

# The Eagle versus the Lion

German nationalism in the Dutch-German relations on the eve of the First World War (1909-1914)



Germany and the Netherlands in 1914. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/map-german-empire-1914> (17-07-2012)

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## 1. Introduction

The Netherlands has always had a special relationship with Germany, not only because it was and still is a neighboring country. The economic ties have been very strong, especially since the industrialization of both nations. The political and ideological background concerning Germany and the Netherlands complicated the shared economic interests to a large extent. Coinciding with the growing industrialization of the Ruhr-area and the Rotterdam harbor in the Rhine-estuary, another major development took place. During the nineteenth century, nationalism became an important political issue. Both countries were influenced by it and responded in different ways. Why was nationalism that important? From the later nineteenth century onward, it became increasingly influential in the international arena. During the early twentieth century, between 1900-1945, it was more or less unthinkable to neglect nationalism as a major contributor to the decision making process of every government. German nationalism has been extensively investigated by many social scholars. The main focus has usually been on the nature of German nationalism around the two World Wars, especially concerning the rise of National Socialism and the role of nationalism in the Wilhelmine Empire (1871-1918).<sup>1</sup> The historiographical contributions have also dealt with several different forms of nationalism existing in Germany as well as in other countries. There is, for instance, philosophical nationalism which prevailed in scientific circles especially from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, which was mainly based on the ideas of J.G. Herder. These intellectual ideas of nationhood mainly dealt with the question of placing individual human beings in a social context. It was considered to be the best option to shape societies along the lines of a nation-state. The fact that nation-states provided a framework for people with the same culture and language, made it stronger. This kind of nationalism was not meant to mirror one nation against others or to give rise to the idea of one's superiority over other nations. Herder's nationalism was basically designed to inspire the bourgeois class in their quest for political power that used to be in the hands of monarchies during the Ancien Régime. Compared to later forms of nationalism, this cultural nationalism was less competitive concerning international relations. Domestic instability as a result of a lack of political participation encouraged the literate bourgeois class to engage into a power struggle with the ruling class composed of the higher nobility. Nationalism became more political and more

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<sup>1</sup> Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions* (New York 1975); Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1918. Zweiter Band. Machtstaat vor der Demokratie* (Munich 1992); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Dritter Band; Von der Deutschen Doppelrevolution bis zum Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges 1849-1914* (Munich 1995); Heinrich August Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen; Bd. 1: Deutsche Geschichte vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zum Untergang der Weimarer Republik* (Munich 2000).

radical during the second half of the nineteenth century. In this period nationalism was not only being used by the intellectual class, but also by the ruling class. It was during the 1860s and 1870s that nationalism in Germany expanded from the general population or *Volk* to the ruling class, although it remained to exist in both groups. In fact, the general population adhered to cultural and romantic nationalism, whereas the elite became more aware of political nationalism during the process of German unification.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1 The Concept and Content of German Nationalism

Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) was ousted as Reich chancellor in 1890 after a conflict with Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941). After the long reign of the Bismarck as the most important person in shaping its foreign policy, the German Empire became reluctant to show any interest in the Netherlands, especially between 1890-1894. The politicians Leo von Caprivi (1831-1899) and Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein (1842-1912) as Reich chancellor and Foreign Minister respectively, were rather uninterested in the Netherlands in their vision of *Neue Kurs*, which had a major emphasis on the German economical position in the world and its industrial development.<sup>3</sup> From 1894 until 1897, German nationalism became more radical which resulted in the introduction of *Weltpolitik*. This doctrine was mainly meant to increase German power on a global scale, mostly focusing on Africa. This was, beside the Pacific Islands, the only continent with a significant German foothold comprised of several colonial possessions. This approach was also supported by the German scientific elite, led by amongst others Max Weber (1864-1920).<sup>4</sup>

*Weltpolitik* became more ambitious between 1897-1904, when politician and statesman Bernhard von Bülow (1849-1929) and Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz (1849-1930) became part of the state secretariat. The main focus remained on Africa and was meant to check British ambitions to dominate this continent. In conjunction with this, Tirpitz realized a large expansion of the navy budget, increasing it to 480 million marks in 1913. This large expansion suggests a huge impact on Dutch and British policy relating to the protection of their overseas empires. The significant expansion of the German navy created the large

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<sup>2</sup> Royal J. Schmidt, 'Cultural Nationalism in Herder', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 17, No. 3 (June 1956) 407-417, there 408-411; F.M. Barnard, 'National Culture and Political Legitimacy: Herder and Rousseau', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, No. 2 (April-June 1983) 231-253, there 241-246 and 248.

<sup>3</sup> André Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar. De Duitse buitenlandse politiek ten aanzien van Nederland in de periode 1890-1914* (Amsterdam 1994) 173-175.

<sup>4</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 187-188.

*Hochseeflotte* operating in the North Sea and capable of inflicting heavy damage on the nearby Dutch and British coastal regions. Due to their worldwide commitments, the Dutch and British were forced to spread their fleets all over the world providing Germany with an advantage in the North Sea.<sup>5</sup> During 1904 Germany seriously developed plans to engage into a preemptive war against France. In conjunction with this policy focused on the European continent, Germany devised concrete plans to strengthen its position in Northwestern Europe. The Netherlands was to be one of the areas to be included in the German sphere of influence. Between 1906-1909 Germany became isolated internationally and was very hesitant to engage into drastic action, resulting in a rather quiet period. One of the reasons why the period from 1909 onward is the most interesting period concerning the Dutch-German relations is the fact that it became more complicated due to the introduction of Rhine duties and the development of Emden and the Eems-estuary. These issues were openly negotiated from 1913 onward. The original plan devised by the Germans entailed the application of a fee system for Rhine shipping. It would have caused more damage to the Dutch economy compared to the larger German economy, because of the scale. The Dutch government as well as the major corporations were against this policy, leading to an intensive diplomatic struggle.<sup>6</sup>

Tension also arose when the exact Dutch-German border needed to be determined in the Eems-region. This river became more important as the port of Emden developed itself. This issue has never been solved at any moment in time and is in fact still going on today. Between 1909-1914, the political tensions created circumstances that could have resulted in a major conflict combined with the matter on the Eems-estuary and the proposed introduction of Rhine duties. The growth of the German armed forces, especially the navy, also made the situation within Europe in general, as well as between Germany and the Netherlands in particular, more complicated. This culminated in the Morocco-crisis of 1911, when the German navy tried to take Agadir. Although this attempt failed, it created more tension between France and Germany. Due to the fact that these nations were not part of the same alliance, it could very well have resulted in open warfare. Even though Morocco was not an official possession of France at the time, it was to become a protectorate in 1912, it still was perceived as a German attempt to breach French sovereignty. It also further increased the inequality in military strength between Germany and the Netherlands. Was the German

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<sup>5</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 198-203.

<sup>6</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21.

increase in military power at this time also meant to provide for a better negotiating position for itself towards the Netherlands?<sup>7</sup>

As a major theoretical concept nationalism is essential for this research. It basically entails the general idea that a group of people living in a certain area should be governed within a corresponding sovereign political unit. Of course, the definition of nationalism is applicable on its many forms. This means that the way in which nation building as a historical subject manifests itself, tends to be different. As mentioned before, multiple cultural groups possess different ideas about their nation as well as the fact that separate classes also have a distinguished development when it comes to nationalistic ideas. This means the elite and the masses could have several ideas about nationalism at any given moment in time. The Marxist anthropologists Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson agree that a nation is a cultural invention and is therefore imagined. Gellner also distinguishes different forms of nationalism evolving from distinct levels of society's development, such as classical liberal and ethnic nationalism.<sup>8</sup> In this thesis, the concept of nationalism will be limited to a political variant, mostly since this type is evident in international relations. It is a top-down form, as it is mainly used by governments to create loyalty to the state among its citizens as well as to mentally prepare them for war.

### **1.3 The relevance of this research**

This research in general is relevant from a scientific perspective, since the Dutch-German relations have been investigated by mostly addressing the major economical aspects as well as some political issues. The historians Hein A.M. Klemann, André Beening and Horst Lademacher have addressed these issues along with others.<sup>9</sup> The role of nationalism has not been determined so far. Here lies an opportunity to add a new dimension to the debate. This debate does not seem to be very lively, especially since most authors tend to address German nationalism itself, failing to draw connections with international relations. Therefore, the influence of German nationalism relating to its behavior towards other countries remains

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<sup>7</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 327-336 and 364-370; Horst Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn. Wege und Wandlungen der deutsch-niederländischen Beziehungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt 1990) 79-85.

<sup>8</sup> Brendan O'Leary, 'On the Nature of Nationalism: An Appraisal of Ernest Gellner's Writings on Nationalism', *British Journal of Political Science* 27, No 2. (April 1997) 191-222, there 200-202; Yael Tamir, 'Review: The Enigma of Nationalism', *World Politics* 47, No. 3 (April 1995) 418-440, there 421.

<sup>9</sup> Hein A.M. Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog? Nederland-Duitsland: Economische integratie en politieke consequenties 1860-2000* (Rotterdam 2006); Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*; Horst Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*.

unknown. This thesis has the objective to find the missing link between nationalism and the Dutch-German relations. The specific period 1909-1914 is relevant because Germany became more aggressive towards other countries during this period compared to the preceding years, as we will see later on in the literature. In the mentioned period the most important events leading up to the First World War took place. These events included the German, French and Belgian military reforms in 1913, the Morocco-crisis in 1911 and most importantly the increase of German pressure on the Netherlands concerning the fortification issue at Vlissingen, to enable the Dutch to withstand a British invasion. This received a new dimension, because of published newspaper articles in Germany at the time. What lacks within the existing historiography, is a clear description of nationalism and its influence on the Dutch-German relations. Additionally, there has not been much written on German history specifically dealing with this period, except books that have been written about Wilhelmine Germany or the lead up to the First World War (1914-1918). Also concerning the Netherlands this field has still been rather unexplored. Historian André Beening deals with the general history of the Dutch-German relations, not specifically a limited time period. Also the approach in which the content of newspapers is combined with the viewpoints of diplomats and the Foreign Minister has to provide a more complete picture.

This thesis focuses on the political dimension of the Dutch-German relations rather than economical and cultural aspects, mainly for practical reasons. Otherwise the amount of issues would become too large. In this thesis a number of questions will be answered. The main objective of this inquiry is to find out what influence nationalism had on Germany's behavior towards the Netherlands. For this reason the main overarching research question is: *What was the role of German nationalism in the Dutch-German relations between 1909-1914?*

This is a difficult question to answer, since we first need to find out what German nationalism during this period entails. The starting point for this research is July 1909, since this was the moment that Chancellor of Germany Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg (1856-1921) took office. His policy was more adventurous compared to Von Bülow. Though Bethmann-Hollweg hoped to find a way to live peacefully alongside the British and French, he apparently forgot to apply this policy on other countries as well. The assassination of Crown prince Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary and the outbreak of the First World War will be the endpoint of this thesis. Beside practical reasons, as there is only a limited amount of time available, it also is a significant watershed concerning the international relations of Germany. Diplomacy switched from peace to war mode and relations became even more

complicated.<sup>10</sup> This issue will be addressed through research of secondary literature. This should shed light on the main characteristics of German nationalism and therefore indicate what issues were indeed nationalistic in nature. This part of the research overlaps with the historiographical research which will also be a part of the thesis' first chapter. Moreover, articles will be used to define nationalism as it is imperative to have a good understanding of this concept. The secondary literature deals with German nationalism, the German empire, colonialism or German history in general. The contributions include the written works of Blicke, Conrad, Dann, Fischer, Hardtwig, Lademacher, Nipperdey, Stürmer, Wehler and Winkler (See literature list). These sources will also provide the information to answer another sub question: *What ambitions did Germany have towards incorporating the Netherlands?*

It is often suggested by historians that Germany and earlier on Prussia had the ambition to incorporate the Netherlands and perhaps also its colonies into a larger German empire. Several reasons have been suggested to support this assumption. Cultural resemblance between Dutch and German people is often presented as a reasoning to suggest that both are part of the same people or *Volk* and therefore should be subjugated into one state. In this case intellectual and nationalistic organizations might have had a major influence on these ambitions, as no direct political or economical interests are necessarily related to this cultural resemblance. Another reason for wanting to include the Netherlands into Germany, was strictly economic in nature. This is mainly suggested by historian Hein A.M. Klemann, as he sees a strong economic interdependency between the Netherlands and Germany, mostly concerning the Ruhr-area. Germany was dependent on the Dutch port of Rotterdam for its imports and exports, mainly due to the geographical location of the Ruhr-area near the Rhine that was flowing into the Netherlands before reaching the North Sea.<sup>11</sup> Another dimension of this issue is perhaps the extent of the German ambitions as full political incorporation might have set off furious reactions throughout Europe, for instance from Britain and France. An alternative would have been to include the Netherlands into a custom-union or a post-union. These initiatives, starting in 1898 and ending in 1903, have indeed been suggested as a part of the *Weltpolitik*, which would also have included other Germanic countries such as Sweden.<sup>12</sup>

Of course, it would have made perfect sense if the Netherlands as a whole or partly would have reacted towards these German ambitions. There may have been a difference in

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<sup>10</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 362-366.

