oral approval – Catholics got magistrates to acquiesce to the way they generated their corporate financial base.

Conclusion

The reorganisation of the poor relief system marked a new manner of confessional coexistence in which dissenting communities were entrusted to care for their own poor co-religionists.⁸⁵ In the negotiations to solve the

83 HUA, SAII, 121-29, 4 May, 23 November 1674; Water, *G.P.U.*, 3:271-272.

84 For the importance of such human senses in the matter of practices of faith, see Frijhoff, 'Dimensions', 230; Idem, *Embodied Belief*, 59; Kaplan, 'Fictions of Privacy', 1056-1057; Yasuhira, 'Interconfessional Relations', 31-35.

85 It is, however, worth noting that this does not mean that Dutch society as a whole became

segregated along confessional lines. As mentioned in the introduction of the present paper, in spite of Groenveld's claim, recent studies have persuasively proved supra-confessional interactions in some spheres of life and denied the total 'pillarisation' of the society. Forclaz, *Catholiques*, 229-359, 363-365; Geraerts, *The Catholic Nobility*, 33-106, 205-210; Kaplan, 'Integration vs Segregation', 62.

financial problems of the civic community, which led to this separation of charity at the institutional level, Catholics did not remain passive. They were one of the actors, along with the Reformed Church and the political authorities. All the actors attempted to defend their own interests by referring to the term ‘public’ based on their own definition.

Before the French occupation, it was impossible for the political authorities to exclude Catholics from the public sphere entirely, despite appeals from the Reformed consistory. The latter proposed the separation of charity along confessional lines, warning the political authorities about the harm caused by Catholics to the ‘public’, which to them meant the abstract confessionalised community. Catholics themselves knew their importance for civic finances; hence, they could sometimes behave boldly, such as in the negotiation concerning the posts of the public charitable institutions. During the French occupation, Catholics were partly integrated into the public sphere, but at the same time, were forced to pay taxes equally with others. Neercassel and some prominent Catholic laymen, to whom the political authorities entrusted a part of the governance, contributed to the civic community in the matter of taxes. Such policies seemed to be employed with a logic similar to that which later enabled the reorganisation of the poor relief system. After the French evacuation, the separation of charity was partly realised by excluding Catholics from the municipal *Aalmoezienerskamer*, which caused the establishment of a parallel Catholic *Aalmoezienerskamer*. This, in turn, led to a negotiation on a workable definition of the ‘public’. The burgomasters defined the ‘public’ on the basis of abstract political connotations with a supra-confessional civic character, and the Catholic trustees defined it on the basis of a concrete material connotation. As a result, Catholics succeeded in obtaining a form of corporate rights to provide a financial base for their community.

What, then, can we learn about the mechanisms of confessional coexistence from this local case study? Kooi, one of the aforementioned historians of the first type, stressed the role of the political authorities in the clarification of the distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’, which, according to her, made Dutch society in the second half of the seventeenth century more tolerant than before.⁸⁶ Such an interpretation ignores the active agency of dissenters and leads to a teleological narrative of the ‘rise of toleration’ from above but is, as shown above in this case study, unlikely. With the second type of authors, such as Frijhoff and Kaplan, the present paper agrees on the structurally remaining vagueness of the ‘public’, which caused struggles and negotiations.⁸⁷ However, although Kaplan foregrounded the construction of ‘fictions of privacy’ as a decisive factor for early modern confessional

86 Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics*, 90-129, 217, 221-222.

87 Frijhoff, ‘Dimensions’, 228-237; Idem, *Embodied Belief*, 57-65; Kaplan, ‘Fictions of Privacy’, 1036, 1056.

coexistence, the present paper casts doubt on the applicability of the concept of 'privacy' to people living in early modern societies. Of course, this concept can be a tool for research, but at the same time, it is important to clarify the perceptions of 'ordinary' people living in early modern multi-confessional civic communities and not just exceptional circles of theorists. For this aim, it is telling that the people appearing in our sources hardly mentioned the term 'private' (in Dutch, *privaat* and *particulier*) but frequently used the term 'public' (in Dutch, *publiek*, *openbaar* and *gemeen*), although the 'public/private' distinction has itself been one of the central preoccupations of the history of Western ideas.⁸⁸

To all appearances, when they struggled to solve the financial problems of the multi-confessional civic community, people living in seventeenth-century Utrecht were more interested in the delimitation of the 'public' than in the protection of or withdrawal into 'privacy'. Faced with such practical and vital problems, they made confessional coexistence possible by delimitating the 'public', which was defined by abstract political or confessional factors, such as allegiance to the civic community or the official church, in the context of wars between the Reformed Dutch Republic and Catholic forces, and by concrete material factors, such as audibility and visibility. After the 'public' was positively delimited, then what historians can regard as 'private' on the basis of our modern intellectual framework would appear negatively and vaguely as the rest. It seems to be the opposite of our modern process, in which 'privacy' is positively defined as a fundamental human right, and the 'public' then comes out as the rest.⁸⁹ In order to incarnate confessional coexistence in seventeenth-century Utrecht, in which the communal, collective and material aspects of life carried indispensable meanings,⁹⁰ people attempted

88 While the history of ideas is beyond the scope of the present paper, which intends to contribute to the religio-social history of coexistence, according to Daniela Gobetti, the natural law theorists in the seventeenth century, such as Samuel von Pufendorf and John Locke, attempted to elaborate the 'liberal' distinction of 'public/private', which was drawn not between institutional domains, namely the body politic and the household, as classical thinkers argued, but between different modalities of agency within the individual. In their natural law theories, an individual acted in his/her private capacity if his/her activities were harmless to others or 'common good'. Daniela Gobetti, 'Humankind as a System: Private and Public

Agency at the Origins of Modern Liberalism', in: Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (eds.), *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy* (Chicago 1997), 103-104, 111-125.

89 For the modern process of construction of the 'public' reflected by the preceding conceptualisation of the 'private', see Junich Saito, *Publicness* (Tokyo 2000, written in Japanese) 12.

90 According to Judith Pollmann, even religious choices were determined not only by individual decisions but also by collective needs. Judith Pollmann, *Religious Choice in the Dutch Republic: The Reformation of Arnoldus Buchelius (1565-1641)* (Manchester 1999) 76-103, 194-195.

to delimitate the ‘public’ but not to define the opposite dichotomous concept that we value.⁹¹

Catholics in Utrecht neither passively obeyed the orders of the public authorities nor conformed to the existing definition of the ‘public’. Instead, Catholics themselves were one of the actors in a shared process of delimitation of the ‘public’ in the multi-confessional civic community, while they were seen as potential traitors to the public authorities. Catholics originally defined the ‘public’ and actively created room for survival by participating in the delimitation of the ‘public’, indicating their allegiance to the abstract politico-civic ‘public’ and showing their behaviour, which could arouse certain criticism, as audibly and visually ‘non-public’. Although recent studies have, to some extent, modified the previous image of Dutch Catholics as being passive, the public sphere has still been depicted as a static place. By contrast, the present paper maintains that the public sphere was a much more dynamic space and that Catholics had much more active agency in the delimitation of the ‘public’.

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91 According to Daniel J. Solove, people began to desire to conceptualise and positively defend ‘privacy’ from certain historical moments, one of which was the late nineteenth century, in the context of industrialisation and development

of technology and information media. Daniel J. Solove, *Understanding Privacy* (Harvard 2008) 4, 12-38, 41, 50-67. Thus, our concern for ‘privacy’ is not ahistorical but modern.