<sup>11</sup> Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog?*, 31-34 and 42-46.

<sup>12</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 215-217 and 228-229.



view between the government and the people, leftist and rightist political parties, different newspapers etc. In this case it is in first instance useful to look at the reaction of the Dutch government, as nationalism tends to influence policy concerning high politics, mostly relating to foreign relations, military power and strategic resource management. The Dutch government was the first to respond in the case of any foreign threat, including one from its eastern neighbor. For this reason the initial reaction of the Dutch government as a whole and therefore especially the diplomatic service is important. Dutch politicians in office relied heavily on the reports from ambassadors and consuls in the countries that were involved in any issue at hand. Investigating the correspondence of diplomats and government officials is the most useful way to find out what perceptions the Netherlands had towards Germany. Moreover, it sheds light on the German ambitions itself from another perspective. For this reason the following question is also a part of this research: *What was the reaction of the Dutch government to German foreign policy?*

Along with the government, it is also relevant to find out what the more general view of the Dutch elite on German nationalism was. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the content of newspapers as well. To complement the previous question, I will also try to find an answer to the following question: *What was the reaction in the Dutch newspapers on the German behavior concerning foreign policy towards the Netherlands?* This question will be answered by using digitalized sources on the website [kranten.kb.nl](http://kranten.kb.nl) using all different newspapers to draw a complete picture of this matter in probably the most important form of media at the time.<sup>13</sup>

In this thesis, the amount of newspapers used will be limited. Only national newspapers will be taken into consideration, hereby excluding regional and Dutch East Indian newspapers which had a different approach concerning foreign news. As a result of the fact that the number of Dutch nationwide newspapers was rather limited, all papers available in this database for this time period will be used. Therefore, the following six newspapers will be used: *Algemeen Handelsblad*, *Het Centrum*, *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*, *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, *Het volk: dagblad voor de arbeiderspartij*. These newspapers will provide a wide overview on the standpoints of Dutch journalists.

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<sup>13</sup> Historic Newspapers on KB website: Newspaper articles from 1909-1914. <http://kranten.kb.nl/search/index/state/load> (12-06-2012).

## 1.4 Sources and study composition

To perform this research properly, a thorough analysis of the sources is a necessity. Their nature has a major influence on the usefulness and reliability of the entire research. One of the key sources for this research is the written correspondence between Dutch diplomats located in Germany at the time and the Dutch Foreign Minister and/or his lieutenants at the department of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. This is also the present location of the National Archive, which preserves these materials and makes them available for public use. These sources exist in their original shape and are (not yet) digitalized. The correspondence took place in the form of letters on paper that are still in a relatively good condition considering the time which has passed ever since. One of the benefits is that these documents have been collected for archival purposes. In fact, there has not been any selection concerning whether or not to include any individual document in this archive as opposed to *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland 1848-1919*, which is composed of selected and shortened letters between ministers and diplomats.<sup>14</sup> The archival sources are therefore complete, which enhances their reliability. The major problem that is expected when using the written documents is the enormous amount that is available. This is one of the reasons why this research is limited in periodization.

When it concerns the primary sources published in *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek*, the major problem lies in the fact that it is only a selection made by the author deciding which letters are the most important. One could argue that this selection process reveals what was being regarded important at the time. In my view, this judgment should be made afterwards. Compared to the archival material, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek* is available at the university library and therefore better accessible than archival documents which have to remain there at all times. These two different types of primary sources are complementary to each other as the strengths and weaknesses compensate for the difficulties mentioned up to at least a certain extent. Therefore, it is beneficial for this research to use both collections.

The scholarly books and articles are to be considered secondary sources, as these were written after the historical events took place. Beside this the use of scientific method distinguishes it from primary material, as the intention is to clarify what took place. The

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<sup>14</sup> C. Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland 1848-1919 Derde periode 1899-1919 Derde Deel 1907-1914* ('s-Gravenhage 1961).

general issue when dealing with secondary literature is the bias of the authors. Every academic scholar has certain convictions which shape the course of his scientific research. This could lead to adopting different methods, but also to using different theoretical frameworks. Usually, these convictions are not being made explicit by the authors, though they are affecting the outcomes of their research. Examples of different theoretical paradigms within the scientific landscape of international relations are for instance (neo-)realism, neoliberal institutionalism, Marxism, constructivism and critical theory. These theories all possess their own scientific language and this makes it more difficult to discover a debate about a certain subject. Beside this, there are also differences between positivist and constructivist or narrativist scholars concerning the actual meaning of concepts such as nationalism, which are being used in their scientific research. Another issue at hand, is the difference in opinion about the value of historical evidence. Positivists tend to adhere far more value to the data coming from sources compared to constructivists.<sup>15</sup>

After the archival sources, the Dutch newspaper articles will also be involved in this study. These are of course also primary sources, since they originated in the period of investigation and they were not meant as scientific contributions by the journalists that wrote them. The main issue with newspaper articles is the possible distortion of truth since the general convictions of the era, country and political denomination play a major role in shaping the content of newspapers. Also, the level in which details are being presented differs throughout each newspaper edition, even amongst articles on the same page. The objectivity is therefore a general threat to the reliability of newspaper articles as sources. A major benefit, however, is that these articles can show us how journalists thought at the time, as for example perceptions about threat, danger and warfare itself may have been very different compared to contemporary views. Beside this, newspapers also form a magnifying glass concerning the thought of the Dutch elite outside of the government. As mentioned, the other major sources on the Dutch side are diplomatic and political in nature. The newspaper articles provide a general idea about the issues that were commonly known at the time as the diplomatic correspondence was classified as secret in those days.

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<sup>15</sup> William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism', in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidel, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford 2008) 131-149. Benno Teschke 'Marxism', in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidel, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford 2008) 163-187. Arthur A. Stein, 'Neoliberal Institutionalism', in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidel, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford 2008) 201-221. Ian Hurd, 'Constructivism', in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidel, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford 2008) 298-316. Richard Shapcott, 'Critical Theory', in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidel, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford 2008) 327-345.

The German newspapers attached to the diplomatic files in the earlier mentioned archival sources also provide useful information concerning the view on the Dutch-German relations outside the direct scope of diplomacy and politics. During this time period most German articles were written in gothic scripture, which makes them slightly more difficult to read. In fact, some German newspapers were official government papers and therefore politically influenced by the German departments concerning the issues involved. Only a few German papers in those days were products of the free press. These are issues that have to be taken into account, but they are not disastrous. However, one has to be aware of this when reading these newspapers. Beside this, the same benefits and drawbacks are applicable compared to their Dutch counterparts.

### **1.5 Methods**

When it comes to the methodology, this research is served best with a qualitative approach. There are several reasons for adopting this method over a quantitative method. Most prominently is the fact that we are dealing with different kinds of primary and secondary sources which makes a quantitative approach extremely difficult to implement. Beside this, a quantitative method also provides limited information when one could in reality, taken the limited time into consideration, only use a few concepts. A qualitative angle sheds light on the meaning of the sources' content. Therefore, this method provides us with more information concerning the nature of German nationalism when dealing with the Dutch-German international relations. Another contributing issue is the fact that we are basically dealing with a case study. The way in which nationalism manifested itself in the Dutch-German circumstances from 1909-1914 does not on a limited period have priority over a larger timeframe with less accurate information, provide us with any information about nationalism in France, Britain, Belgium or other countries even in the same time period.

Also, the amount of letters written by diplomats does not necessarily provide a clear picture on the relevance of the matter discussed in the correspondence. This remains a matter of debate and therefore a thorough investigation of the content and meaning of this communication as well as the newspaper articles is more valuable. A negative aspect of the qualitative method is the fact that the large amount of material becomes an issue. For this reason the timeframe has been limited. In my view a valuable research is worth more than a general and wide research, as long as the boundaries are made explicit.

## **Chapter 2: Nationalism in German Foreign Policy**

What has been shown so far, indicates a growing German influence on the world stage in the early years of the twentieth century. The main objective in this chapter is to determine the influence of German nationalism on the German foreign policy towards the Netherlands. To come to this, one first has to estimate what role German political nationalism had on Berlin's policy. In the light of the role of the Netherlands, it is useful to make a distinction between different kinds of political nationalism. The posture towards the Netherlands in each doctrine may be dependent on the ideas concerning Pan-Germanism. Furthermore, Germany's position into Ernest Gellner's theory on nationalism, which is part of the theoretical framework, will be examined. Beside this, the international circumstances that Germany had to deal with, between 1909 and 1914, will also be examined in detail. In this perspective the German international relations with other countries played a major role.

### **2.1 Historiography: Nationalism in general**

The main issues concerning nationalism in the historiographical debate deal with the question of the origin of the phenomenon as well as the different types that exist. On the origins of nationalism, the main debate is about whether nations already existed before the corresponding nation-state. The other alternative suggests that nations were created after the formation of the state concerned.

One important issue is the assumption that it is a modern phenomenon. This means it only evolved during or after the Enlightenment or the French Revolution. The American anthropologist Ernest Gellner claims that nationalism is indeed a modern occurrence. The core of his view entails the assumption that modern society is highly centralized, due to technical improvements. This development resulted from the Industrial Revolution, in which the more advanced technology required more training amongst laborers. Consequently, power was also centralized and monopolized by a central authority within the state. As a Marxist, Gellner also attributes a major role to the industrialization process. The high degree of specialization as well as occupational mobility, are common traits in modern societies. This implies that because of more technical advancement, the skill of at least some laborers needs to improve. As a whole, society was transforming towards a more technologically advanced

mode, the local or regional and also the state's economy became more dependent on this scarce category of laborers. This required a centralized system of education, in order to enable workers to apply their skills at different locations. According to Gellner, this was the main cause for nationalism, although he basically emphasizes the consequences for socialism in his Marxist approach. States needed to promote better education to strengthen their economy. As this education was limited to one language, it directly connected with the domestic labor market.<sup>16</sup> Gellner's view is rather interesting, as it makes sense that the Industrial Revolution had a major impact relating to its technological implications. Therefore I am positive, that Gellner's approach sheds light on the development of social relations, especially the shift from small scale to large scale modes of production and human interaction. These developments eventually led to the more centralized policy adopted by states to standardize the educational system.

The British historian and political-scientist Benedict Anderson also has a Marxist view on the development of nationalism. Along with Gellner, he emphasizes the role of the industrialization process and the consequences this had for laborers. The connection between religion and print-technology supported the formation of a centralized state as well. This already took place in pre-modern times, hereby suggesting a slight difference in Anderson's view compared to Gellner. Anderson goes further and tries to explain why nationalism eventually took many forms and led to mass murder on people belonging to different nations. Anderson refers to nations as 'imagined communities', since no individual was able to get to know most other members in his lifetime. Still, the nation apparently created a sense of loyalty to the extent that people were willing to fight and die for their nation. In fact, the core reason would be that this ethnic nationalism results from notions of strictly adhering to a homogeneous lingual and religious community. This homogeneous culture apparently forms a framework of similarities between individuals belonging to the same nation.<sup>17</sup>

The British Marxist historian Eric J. Hobsbawm is not much different from Anderson and Gellner in his book *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*. Hobsbawm also claims that nations are a modern phenomenon. As major prerequisite for a nation a common historic association is considered necessary, along with an established cultural elite.<sup>18</sup> Hobsbawm also claims that nationalism existed in a so-called proto-

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<sup>16</sup> Ernest Gellner, 'Nationalism', *Theory and Society* 10 (1981) 753-776, there 753-759, 764-766 and 770-776.

<sup>17</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/New York 2006) 37-46.

<sup>18</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge/New York 1990) 35-38.

nationalistic form halfway the nineteenth century. This form was especially popular among writers and other members of the cultural elite, who transferred it to the general population. This hints at the existence of a modern cultural infrastructure as mentioned before.

Hobsbawm goes on to suggest that nationalism is a phenomenon which changes through time. His approach does not indicate a clear distinction between several types of nationalism co-existing. He thinks historical development changed the nature of nationalism from popular nationalism towards state-nationalism. This means that the state took over the agenda setting for the nationalist program, and the people in general lose grip in an increasing rate.

According to him, the transformation took place between 1870 and 1918. He agrees on the notion that common language is a contributing factor within the nation-building process.<sup>19</sup>

Another type of nationalism is ethnic nationalism, which is presented by the British historian Anthony D. Smith in his article 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism'. Ethnic nationalism is presented as a radical form of nationalism which is meant to purify one's culture from alien influences. This suggests a rather homogenous composition of the state, which is in reality difficult to obtain. What it also entails, is the claiming of territory on historic grounds, mostly because of historical events attributed to the nation. This usually leads to multiple claims on a certain piece of land. Smith's approach is not Marxist, it is in fact a bit moralistic, since it is suggested that ethnic nationalism is a harmful occurrence. In essence Smith treats nationalism basically as being ethnic in nature, while he ignores other types of nationalism. Even though ethnic form can be harmful in general, it remains unclear what connection Smith tries to make with the other types of nationalism. It is not clear whether German nationalism shortly before the First World War was comparable to the rather contemporary examples which are presented by Smith, such as the former Yugoslavia.<sup>20</sup>

What we have seen so far, helps us to identify at least two forms of nationalism. Popular national, with mostly cultural content (see Herder later on for cultural nationalism) and state nationalism with political content. Popular nationalism comes rather close to cultural nationalism and is hard to distinguish. It is more part of the general lower culture, compared to the exclusiveness of cultural nationalism within the elite. What we can see, is that the inner dynamic of nationalism is meant to draw a line between groups of people. Some people belong to the nation and others do not. Gellner, Anderson and Hobsbawm probably look upon

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<sup>19</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 46-49 and 120-128.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony D. Smith, 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism', *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 72, 3: 'Ethnicity and International Relations' (July 1996) 445-458; 447-450 and 455-458.

nationalism as part of the capitalist effort to control the world by using nationalist sentiments to assert loyalty from the general population towards the upper-class of (industrial) entrepreneurs. This would suggest that one must assume that these entrepreneurs are somehow related to the nation-state elite or government. This of course became apparent in communist countries in the twentieth century. As for capitalist states such as Germany during the early twentieth century, this could also be the case. The authors, however, do not shed any more light on what this connection would have been like, which is a weak point. The authors could also have addressed other aspects of nationalism a bit more, for example the more idea-based aspects instead of material forces, which were fundamental in the formation of nation-states.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 Nationalism according to Ernest Gellner

In terms of usefulness, Gellner's contribution seems to be the most adequate. His account not only entails a clear description of nationalism, but also includes a further analysis concerning power-holders and non-power-holders within an industrial society. He uses this method to account for differences in kinds of nationalism that have evolved around the world. As a result of such developments, several types of nationalism have been established, including Diaspora-nationalism, Eastern and Western nationalism. In Italy and Germany unification-nationalism was the form that was most apparent halfway through the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

In Ernest Gellner's description of nationalism he starts with mentioning the common traits of a modern society. For instance, it is politically centralized. This is most evident when dealing with the monopolization of legitimate violence and the elimination of reliance on self-help. Beside this, modern production is that much more complicated that it requires many more qualities from the workers, in fact demanding specialization. For this reason a separation between the military and the productive sectors emerged. This was the result of the fact that loyalties between work community and military units no longer coincided. The military became part of the national level, while the work community remained rather local or regional. One would see different individuals specializing in one of these two sectors. The claim even goes further, when Gellner adds that industrial societies are always politically centralized, while agrarian societies are seldom centralized. This is related to the mentioned demand for specialization, since the production process became more complicated.

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<sup>21</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Gellner, 'Nationalism'; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*.

<sup>22</sup> Gellner, 'Nationalism', 770-776.



Another major point made by Gellner, is that industrial society is occupationally mobile. Traditionally most people would take up the profession carried out by their fathers. Technological change could produce a shift that would make a certain profession economically unfavorable after some time. In this case moving towards a different profession is economically the best thing to do, although it was socially rather unacceptable. Training can be provided by a community to deal with changing economic circumstances. In this way, assuming a stable economic climate, heredity can still be decisive in work allocation. In general, another feature relating to this issue is the fact that specialism requires a high technological level and many years of genuine training. Specialisms are necessary when the content of a profession becomes more complex. Gellner uses medieval bishops and lords as examples, stating that every fool living today could pose as a bishop or lord. Whether or not this is genuinely true, one could indeed argue that these occupations were rather empty compared to today's managerial positions. Heredity was acceptable as the system would function anyway, regardless of the occupant's talents. Since the demands for certain capabilities have significantly increased from the Industrial Revolution onward, it is no longer possible to suffice with a hereditary system. For today's elite positions such as scientific professors, one needs specific qualities. These are not to be found when randomly selecting some candidates from the general population. Not everyone has the ability to be such a professor. The hereditary system no longer suffices. Although genetic qualities could be of influence here, the training through education has a stronger influence. Another result of this development is the fact that education shifts from family or guild organizations to more complex organizations. In that sense nationalism is the shift towards a culture based on literacy and a formal educational system. The language that became dominant was the language of the school system, rather than the local mother tongue.<sup>23</sup>

Another characteristic of the industrial society is the fact that it's not only mobile between generations, but also within life spans and careers. The high degree of specialization required an extensive communication and co-operation between different specialists. For this reason the educational system had to be general as well. People from different specializations had to communicate within the same paradigm. Therefore, one had to learn general un-specialized things as well, beside the trade-specific features. This shared base makes changing jobs possible as well enhancing the feeling of belonging to the same society. Such a common base in the educational system, was new in modern society and never seen before.

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<sup>23</sup> Gellner, 'Nationalism', 753-761.

Another aspect of Gellner's nationalistic view is the distinction between power holders and non-power holders. *Power holders* refers to the political elite and *non-power holders* to the general population of the area involved. The question then is if either one of these groups is modern in the sense of literacy, education and technological development. In the case of Germany, both were possessors of a modern culture in that sense. What was different, however, was the cultural aspect. A cultural boundary was evident between the power holders and non-power holders, essentially meaning that the non-power holders could not agree with the power holders' culture. In reality there was a difference between the elite and the common people on what their cultural heritage was. Germany was politically divided; the general sentiment amongst the people foresaw a united Germany. Gellner's calls it unification nationalism, applicable to Italy and Germany from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. Gellner puts this form of nationalism in opposition against classic nationalism, in which the major difference is that the non-power holders lack an advanced degree in literacy and education. According to Gellner this results in an authoritarian system with an oppressed peasant society, mainly existing in Eastern Europe, where the elite needs to shape the national identity by cultural engineering.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.3 Situation in Europe

After this it is time to move on to the main part of this chapter and provide an answer to the main research question: *What was the role of German nationalism in the Dutch-German relations between 1909-1914?* For this part of the research not only secondary literature will be used. Also primary sources will be vital in answering this question. When investigating the archival sources in the National Archive in The Hague (Den Haag), it becomes evident that Germany has had a lot of international involvement during 1909-1914. These ambitions mainly focused on France and the Balkan-area, not quite in an overtly offensive manner. The correspondence between the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs and the ambassador in Berlin concerned royal families and minor issues most of the time. Events relating to state-security were a lot less frequent. The source material involved contains amongst others secret

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<sup>24</sup> Gellner, 'Nationalism', 769-776.

documents. Therefore, there is no reason to suspect that any file has been withheld from this part of the national archive.<sup>25</sup>

As we have seen in the previous chapter, nationalism is a phenomenon that has got many different faces. One of the important issues in this thesis is the influence of nationalism on foreign policy. How would nationalism alter decision making within this sphere? Is nationalism only interested in self defense or is it an expansive force? What are the consequences of nationalism in foreign policy? One would expect that every state, whether nationalistic or not, will do everything in its power to survive. The extra dimension added by nationalism might be the fact that survival itself is no longer the only major goal. Improvement of conditions for the people belonging to the nation becomes more important. The exact type of nationalism prevailing at a certain period of time and location results in different possibilities. French nationalism has been connected to the French state, the French territory and the French language. Therefore, inclusion into the nation would entail being able to speak French and living within the borders of France. German nationalism, for example during the first half of the twentieth century, made it possible for Germans to live thousands of miles outside the German borders, even within Russia, Poland and Romania. The main criterion was whether or not people had German blood running through their veins. Ancestry was deemed more important than language and country of origin, even though German was usually the language spoken at home. For this reason, one could argue that German nationalism would not limit itself at the German state borders. One could assume that the German government wanted to look after the interests of German people abroad as well. As these people were mostly living in Central and Eastern Europe, the Netherlands itself was not a major player concerning this issue. Although there was a large German minority living of a few tens of thousand in the Netherlands, there was no reason to suspect any conflict for that reason according to the literature already viewed upon in a previous chapter.<sup>26</sup>

During the nineteenth century, Europe was in the process of changing from the old order, consisting of monarchical regimes and empires, towards a state-system with more coherent national states. This process took decades if not more than a century. The most interesting issue about these national-states is probably the fact that these were no longer formed along dynastic lines. In fact, the general population was taken as a vantage point to define the nation. Along these lines nation-states were eventually formed, based on common

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<sup>25</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 76-81.

<sup>26</sup> Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 41-52 and 76-81.

culture, language and other characteristics. This sounds all too easy to account for all events that took place concerning this development. Several nation-states developed earlier than others. Some of them even failed to sustain themselves. The history of nationalism in Europe has many aspects, for example the several types of nationalism that existed. Nationalism as such had a huge influence on the course of events in Europe during the early twentieth century as well. An interesting approach would be to look at the bilateral international relations between states, for instance Germany and the Netherlands. On our way to finding an answer on the matter concerning the influence of German nationalism on the relation between the Netherlands and Germany, it is necessary to take a side step. This entails the exploration of the secondary literature surrounding this topic, in order to create a framework for this research. It is useful to investigate further what has already been written about this subject, not only to avoid addressing a question that has already been answered. It is also important to have an idea about the main concept, namely nationalism. This will be the first step in this chapter. We will explore what types of nationalism exist and what opinions several authors adhere to. Also, we will find out if nations already existed once nation-states emerged or the other way around. After this we will investigate the secondary material, which has already been written about nationalism in Germany. This period will be limited to the period of our final research, which is 1909-1914, although the preceding decades will also be explored. Consequently, the period will be extended to 1890-1914 to start with the fall of Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) as Chancellor in 1890, and the time of uncertainty after his decades long rule.

In this perspective the main issues to be dealt with are the types of nationalism that existed in Germany, as the main goal is to investigate political nationalism in the final research. To help finding the most relevant information, I have formulated three questions to shed more light on this subject. What kind of nationalism was prevalent in Germany? When did German nationalism radicalize? What were the causes of increased nationalism? This will provide us with a solid background on German nationalism before exploring the secondary literature on the Dutch-German relations. This basically covers a limited number of titles as this is a rather unexplored terrain, at least when it concerns nationalism. Therefore, it is useful to explore which aspects have been investigated satisfactory and where there are still open spaces.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*; Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog?*

## 2.4 Historiography on German Nationalism

As it is my objective to find out what role German nationalism had in the Dutch-German relations, it is useful to consider the literature about German nationalism that has been written so far. As we have noticed in the previous section, nationalism has existed in many forms during the past two centuries. Now it is time to take a closer look at the type of nationalism that was dominant in Germany between 1890 and 1914. In general, all authors acknowledge the existence of cultural nationalism among the general population. There is no debate about the fact that the eighteenth century German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder was the founding father of German cultural nationalism. His ideas included the conception of *das Volk* as a collective national personality. He also proposed a pacifistic philosophy, as well as the idea of the *Zeitgeist* as the dominant opinion of the manners, customs, thought, and tendency of an age. Furthermore, Herder had a belief in the brotherhood of men. What also seems to be clear, is the connection between German cultural nationalism and romanticism, which was addressed thoroughly by the American historian Royal J. Schmidt, already in 1956.<sup>28</sup>

During the time period of this research (1909-1914), the focal point of German nationalism had already shifted to more radical forms of nationalism, or better expressed, it had expanded towards the political and military area besides being only present in literature and other media. This development was already evident during the period 1864-1871, which did lead to the political unification of the German states into one *Kaiserreich*. This period was also characterized by three wars. The Danish-Prussian War was the first one, which took place in 1864, as well as a war against Austria in 1866 and later in 1870-71 against France.<sup>29</sup> In the article 'German Nationalism and Religion', the American historian A.J. Hoover makes a connection between Protestantism and German nationalism. In fact, he claims that during the formation of the German Empire many Protestants saw the nation as a God given entity. The clergy was universalistic in its approach and stood up against this view. This meant it vied for a Christian world community instead of a world divided by nations.<sup>30</sup> Most other historians disregard the religious aspect as if it is irrelevant. The reason why this matter might be interesting, is the fact that Germany was predominantly protestant in the north and mostly

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<sup>28</sup> Schmidt, 'Cultural Nationalism in Herder' 408-411; Barnard, 'National Culture and Political Legitimacy; 241-246 and 248.

<sup>29</sup> Stacie E. Goddard, 'When Right Makes Might: How Prussia Overturned the European Balance of Power', *International Security* 33 (2008) 110-142, there 113-119, 132-135, 140.

<sup>30</sup> A.J. Hoover, 'German Nationalism and Religion', *History of European Ideas* 20 (1995) 765-771, there 765-768 and 770-771.

catholic in the south.<sup>31</sup> It eventually formed one nation-state in 1871. This suggests that the cultural and linguistic ties were already relatively strong at this time. This nationalism was in first instance cultural and referred to specific qualities of the German people, such as their working ethic. Hoover claims that this cultural nationalism was dominant throughout the nineteenth century, with state sponsored political nationalism mostly prevalent in war time as well as during *Kulturkampf* in which the catholic part of Germany was subjugated to the cultural and political agenda of Germany as a unified state. This had a major influence on the assertion of loyalty of the German citizens, especially in the south.<sup>32</sup>

Already in 1969, the German historian Fritz Fischer wrote in his book *War of Illusions*, that Germany went to war in 1914 because of domestic motives. These considerations were a combination of military-industrial ambitions as well as more general economic issues, including the recession in 1913-14. Apart from major unemployment, this also led to a capital crisis in the banking sector. In its turn it weakened the German foreign trade and therefore its dependency on other countries.<sup>33</sup> The German political arena was already playing a risky game. In 1908 the relations between Turkey and Germany improved, which led to the dispatch of lieutenant-general Otto Liman von Sanders (1855-1929) to the Turks in Constantinople.<sup>34</sup>

Fischer has a rather materialistic approach when attributing causes to nationalism, as he mostly refers to economic interests and the socialist threat. The cultural nationalism and its background are disregarded in his work. His classification of nationalism is generally ethnic and related to the German people rather than the state, even though these two coincided mostly around this time. Relating to German nationalism, Fischer claims that the major cause was the prevalence of domestic cooperation above social opposing factions. Fischer also claims that the German political top-down nationalism was caused by an idea among the political elite of promoting medieval chivalry and to oppose Western pacifism that went along with economic and political liberalism in most Western countries around 1900. The German economy flourished; however, at the same time the general population resented the rational approach of profit chasing. The view of the population, which was based on romanticist ideas, opposed the standardized industrial mode of production, which minimized personal influence. Also the fact that capitalists became more powerful compared to this lack of individual

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<sup>31</sup> Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Dritter Band; Von der Deutschen Doppelrevolution bis zum Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges 1849-1914*. (Munich 1995) 377-386.

<sup>32</sup> Hoover, 'German Nationalism and Religion', 765-768 and 770-771.

<sup>33</sup> Fischer, *War of Illusions*, 355-361.

<sup>34</sup> Idem, 330-332.

opportunity on the part of the workers, caused massive resentment. This formed a common ground for a joined effort against this modern capitalist domination and, coinciding with an economic crisis, it further aggravated the distrust concerning liberal capitalism of both the German elite as well as the general population. These issues, according to Fischer, led to an even more aggressive foreign policy along with the notion of German ethnic nationalism, because of the common goal of both elite and people to avoid this modern rational capitalist accumulation.<sup>35</sup>

In a more recent publication by the British historian Hew Strachan, Fischer's account is being presented as no longer feasible in the light of the evidence available today. According to Strachan, Fischer failed to make a distinction between foreign and domestic policy. Beside this, Fischer took Germany's war aims as vantage points and went back in time to extract the causes for the First World War, for which Germany received most of the blame. Strachan argues in *The First World War Volume I: To Arms*, that the monarchs in the German states at the time of German unification in 1871 managed to make this unification. This was propagated by the liberal-nationalists, even though it eventually ended up being a conservative-nationalist victory, due to the fact that universal manhood suffrage led to more support for monarchical-aristocratic principles. This resulted in a lack of democratic control on military issues as well as foreign policy.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Strachan claims that Social-Darwinism played a major role within intellectual nationalism in Germany in the years before the First World War. He treats nationalism as such separated from foreign policy, therefore the specific role of nationalism, within the German government, remains unclear.<sup>37</sup>

The German historian Thomas Nipperdey wrote a book on Germany's general history in *Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1918* (1992). His emphasis is on politics, both the domestic as well as the international dimension. Concerning German nationalism in the period after 1890, he claims that three types of nationalism existed at the same time. The first one was *Nationalpatriotismus*, which is the most basic form of nationalism. This form is left out by other authors, since they probably consider it to be outside the scope of nationalism, and classify it plainly as patriotism. This *Nationalpatriotismus* is mostly characterized as being the result of face-to-face contact, hereby contradicting the view of an imagined community as suggested by Anderson. It has the sense of belonging to a German community as a main feature. This does not mean that the state has no influence on this form of nationalism. In fact,

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<sup>35</sup> Fischer, *War of Illusions*, 28-30.

<sup>36</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War Volume I: To Arms* (Oxford/New York 2001) 3-6.

<sup>37</sup> Strachan, *The First World War*, 133-136.

the feeling of unity was enhanced by symbolizing the nation, with the Kaiser as most important example. Another form of nationalism was *Normalnationalismus*. This is mainly characterized by national anthems, celebrations, the promotion of the armed forces, and imperialism. These forms are also detectable in other European countries during the same period. The third type of nationalism was *Radikalnationalismus*. It propagated German world power, but also a strong economic and military position in Europe. This form of nationalism was mainly present in the cultural elite and took a more radical turn in 1909. Why remains unclear, although the influence of organizations such as the *Alldeutscher Verband* and the *Flottenverein* became larger at about this time. The *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-Germanic League) was a radical nationalist pressure group with significant influence in those days. This organization was mostly focused on the people's sense of nationhood. The *Flottenverein* was the naval organization which propagated radical nationalism. In the light of the significant role of the military on the German foreign policy, organizations like these are not to be ignored, despite their limited memberships reaching up to 300.000.<sup>38</sup>

Nipperdey sees in Germany's politics a development which suggests a rather quiet period before 1907 and a period of crisis afterwards. This is mainly due to economic circumstances as a crisis emerged around 1913, caused by trouble in the banking business and also a lack of decisive intervention from the government. Also, the international tension became more severe, as the Morocco-crisis took shape in which the German navy tried to take Agadir and subsequently the whole of Morocco. The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were also disturbing, even though Germany did not participate in these wars. It created more tension around Austria-Hungary, an ally, and Russia, a potential foe. Nipperdey suggests that internationally the period from 1909 onwards was more polarizing, since nations were more confronted with each others ambitions.<sup>39</sup> The British historian John Breuilly also discovered crises in 1909 and 1913. He connects these crises with the increased demands concerning Germany's infrastructure at home and abroad, resulting from *Weltpolitik* and imperialism. As a consequence, more revenue was needed to sustain the costs, which caused economic problems. This coincided with Germany existing as a *Reichsnation*, basically an Empire with a core and areas of expansion, either overseas or border-regions. He also identifies Germany being a state-nation and a nation-state. The federal character suggested little homogeneity, while the government worked on creating a coherent nation for the people. This resulted in

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1918. Zweiter Band. Machtstaat vor der Demokratie* (München 1992) 595-609.

<sup>39</sup> Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 699-702 and 741-750.



the nation as such being unitary, namely Germany itself as *Kaiserreich* and the state structure being more decentralized as a federation consisting of several states, such as Bavaria and Prussia.<sup>40</sup>

The German historian Otto Dann wrote in *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland, 1770-1990* (1994) that the national-state is generally based on the state adopting a political program in order to look after its interests. The nation-state is therefore bound by a certain territory encompassing all the people living within its borders. According to Dann, these borders are solid and the nation-state is therefore by definition sovereign. Beside this, it is also a product of modernity, in which societies address the issues of democracy, minorities and neighboring people. An important notion Dann conveys, is his separation of the concepts of nation-state and nationalism. Nationalism is to Dann an undemocratic and inhuman part of the more general national movements, which propagates the democratic nation-state. This democratic nation-state shares the ideas of the people in a representative way and is oriented inward. The nationalistic movement is moved by certain interest groups that gain power through an expansionist foreign policy. It could have been used as an instrument to increase governmental or corporatist power on the general population. Dann's view on nation-states makes an explanation of nation-building in the German case suggests that both factions were present. In this perspective nation-building in a regular sense must be seen as the efforts of a national movement based on cultural nationalism. The nationalist agenda, on the contrary, is comparable to radical nationalism, although the explanation of the undemocratic element remains hidden in Dann's account. It is unclear why nationalism by definition needs to be undemocratic. Is it because the general population tends to avoid warfare, and can therefore not be too radical? This argument seems technically feasible, though the question remains why other authors have not made a similar distinction concerning nation-state and nationalism.<sup>41</sup>

According to the German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler in *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (1994), German nationalism radicalized already after 1890. Wehler sees the radicalization of German nationalism as a result of several issues taking place at approximately the same time. It was mostly being caused by increased colonial ambitions, anti-Polish sentiments, anti-Semitism and fear of Pan-Slavism. The influence of so-called *Nationalistische Agitationsverbände* or nationalistic pressure groups, such as the *Alldeutsche*

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<sup>40</sup> John Breuilly, 'Nation and Nationalism in Modern German History', *The Historical Journal* 33/3 (1990) 659-675, there 665-669.

<sup>41</sup> Otto Dann, *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland, 1770-1990* (Munich 1994) 177-189 and 195-207.

*Verband* and the *Wehrverein*, was also marked. These pressure groups were connected to the arms industry as well as to the military itself. Social-Darwinism also played a major role in political nationalism, as it underscored the unique role the German people was given.<sup>42</sup>

In terms of foreign policy, Wehler identifies 1911 as a watershed. He acknowledges the major expansion of the navy and the army in the preceding years, but holds the moment of active engagement in hazardous international politics as a breakthrough. The Morocco-crisis is seen as the most important act. This significant part of *Weltpolitik* was not only state sponsored, but also a result of an increased nationalism amongst the German population, especially due to the well organized *Agitationsverbände*, as these propagated an increased arms industry and military capability. What Wehler also claims, is that geographical considerations also played a role in German radical nationalism in relation to Social Darwinism. Not only in concerning the defense of the German soil itself, but also as a contributing factor towards the German identity.<sup>43</sup>

The German historian Hans Peter Hermann writes in the article ‘‘Fatherland’’: Patriotism and Nationalism in the Eighteenth Century’ (1996), that a clear distinction between bourgeois liberal nationalism and cultural nationalism is not valid, as promoted by Herder on the one hand and radical militant nationalism on the other hand. Although Hermann does not treat any specific period in German history, it still sheds light on the meaning of nationalism as a movement in German culture. The author suggests these different forms of nationalism are intertwined through cultural instruments, such as books. Therefore, the cultural elite, state authority and the general public have more unity than one would think at first sight.<sup>44</sup>

The German historian Heinrich August Winkler writes in his book *Der lange Weg nach Westen* (2000) a general history of Germany from 1789-1933. His approach concerning the selected subjects is comparable to Wehler. He also deals mostly with political culture and general economic issues. He has concepts such as liberalism and nationalism as the backbone in his story. In my view, he tries to indicate what development liberalism and nationalism have made throughout the mentioned period. His argument basically is that the initial liberalism forthcoming from the French Revolution eventually had to make way for nationalism. This meant that the freedom of choice for individuals became subject to the needs of the state. This shift took place between 1850 and 1870. This probably not only

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<sup>42</sup> Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 1067-1073 and 1079-1082.

<sup>43</sup> Idem, 1109-1111.

<sup>44</sup> Hans Peter Herrmann, ‘‘Fatherland’’: Patriotism and Nationalism in the Eighteenth Century’, in Jost Hermand, and James Steakley, *Heimat, Nation, Fatherland. The German Sense of Belonging* (New York 1996) 2-17, there 2-8 and 15-17.

suggests the existence of a road to German unification, but also hints at explaining Prussia's more aggressive behavior towards other states. Eventually, this would lead to three wars, against Denmark in 1864, against Austria in 1866 and versus France in 1870-71. These wars did not only create military alliances between Prussia and other German states, especially the southern catholic kingdoms, such as Bavaria and Württemberg. It also shaped the unifying process of Germany to form a coherent nation-state from 1871 onward.<sup>45</sup>

Winkler mostly deals with the political developments from 1871-1890, where only the political dimension of nationalism and the consequences for its domestic and foreign policy are taken into consideration, for instance the development of nationalistic political parties in the *Reichstag* and the alliance building process in Europe. A connection between cultural nationalism and political nationalism lacks in his work.<sup>46</sup>

The main question remains why Winkler pays so much attention to political parties in an autocratic Germany. It could be because the content of the political programs sheds light on the most important issues of those days. Winkler also emphasizes a strong connection between nationalism and anti-Semitism. This would suggest that he sees this nationalism as radical and ethnically oriented, since it would be a matter of inclusion and exclusion. It creates a separation between 'real' Germans and those who are not and only happen to live in Germany. Winkler sees a benchmark in 1909, when as a result of that year's elections the nationalists gained more influence in the Reichstag. As suggested before, this would not mean anything yet, as the Reichstag's influence was limited. However, it created a shift in foreign policy as well from 1909 onward, when politician Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg (1856-1921) became Reich chancellor. Eventually, this would lead to a stronger adoption of *Weltpolitik*, especially from 1911 onward, leading to the Morocco-crisis and eventually the First World War in 1914.<sup>47</sup>

In 2006, the modern German historian Sebastian Conrad wrote *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*. Although this book focuses on the situation in the German colonies in Africa and China, an account of nationalism is still given. Conrad claims that, especially from 1848 onward, cultural nationalism was predominant and became political only as of 1880. It is highly unlikely that this would have happened after the Franco-Prussian War and the German unification. The fact that this unification finalized in 1871 meant that political nationalism had already existed before this moment. This contradicts the views of

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<sup>45</sup> Heinrich August Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen; Bd. 1: Deutsche Geschichte vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zum Untergang der Weimarer Republik* (Munich 2000) 177-180 and 190-198.

<sup>46</sup> Idem, 238-245.

<sup>47</sup> Idem, 298-306 and 310-318.

other authors. It probably is because the conceptual focus is more on globalization, which is not necessarily contradictory compared to nationalism. Germany's colonial ambitions were no doubt the result of at least some nationalistic agenda. Apparently, colonialism was considered to be beneficial for Germany's economic and military strategic position.<sup>48</sup>

There are a few books that have proven less valuable than one would expect. For instance, *The German Empire* by Michael Stürmer is rather general in its approach concerning the Wilhelmine Empire from 1871-1918. It mostly concentrates on military aspects, especially around the period of the First World War. Even though some economical aspects are taken into consideration, nationalism is left out entirely. It does not contribute to the debate in that perspective.<sup>49</sup> Based on what we have seen so far concerning German nationalism, there still remains a gap when addressing the question why German nationalism radicalized in the periods mentioned by the authors, although some causes have been identified. In most cases there are several periods of radicalization, mostly related to the process of German unification around 1860-1871, as well as the period after 1890 and the last few years before World War I. Economic crises are identified by Nipperdey and Fischer, although the dynamics behind this process remain hidden. As other causes of radicalized nationalism, authors mostly refer to events concerning international politics, such as wars. In line with Strachan's observation on Fischer, this suggests that one tends to identify causes when the consequences have become evident. It is rather easy to declare that nationalism radicalizes when you know a war followed shortly afterwards. For this reason I think the question of the causes of this radicalization, especially between roughly 1905-1914, remains unanswered. What we can see clearly is a more radicalized nationalism form 1909 onwards. In this perspective I think this is quite a convincing conclusion, as many authors identify this development and basically no one goes explicitly against it. What is remarkable, however, is the fact that this radicalization seems to be the product of external threats or perceived threats. In the literature it does not become clear if there were any domestic issues that played a significant role in the radicalization process. Has it for instance to do with the interests of the arms industry, trying to provoke a major war? There is after all an interaction between the nationalist organization, the government and the military and the industry.<sup>50</sup> The American historian Marilyn Shevin Coetzee published on German nationalism when researching the *Deutsche Wehrverein* or

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<sup>48</sup> Sebastiaan Conrad, *Globalisation and the nation in imperial Germany* (Cambridge 2010) 12-19 and 375-385.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Stürmer, *The German Empire* (New York 2000) 110-117.

<sup>50</sup> Fischer, *War of Illusions* 28-30; Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte* 699-702 and 741-750; Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* 1067-1073, 1079-1082 and 1109-1111; Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen* 177-180, 190-198 and 238-245.

*German Army League* in *The German Army League Popular Nationalism in Wilhelmine Germany*. According to Shevin Coetzee, the type of nationalism associated with the Army League is popular nationalism. This organization was connected to the army but had rather general ideas concerning German nationalism and the way it had to be implemented. She claims it eventually led to national-socialism. Beside this the doctrine was highly anti-Semitic, with also a tendency to promote world domination. In essence, the main focus of this organization was not only supporting the activities of the armed forces, but also the expansionist German foreign politics in general. The general idea behind the doctrine was some sort of reconciliation, especially before the First World War around 1912. Germany was supposed to strike back from a backward position. In itself it is rather remarkable to refer to Germany as backward, although the idea is understandable when it comes to German power on a worldwide level, as the amount of colonial possessions lagged far behind that of other major powers, such as Britain and France. What Shevin Coetzee also shows, is the fact that membership concerning patriotic organizations overlapped and one person could be a member of more than one such organization. In the light of the different programs this looks rather remarkable. Here it becomes clear that the Navy League or the *Flottenverein* was much more popular in terms of membership than the *Alldeutscher Verband* or *Kolonialverein* or *Ostmarkenverein*. The *Flottenverein* had around 300.000 members between 1909 and 1914, the other organizations roughly between 17.000 and 55.000.<sup>51</sup> Shevin Coetzee published the article 'Rethinking the Radical Right in Germany and Britain before 1914' along with Frans Coetzee. Here it becomes clear that the German radical right movements had a limited influence on the German political climate. The most prominent members were moderate and apparently more educated, which prevented a full scale domination of radical individuals.<sup>52</sup> The strange thing about this radicalization was that most of the prominent radicals were the ones who profited from the German modernization process instead of the ones being its victims. In this sense Frans and Marilyn Coetzee agree with the British historian Geoff Eley, who already described this exact phenomenon before. Furthermore, Eley claims in 'Reshaping the Right' that the *Flottenverein*, for example, was very much against the civilian economic capitalist modernization. This meant that there was a contradiction within two different sides within Germany. The capitalist economy provided Germany with its prosperity and the financial capacities to let the navy grow to the size it reached during the 1910s. Contradictory

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<sup>51</sup> Marilyn Shevin Coetzee, *The German Army League. Popular Nationalism in Wilhelmine Germany* (New York/Oxford 1990) 15-17, 97-104, 118-120.

<sup>52</sup> Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin Coetzee, 'Rethinking the Radical Right in Germany and Britain before 1914.' *Journal of Contemporary History* 21/4 (1986) 515-537, there 515-517 and 524-527.

to this was the assumption that this was all redundant and nationalistic ideology itself was dominant. August Keim (1845-?) was a member of the *Wehrverein* and the *Alldeutsche Verband*. He became leader of the latter in 1908. He thought the regular modernization process was fragmenting the nation. For this reason he pleaded for unity and stubborn nationalism. This was to be followed by a nationalistic ideology, which would promote the German interest within the political arena. This shows that there was somehow a contradiction between radical nationalism and everyday politics.<sup>53</sup>

Another issue is the matter of inclusion and exclusion, in this case the matter of being German. Is this limited to only those who speak German and are purely German in ancestry? An alternative could be the explanation ushered by Pan-Germanics, as they consider all other Germanic people to be part of the same tribe. In this view, the Dutch people can be considered to be part of a larger Germany. Pan-Germanic views have been scrutinized since the Second World War, but were quite regular in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Pan-Germanic nationalism would involve, beside Germany itself, also Austria, Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Flanders, and maybe other areas, such as Luxembourg and northern France as well. Was this Pan-Germanic view evident within the German government between 1909 and 1914? If it was, can it be revealed? It might have been that the Germans considered the Dutch to be their brothers, as the evidence shows that Germany was more aggressive and demanding towards France and Russia, compared to their other neighbor, the Netherlands. We have seen that several pressure groups with Pan-Germanic views were active and influential. The *Alldeutsche Verband* and the *Flottenverein* were two of these nationalistic organizations. The former was indeed well known for its Pan-Germanic views, the latter for supporting the colonial adventure and the naval expansions.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.5 The Role of Nationalism in German Foreign Policy

German nationalism was probably at its high between 1909 and 1914. What we can see most clearly when investigating German nationalism using secondary sources, is the fact that there is a discrepancy between German foreign policy formulated in Berlin on the one hand, and the ambitious and strongly diverging nationalistic sentiments on the other, which was represented

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<sup>53</sup> Geoff Eley, 'Reshaping the Right: Radical Nationalism and the German Navy League, 1898-1908', *The Historical Journal* 21/2 (1978) 327-354, there 350-354.

<sup>54</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 263-288. Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 699-702.

by nationalistic organizations, such as the *Flottenverein* and the *Alldeutsche Verband*. Essentially, the freely expressed nationalistic feelings throughout the country do not blend in very well with the daily reality in the international arena. To what extent is nationalism therefore measurable? This is a more difficult issue than one would think. In the primary sources nationalism is barely ever used. Even when it would have been, one could doubt if the content of this term would be the same as today. In the historiographical part of this thesis, it has become clear that nationalism manifested itself through its characteristics. Of course, these properties depend entirely on the type of nationalism that we are dealing with. Cultural nationalism, for instance, has an emphasis on education and artistic expressions and lacks concrete political goals. Unification nationalism, existing in modern urbanized and industrial societies, has an evident political goal. In the case of unification nationalism that, according to Gellner, existed in Germany and Italy, the population of an area with a common culture and language, manages to fulfill the need for a nationalistic program in order to accomplish unification.<sup>55</sup> The German unification process was officially completed in 1871 when the German Empire under Kaiser Wilhelm I was formed. There were still issues that remained unsolved, however. The German people living in Eastern Europe for example, where in fact considered part of the German nation. Was German unification still incomplete? The decision making process concerning international relations between Germany and any other country took place at the highest governmental level, in this case the German Imperial government in Berlin as an overarching institution for all German states, such as Prussia, Bavaria and Sachsen. According to realist theory, the state is the main actor in international relations. For this reason it is useful to limit ourselves to political nationalism. Any other kind of nationalism, lacking a political program, would have no influence when dealing with politics in general let alone foreign politics.

Two main streams in German nationalism become most relevant for the relation between Germany and the Netherlands. Political nationalism in general can be divided in two main groups as these have different consequences, for the ambitions towards the Netherlands. The first group entails the Pan-Germanic nationalism, as this type of nationalism was likely to include the Netherlands into its sphere of influence. The other type of German political nationalism, proposed to maintain the existing territory or only to annex smaller areas, inhabited by German people. The *Alldeutsche Verband* and the *Flottenverein* were probably the main representatives of these respective streams. The Pan-Germanic stream of nationalism

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<sup>55</sup> Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 1067-1073 and 1079-1082; Shevin Coetzee, *The German Army League*, 15-17, 97-104.

was not that evident at the highest level of government and its content never became official government policy. The influence on individuals within the government as well as political parties cannot be underestimated.<sup>56</sup>

Apart from the *Alldeutsche Verband*, the *Ostmarkenverein*, active since 1894, was also prominent. Both organizations proposed *Germanisierung*, cleansing of non-Germanic people, applicable in all German territory, aiming to expel three million Poles from East-Prussia. These pressure groups had significant support amongst the population as well as major intellectuals, such as sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920). The *Alldeutsche Verband* had some strong ties within the upper ranks of the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Diplomat Alfred von Kiderlen-Waechter (1852-1912) and deputy secretary Arthur Zimmermann (1864-1940) had serious connections with the *Alldeutsche Verband*. This was mostly related to the escalation process concerning German foreign policy, even leading to the second Morocco-crisis in 1911. This shows us that even the Pan-Germanic nationalists were willing to support the colonial adventure.<sup>57</sup> This account by Michael Peter concerning the *Alldeutsche Verband* does, however, still confirm the limited influence of Pan-Germanic nationalism in general on the German foreign policy. In fact, the right wing political parties lost much influence in the Reichstag during 1909-1914, as the social-democrats gained a lot.<sup>58</sup>

The second stream, (Klein)-German nationalism, was more evident in the highest level of government. The pressure groups supporting this kind of nationalism aimed at world domination. The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (1887), *Deutsche Flottenverein* (1898), and *Deutsche Wehrverein* (1912) had more specific objectives rather than a general idea about Germany's future. These were organizations targeting at specific issues relating to the colonial endeavor as well as the armed forces. Both the government as well as these pressure groups were convinced that a strong German army and navy would be necessary to protect German colonial possessions and trade worldwide. Regardless of the neglectable economic gain resulting from the colonial endeavor, this policy was still promoted as being an immaterial manifestation of German superiority by showing its advanced industry and technology in the form of a strong naval force. The Pan-Germanic organizations were rather ambivalent in their approach around 1911-1912. In fact, these organizations supported the naval expansions and the colonial project, while at the same time promoting a more outward policy on the continent. Bethmann-Hollweg was severely criticized for adhering to the

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<sup>56</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 282-297. Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 79-91.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Peters, *Der Alldeutsche Verband am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges (1908-1914)* (Frankfurt 1996) 114-120 and 123-128.

<sup>58</sup> Peters, *Der Alldeutsche Verband*, 176-179.



former. According to Dutch historian Frits Boterman, the German government succumbed under pressure from both branches of nationalistic organizations.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, it is fair to conclude that nationalism in fact had a large influence on the German foreign policy goals. Is this a general view? Most authors are not that outspoken on the influence of nationalist organizations on foreign policy. Their accounts limit themselves to their political culture and role in society. Nipperdey and Wehler are the only ones explicitly mentioning the influence of these nationalistic organizations. Essentially, no clear answer is given on which actor formed the motor behind nationalism. The state promoted nationalism and gave these organizations full opportunity to promote their way of thinking. We can assume, based on what we have seen, that there is a tight relationship between intellectuals active for or within nationalistic pressure groups on the one hand, and those active as civil servants in the governmental departments on the other.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, the nationalistic movements cannot be separated simply into governmental and public streams. In fact, it more or less functioned as one and the same organism. For this reason we can assume that foreign policy was in fact drenched with nationalism. The numerical support for the regular German nationalism was significantly higher as we have seen. Regardless of that fact it remains uncertain if the exact influence on the government was measurable in the first place. Because of the fact that it differed for each person, it would be necessary to do further research on the personal accounts and diaries of these individuals. Beside this it is just as well possible that an organization with fewer members was able to gain more influence due to a better strategy or pure luck. Which one of the two streams had more influence remains unclear. If we focus on results, however, the Pan-Germanic viewpoint does barely come forward between 1909 and 1914. This is as we will see applicable on the Netherlands as well as other nations, somehow involved with Germany.<sup>61</sup>

## **2.6 Involvement in European international relations**

The international situation of Germany in 1909 was as follows. It was a rapidly growing, both in an absolute as well as in a relative sense, economic power. An increased flow of raw materials and foodstuffs was imperative to support the growing economy as well as the

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<sup>59</sup> Shevin Coetzee, *The German Army League*, 15-17 and 97-104; Frits Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland 1800-heden* (Amsterdam 2005) 193-199.

<sup>60</sup> Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 1067-1073 and 1079-1082; Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 699-702 and 741-750.

<sup>61</sup> Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 71-81; Shevin Coetzee, *The German Army League*, 118-120.

expanding population. Germany therefore, had to secure a larger percentage of the international trade. The colonial possessions in Africa and the Asian-Pacific region were of little added value to the metropole's economy. Still, the German government wanted to sustain these colonies for political prestige. When depleted of any concrete economic value, this political objective was a clear sign of nationalism. The security of the communication and transport lines had to be accomplished. For this reason, the navy was given a more important role from the 1880s onward. After this period, another occurrence resulted in an expanded German navy. The British launched their Dreadnought-class battleships, which were deemed revolutionary and superior, compared to other battleship classes. When this took place in 1906, the Germans decided to build their own larger type of battleship. As a result of this, a major naval race developed, in which the Germans and the British tried to overtake each other in terms of ship size and advanced weaponry. The British naval power was still significantly larger compared to Germany's naval capabilities. The main strategic issue was the domination of the sea routes between Germany and its colonies, mainly in Africa. Due to its location, Britain was well able to raise a blockade against German vessels on their way to the Atlantic. German prestige was not only inferior within the colonial sphere, but also vulnerable on the longer term if the British were to maintain naval superiority.<sup>62</sup>

Germany's political power on the continent was already significantly growing in Prussian times, before the German unification in 1871. The wars in 1864 against Denmark, 1866 against Austria and 1870 versus France, showed an increasing German capability to deal with serious adversaries. What it also showed, was the fact that population size was no longer a deciding factor in warfare. Industrial production became increasingly important. Germany managed to build up a solid and highly efficient industrial sector. It managed to take a leading position within Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. It surpassed Britain when it came to industrial power, even though it still lagged behind in terms of financial domination as well as imperialism. This contradiction weighed heavily upon the German self-esteem. Not only did this notion result in Germany taking up a role in the imperialistic endeavor, as mentioned before, it also triggered some demand for compensation. As Britain and France were evidently dominant in the intercontinental realm, Germany sought a way to cope with this. One of the methods to accomplish this was to expand German power on the European continent itself.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 249-255, 283-285, 293-297 and 352-360. Strachan, *The First World War*, 1-9 and 374-381. John Keegan, *De Eerste Wereldoorlog (translation; The First World War)* (London/Kilmington 1998/2006) 29-33 and 41-51.

<sup>63</sup> Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 741-750, 812-819. Strachan, *The First World War*, 21-27.

As a result of this, a mixture of defensive and offensive objectives developed within the German foreign policy. Its ambitions were in fact highly limited due to the vulnerable position of the German territory on the European continent. In the West Britain and France were around 1909 still two formidable powers and were involved in an alliance with each other since 1904. For this reason a war with France would create the risk of a British intervention. In the East there was Russia as potentially one of the strongest European great powers. This was mostly caused by its enormous population size, more than twice the amount of people compared to Germany. Also, the sheer size of the Russian territory made it well protected from any foreign invasion. At the time Germany and Russia were neighbors, with a huge Russian salient probing into German territory (Silesia, East Prussia and Pommern) in what is today known as the Warsaw region in Poland. To make matters worse from a German perspective, the Russian formed an alliance with the French (1894) and the British (1907). The Germans themselves had alliance treaties with Austria-Hungary and Italy. Within this Central-European alliance, Germany was clearly the most powerful nation from an economic as well as from a military perspective.<sup>64</sup> According to Dutch historian Frits Boterman, the German foreign policy was characterized by *Weltpolitik*. How did this form of international politics come into existence in the first place? Boterman claims that Bismarck's successors simply did not possess enough moral power to formulate a foreign policy beyond the influence of Wilhelm II and the military elite. Bismarck managed Germany's security by preventing an alliance being formed between France and Russia. Chancellor Von Caprivi wanted to change the former policy and lean more on Austria-Hungary, hereby neglecting Russia completely.<sup>65</sup> The multi-ethnic 'Habsburg' Empire was suffering from internal weaknesses due to nationalistic tensions in the Balkans. This policy change also had to do with the fact that Russia and Austria were no longer compatible within the same alliance, because both had a major interest to expand their power in the Balkan-peninsula. Another issue was the French revanchist posture resulting from the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), in which the French lost a significant amount of territory in Elzas-Lorraine to Germany. Not only the piece of land itself, but also the economic value attached to it, added to the grievances amongst the French people. In the case of a repetitive war between these two countries, Germany was in a vulnerable position, since it could expect a Russian offensive from the East. Another initiative also used to be part of Germany's foreign policy. It wanted to approach Britain in order to create a better relationship with this formidable maritime

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<sup>64</sup> Keegan, *De Eerste Wereldoorlog*, 20-26 and 53-59.

<sup>65</sup> Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland*, 193-199.

power. The Germans expected the British would be interested in establishing an alliance, as German support was deemed necessary to help Britain defend its colonies in Asia and Africa against Russia and France respectively. Maybe being part of an alliance added to Germany's vulnerability as the odds of getting involved in a war, when being part of an alliance structure, were significantly higher. Germany ran the risk of having to intervene on behalf of Italy or Austria-Hungary. Therefore, it is fair to say that Germany's position from a realist perspective was rather weak, at least on the alliance structure issue. In terms of absolute strength Germany was the primary power in Europe. It had also the strongest industrial base. Still the Germans wanted to continue their traditional approach.<sup>66</sup> The issues just mentioned indicated a less favorable climate for expansion compared to around 1890-1900. The alliance structure and the potential amount of enemy soldiers crippled any perspective of a quick victory against France and Russia that were part of the opposing alliance. This was embodied in the Von Schlieffen plan, which entailed a short war of only a few weeks to defeat France, before moving the German Army by train to the East to fight Russia. This scheme was considered possible due to the fact that Russia was expected to mobilize much slower than France.<sup>67</sup>

On 29 April 1909, the Dutch envoy to Berlin W.A.F Gevers (1856-1927) reported to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Reneke de Marees van Swinderen (1860-1955), that Germany had declared to recognize the independence of Bulgaria which it received from the Ottoman Empire. The process of recognition was slightly delayed because of the *Orient-Bahn-Gesellschaft's* director not being present at his desk.<sup>68</sup> Apparently, the opinion of this German railway-company weighed heavily on the policy makers in Berlin. The railway connection between Germany and Constantinople went directly through the territory of Bulgaria, therefore it was relevant. The security of the railway line was apparently of major importance for German assets and trade relations. Also mentioned in this report was the unrest on the Albanian-Serbian border. At the time Albania was still part of the Ottoman Empire as it was before the two Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. Albania gained independence during 1913 as a result of the first Balkan War. Apparently, the name Albania was already in use to indicate the specific region. This unrest involved Serbian claims on Ottoman territory and led to skirmishes resulting from the abdication of the Turkish Sultan and the power shift towards

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<sup>66</sup> Strachan, *The First World War*, 28-36 and 163-172; Keegan, *De Eerste Wereldoorlog*, 117-126, 156-164 and 227-234.

<sup>67</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 249-259; Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland*, 195-204; Keegan, *De Eerste Wereldoorlog*, 35-43.

<sup>68</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; The Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers to Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees Van Swinderen, 29 April 1909.

the Young Turks. The German government was concerned with the stability in the area, as it saw the emerging Slavic states on the Balkan-peninsula as a threat towards the established Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Also it was reported that more instability was to be expected in Central-Asia and Macedonia. Where exactly and why does not become clear. In the case of Macedonia it may have the same causes as the Serbo-Albanian unrest. Also the independence of Bulgaria could have ignited nationalistic feelings in Macedonia as the Macedonian people still incorporated in the Ottoman Empire wanted to connect to Bulgaria or become entirely independent themselves. After the Balkan Wars, Macedonia became part of Serbia.<sup>69</sup>

On 4 March 1913, Gevers reported to the minister of Foreign affairs De Marees van Swinderen that a shift in behavior was to be expected from Germany within the near future. One of the first signs that Germany was actively preparing for war was the fact that the government in Berlin considered it necessary to increase the army size and reinforce certain army and navy units. The perceived threat that formed the basis for this course of action had nothing to do with the Netherlands. The limited size of the Netherlands as a country and as a military power was not an essential reason for the Germans not to consider this nation as being a threat. In fact, some smaller countries lying further away from Germany were seen as a possible danger for Germany's security as a result of the relatively new established Slavic states on the Balkan-peninsula: Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro. Even though these states were no real threat to Germany itself, the perceived instability of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was considered endangering to the existing order.<sup>70</sup>

The exact reasoning behind this remains a bit unclear and is perhaps a subject for another research. One could argue that Austria-Hungary was regarded as a buffer state separating Slavic and Germanic people. Apparently, Austria-Hungary was considered to be a Germanic country as the Austrians and the many Germans living in all corners of that empire were looked upon as Germans by many people in Germany itself. The Balkan Wars ravaging the southern Balkan area were mainly undermining the power of the Ottoman Empire, also one of Germany's future allies. Serbia increased its territory and military power significantly and posed a major threat considering the fact that many ethnic Serbs living in Bosnia, an Austrian province, might feel encouraged to reach out for independence or inclusion into

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<sup>69</sup> Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 732-740; Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland*, 195-204; Strachan, *The First World War*, 36-42 and 335-337; Keegan, *De Eerste Wereldoorlog*, 67-76.

<sup>70</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; The Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers to Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees Van Swinderen, 4 March 1913.

Serbia. The nationalistic ideas prevailing within the German society might very well foresee a more homogeneous state as the ideal state and therefore consider the events in the Balkan as a natural course of history. At the same time, Russia was in the process of increasing the size of its military. The Russians were seen as rather incompetent to fight prolonged wars, ever since their failure in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. It was, however, still a dangerous opponent because of the size of the army, with more people likely to enlist in wartime than Germany and Austria-Hungary combined. The level of armament was rather limited and therefore the Russian government decided to increase the amount of weaponry per man in the armed forces in 1913. The odds of defeating Russia within a short period of time decreased significantly.<sup>71</sup>

Apart from Russia, Belgium and France also took some measures in 1913. Both of Germany's western neighbors reconstructed their armed forces, making them more effective to resist a German invasion. Especially France increased the number of army divisions, resulting in more capabilities to defend a wider frontline. In order to accomplish this, the French government expanded the traditional two years of military service to three years. As a result of this, the French armed forces were enabled to retain more men within their ranks at any given time. The increase in military power in the West and in the East was perceived as a genuine threat by Germany. Eventually, the German government saw itself forced to take appropriate measures in order to counter the relative gain in strength by the Entente powers France and Russia. The next course of action was the increase in military expenditure, which resulted in higher taxation levels throughout the German society.<sup>72</sup>

On 8 April 1913, the German chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg held a speech indicating that the German people should be ready to face many deprivations as a result of these military expansions. According to Gevers, the speech made a tremendous impression amongst all observants and the general public. The tone in which Bethmann-Hollweg spoke was not too sharp and quite reasonable given the circumstances. What became evident in this speech was the fact that the German government blamed the increased tensions on Russia and France,

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<sup>71</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 263-271; Strachan, *The First World War*, 36-42, 281-285 and 441-450.

<sup>72</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; The Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers to Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees Van Swinderen, 7 July 1913.

since these countries provoked Germany. The fact that France and Russia were allies of one another made the situation less favorable for Germany.<sup>73</sup>

What can we learn from the preceding narrative? The fact that the Dutch envoy reported on issues in which the Netherlands was not directly involved, testifies to the importance of other nations beside only the Netherlands and Germany. When it concerned German international ambitions, mostly other countries than the Netherlands were victimized. If we can assume that German nationalism was of influence within foreign policy, it is to be expected that every neighboring country would suffer from it to an equal extent, unless other issues play a role. According to realist theory an external threat, such British or French military power, could have been of major influence. Also, the Russian and French military expansions from 1913 onward were likely to provoke an aggressive German reaction. The German need for coals and iron ore may also have been a major factor in expansive behavior towards Belgium and France. The Netherlands mostly lacked these resources, making an occupation of the Netherlands less profitable. If we put liberal theory on trial, the Dutch in case of war would secure Germany's import flow through the port of Rotterdam to the major industrial area in the Ruhr.

## 2.7 Ending remarks

This chapter started with an overview on German nationalism and what it was based on. Gellner's account indicates that it could be considered as unification nationalism, being part of a Western type of this phenomenon. The two main groups in Gellner's theory, the power holders and non-power holders, are both educated and technologically advanced within the industrial sector. A cultural boundary separated the power holders and non-power holders, as the political elite was non-organized according to the peoples' assumption of a nation, in Germany's case, multiple countries within one German nation, with the language and identity.<sup>74</sup> After the unification, Germany held on to firm nationalism, resulting in different doctrines existing amongst the people. The fact that the people were educated and could empower their intellectuals, had a major influence on the German government in Berlin. Here we touch upon the role of German nationalistic organizations. When it comes to the German-Dutch relations, it would be most relevant to separate these groups in terms of Pan-Germanic content. First of

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<sup>73</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen 8 April 1913; Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland*, 193-198.

<sup>74</sup> Gellner, 'Nationalism', 753-761 and 769-776.

all, we must understand what the exact role was of German nationalism on the highest level of government. Throughout German society many forms of nationalism existed. The most relevant way to separate the different forms of German nationalism, is to first look at the objectives towards the Netherlands. On the one hand there was a stream within German nationalism that was Pan-Germanic. It's goals were to at least integrate any area where German people lived and also to gain influence in other Germanic countries, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Whether or not these plans also involved an annexation of the Netherlands, cannot be proven. Maybe an answer lies in the German archives concerning the *Alldeutsche Verband*. The reality was that *Alldeutsche Verband* never had any real power on the national level.<sup>75</sup>

Therefore, this organization never was in the position where it could officially formulate such a policy. Other German nationalistic organizations, such as *Deutsche Flottenverein* (1898), *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (1887) and *Wehrverein* (1912), were not focused on German expansion on the continent and towards other Germanic nations. In fact, these organizations mainly supported *Weltpolitik*, which entailed the establishment of colonies and vying for world domination, mostly at the cost of Britain. This policy was more evident in the German foreign policy. The German *Auswärtiges Amt* was highly influenced by nationalism, if we put in general terms.<sup>76</sup> According to Gellner's theory, unification nationalism was most evident in the middle of the nineteenth century. A shift in policy was to be expected, after the unification process was accomplished. The strong German political nationalism could be considered a mixed form of this unification nationalism to be found in both Pan-Germanic as well as Prussian nationalistic views. What we have seen, is that the Prussian or German nationalistic view was dominant within the government in Berlin, compared to the Pan-Germanic view, which barely took shape within policy goals. Beside this, we have also discovered what concrete ambitions Germany had to incorporate the Netherlands into its Empire. What becomes evident, especially based on Wehler, Nipperdey and Boterman, is that the influence of these nationalistic pressure groups cannot be underestimated. Many intellectuals shared both an academic as well a political function.<sup>77</sup> The exact amount of influence exerted remains, based on all available sources, unclear. What we can see, is that German foreign policy turned more aggressive towards other nations after 1909. Germany increased pressure on France, Britain, Belgium and Russia most significantly.

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<sup>75</sup> Peter, *Der Alldeutsche Verband*, 114-120 and 123-128.

<sup>76</sup> Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland*, 197-200.

<sup>77</sup> Boterman, *Moderne geschiedenis van Duitsland*, 193-204; Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 732-759; Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 1067-1073 and 1079-1082; Gellner, 'Nationalism', 769-776.



Towards the Netherlands it did not follow this line. Other issues may also explain the course of events between 1909 and 1914. According to realist theory, Germany put more pressure on Belgium and France because of the need for coal as natural resource. The military threat provided by Britain, especially its naval power, and the land army strength of Russia and France were conceived as major considerations for Berlin to be more assertive in its foreign policy. The Netherlands had no role concerning resources and threat, unless one would argue that the port of Rotterdam was especially fundamental in sustaining these resource imports in case of war. A vital condition was that the Netherlands should remain neutral in this war and remain unoccupied by any belligerent.

## Chapter 3 German Ambitions

When considering the relationship between the Netherlands and Germany between 1890 and 1914, it immediately becomes clear that this was an unequal relation. The sheer size of Germany, about thirteen times the size of the Netherlands in surface area and approximately eight times in population, clearly illustrated this inequality at the time. What we have seen in the previous part, is that Germany developed a rather radical form of political nationalism, potentially dangerous to countries nearby. One issue that immediately becomes clear, is the influence of this nationalism on German foreign policy, which is a necessary condition if this nationalism was to have consequences beyond the German borders. Was this situation a serious threat for the Netherlands? According to realist thinkers, states are the main actors in international relations and tend to behave in accordance with their self interest. It also emphasizes the importance of material forces, energy, foodstuffs and military power. This contradicts the major way of thinking that the liberals or neo-liberals adhere to. In their view, interdependency leads to the expectation that the states involved are unlikely to wage war against each other. Corporations interact across borders and create mutually beneficial trading relations between two or more countries. Within this research, realism has been chosen as theoretical framework, since this resembles the way of thinking by politicians and intellectuals at the time in best possible way. Another reason is the fact that this research focuses on (foreign) policy aspects and barely on corporate interactions. Therefore, the neo-liberal theory cannot be adequately tested.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.1 Historiography on Dutch-German relations

The existing literature concerning the nationalist element in the German-Dutch relations during this period is rather meager. Only the Dutch historian André Beening and his German colleague Horst Lademacher have contributed in relation to this specific topic.<sup>79</sup> The Dutch historian Hein A.M. Klemann also wrote extensively about the relationship between the Netherlands and Germany, although mostly emphasizing economic elements. Klemann identified interdependence as a major contributing factor that resulted in Germany respecting

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<sup>78</sup> Wohlforth, 'Realism', 131-135; Stein, 'Neoliberal Institutionalism', 203-207; Andrew Moravcsik, 'The New Liberalism', in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford 2008) 234-254, there 236-240.

<sup>79</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*; Hein A.M. Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog?*

Dutch neutrality during the First World War. Also, the economic growth of both countries seemed to coincide with a few years delay, for most of the period 1850-1950. The foreign policy aspect concerning both countries in the period 1909-1914 remains more or less neglected as it is focused on the First World War and the period following.<sup>80</sup>

The development of the Dutch-German political relationship was already centuries old, when our period takes off. Lademacher claims that the political-military neutrality of the Netherlands, as well of Belgium and Switzerland, caused some German resentment. In relation to its Pan-Germanic views, these countries were supposed to be a part of the German sphere of influence and were not expected to object to any German ambitions concerning its foreign policy.<sup>81</sup>

Lademacher further sheds light on the closeness of Germany and the Netherlands when it comes to the monarchies. Not only did Queen Wilhelmina (1880-1962) have a close bond with Kaiser Wilhelm II, she also married the German prince Hendrik von Mecklenburg-Schwerin (1876-1934). When dealing with German ambitions to annex the Netherlands, Lademacher claims that these ambitions existed already since the 1830s and went on to exist, although until what moment remains unclear. The only real cause for this desire to annex their western neighbor was the notion of Germanic brotherhood. It is fair to argue that Lademacher holds the cultural resemblance between both countries as a vital condition. The notion among the Germans that the Dutch people were their close brethren, was during the period 1890-1914 mostly propagated by the *Alldeutsche Verband* and other nationalistic pressure groups. These organizations were in favor of a more aggressive foreign policy including colonization in other continents, such as Africa as well as expansion of the armed forces.<sup>82</sup>

The Germans were rather keen to adopt the Netherlands into their *Reich*, the Dutch people on the other hand were, according to both Lademacher and Beening, very much against German expansion within their territory. Even though they economically cooperated, they were politically quite negative about the Germans. Beening uses Lademacher as a source, therefore it is not surprising that both authors agree on this subject. Another issue in which both scholars share the same opinion, is the fact that the German nationalistic pressure groups had an apparent influence on the Dutch-German relations. The Germans found the Dutch bluntness to be a trait typical for real Germans. Therefore, the German radical nationalistic groups were encouraged to make more effort to include the Netherlands into the German

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<sup>80</sup> Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog?*, 18-23.

<sup>81</sup> Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 54-60 and 64-68.

<sup>82</sup> *Idem*, 76-90.

Empire. The government in Berlin was, however, more reluctant. It foresaw the international complications that would result from annexing the Netherlands.<sup>83</sup> Lademacher further pays attention to the extension of the coastal defenses at Vlissingen, which the Germans demanded to be implemented to force the Dutch to maintaining their neutrality by balancing the coastal defenses against Britain and the border defenses against Germany. Beening does not pay attention to this issue. The reason why remains unclear.<sup>84</sup>

What Beening does address in his book, is emphasizing the relevance of *Weltpolitik* and especially the political history after Von Bismarck left office as Chancellor of Germany, the major points of which include the following: The strong ties of Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1918) and the Netherlands, especially relating to the Dutch Queen and his visits to the Netherlands. The negotiations concerning a customs union (1898-1901) and a post union (1901-1903), which were to integrate both countries to a larger extent. The same was applicable on the influence of *Weltpolitik* on the Dutch colonies, taking place between 1897-1905. These issues are only addressed by Beening and left out by Lademacher.<sup>85</sup>

This leaves the historiographical debate when it comes to the international relations between the Netherlands and Germany rather open due to a lack of sources on this topic. As there are for many aspects only one or two sources available dealing with the Dutch-German history the between 1890-1914, this can be considered a historiographical gap. One of the reasons is probably the perspective. Lademacher's account for the period before the First World War is limited and holds Germany at the centre of his research. Beening is more interested in the Dutch side of the story.

When it comes to the historical development of the relation between Germany and the Netherlands, Lademacher does not provide any additional information concerning 1909-1914. Beening first treats the impact of *Weltpolitik* before moving to the period between 1904-1909, which was a period of international isolation for Germany, especially after ending the Morocco crisis with the treaty of Algeciras, which confirmed French claims in Morocco and withheld the Germans from engaging further. The period after this, between 1906-1909, was rather quiet, as Germany did not take any risks. General Helmuth von Moltke the Younger (1848-1916), chief of the general staff, adapted the *Schlieffen-Plan* in 1906, which meant the Netherlands would not be invaded once war would break out between Germany and France. The Netherlands was kept out of the *Schlieffen-Plan* mostly for economic reasons. The

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<sup>83</sup> Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 79-90; Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 187-195.

<sup>84</sup> Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 91-96.

<sup>85</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 173-176, 198-215, 228-231 and 249-258.

Germans needed Rotterdam as a free harbor to supply the Ruhr-area and its arms industry.<sup>86</sup> From a strictly military perspective, leaving the Netherlands alone would also mean that less military personnel would have to be diverted from the main war objective, Paris. This created a more quiet situation which took away much of the tension. This would not start to built up before 1909, which was the prelude to a more aggressive international policy, especially taking shape from 1911 onward. Beening's view corresponds with most other authors, i.e. Wehler, Winkler, Nipperdey, when it comes to this issue.<sup>87</sup>

### 3.2 German ambitions towards incorporating the Netherlands

German ambitions towards the Netherlands were significantly ambivalent. On the one hand Berlin wanted to expand its power towards the Netherlands. On the other hand, the prevailing doctrine of political nationalism was by no means clear on whether or not to include the Netherlands. Within Germany itself, there was a tendency of diverging nationalistic programs. It is in the light of this research useful to distinguish between two groups of nationalism; the Pan-Germanic forms of nationalism on the one hand and the strictly German forms on the other. These variations of nationalism were to be found anywhere within German society and were very well established between 1909 and 1914. As we have seen that the Pan-Germanic form of nationalism could not successfully find its way in Berlin, the objective of this chapter is to provide an answer to the following question: *What ambitions did Germany have towards incorporating the Netherlands?* The answer will be given with the help of primary sources mostly, added with some secondary literature on German ambitions towards the Netherlands.

The Dutch envoy in Berlin W.A.F. Gevers (1856-1927) send a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees van Swinderen on 30 September 1909. The subject was merely the article in the German newspaper *Hamburger Nachrichten* on 25 September 1909. In this article, the alleged letter was being discussed supposedly send by Emperor Wilhelm II to Queen Wilhelmina (1880-1962), concerning the coastal defenses along the west coast. The main issue was that Germany would have been forced to occupy the Netherlands if this was not taken care of properly. As this letter was confidential, there was no response by any of the ministers, who were pretending or assuming it never existed. The German government claimed it was, however, published in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, even though the German correspondent in The Hague denied this allegation. Another issue in this letter was

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<sup>86</sup> Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog?*, 18-23, Paul Moeyes, *Buiten Schot. Nederland tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog 1914-1918*. (Amsterdam/Antwerpen 2001) 135-137 and 142-147.

<sup>87</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 263-271, 276-282 and 362-370.

the recommendation, mainly from the German side that a *Zollverein* (Customs Union) was recommendable. Apparently, this would have led to economic benefits for both nations. The trade barriers would have been lifted, resulting in both the Netherlands and Germany having to bear decreased costs relating to trade across the borders.<sup>88</sup>

On 6 November 1911, ambassador Gevers communicated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs once more. This letter dealt with the so-called *Deutschfreundlichkeit* (friendliness against Germans), which was detected in German diplomatic circles. The source of this *Deutschfreundlichkeit* was the Dutch East Indian press. In Batavia and other locations in the Dutch East Indies, the authorities were quite positive towards Germany and the role it played in the world. Of course, Germany was renowned for its important role as a trading partner to the Netherlands. Beside this, the connections through the royal families was one of the major issues that was a contributing factor and was seen as a guarantee for peace between the two countries. In general, the German press did not put much pressure on the Dutch government at all. Of course, the German newspapers differed from each other in terms of the amount of governmental influence. Some newspapers, mostly the ones from Berlin, were essentially state-sponsored and censored by the government. In the *Berliner Tageblatt*, dealing with the alleged letter to Queen Wilhelmina, the content of the article was stronger compared to the *Hamburger Nachrichten* article. The latter article was limited to a clear explanation about the content of this letter and did not go into the possible political consequences. The *Berliner Tageblatt* article was essentially accusing the Netherlands of not being on friendly terms with Germany anymore.<sup>89</sup>

On 1 March 1913, the German newspaper *Der Tag Illustrierter Teil Berlin* reported the possible scenarios for the Dutch fate in case of a war between Germany and France and Great Britain. The German chief of the general staff, Helmuth Von Moltke, had two different schemes in mind. The first plan involved a war between Germany and France as a repetition of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871).<sup>90</sup> Of course, Germany gained a lot of territory in

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<sup>88</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen 30 September 1909, *Berliner Tageblatt* 20 September 1909; Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 303-312; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 75-78.

<sup>89</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen 6 November 1911; *Hamburger Nachrichten* 25 September 1909; Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, Minister of Foreign Affairs Reneke de Marees van Swinderen to envoy in Berlin Gevers, 4 February 1910.

<sup>90</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van

Elzas and Lorraine as a result of that war. The main issue was to ensure that Belgium would choose sides. Of course, the Germans hoped that Brussels would at least allow German forces within their borders. In the most ideal situation, Belgium could be persuaded to take up arms alongside Germany and participate actively in a war against France. This scenario seemed rather unlikely, since the political ties between Belgium and France were strong in those days. Belgium would face an invasion if it would take the French side. The war plans created in Germany by Von Moltke did not expect a lot of resistance from the Belgian defenses and the field army. The expectation was that Germany would be able to march through the Ardennes virtually unopposed. The Netherlands would remain untouched by default in the scenario involving a war between France and Germany. In the second scenario, the Netherlands would play a more significant role. In this sequence of events, Germany would be at war not only with France, but also with Britain. The German Ministerial Direktor Dr. Kriege declared that, in coherence with later scholarly publications, the Netherlands as a strictly neutral country was of vital importance to Germany. The Germans needed a neutral harbor to supply their country in case of war with other major European powers. Dutch neutrality being respected by Germany was, however, conditional, amongst other issues, on the behavior of Britain. In the event Britain would occupy parts of the Netherlands, most likely the coastline or the port of Rotterdam, Germany would consider itself forced to invade the Netherlands. In this scenario the beneficial position of the Netherlands as Germany's supply line would have fallen away due to the British infringement. Essentially, the German military authorities, of course strongly influenced by nationalistic feelings, felt it necessary to invade the Netherlands only if specific circumstances would occur. This was not only a pragmatic way of thinking, compared to the rather ideological reasoning belonging to a policy based on nationalism. Of course, sustaining its economy was one of Germany's important national objectives. Therefore, it automatically suggests some kind of nationalistic agenda. Even though this might be the case, one should try to separate economic and military calculations from the nationalistic considerations at government level.<sup>91</sup>

Von Moltke reported to *Der Tag*: 'De loop van de Maas in dusdanig dat Nederlandsche neutraliteit mogelijk blijft. Nederland dient zich niet vijandelijk ten opzichte van Duitschland of behulpzaam ten opzichte van vijandelijke mogendheden op te stellen. De

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Swinderen, March 1 1913. *Der Tag Illustrierter Teil Berlin* 25 February 1913; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 74-91.

<sup>91</sup> Strachan, *The First World War*, 1-11 and 163-168; Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog?* 18-23.

Rijnmond is volgens de Duitsers economisch en militair dusdanig belangrijk, dat het zich niet kan veroorloven daar een vijandelijke mogendheid toe te staan'.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.3 Ending remarks

The German-Dutch relations during the period 1909-1914 were probably mainly characterized by the efforts of both nations to maintain their position in the world, the essence of which was for the Netherlands to retain its colonial possessions and to build up a solid and durable industrial economic home economy, despite its limited size. Germany wanted to expand, not only economically, but also in terms of political power. The main frustration existing within the German society was the lack of a vast colonial empire.<sup>93</sup>

During this period, Germany's industrial output had well eclipsed that of Britain, the most prominent European economic rival. France was lagging behind even more, and other large European countries such as Italy, Russia and Austria-Hungary were no match at all for the German industrial capacity. The Germans had more ambitions to increase their role in the world. The so-called *Weltpolitik* was mainly focused on the intercontinental expansion of German influence. This involved trying to increase the economic power by means of investing abroad, following the British example in South America, during the nineteenth century. Also, Germany wanted to gain more political power by including additional areas within its colonial empire. Cameroon, Togoland, Southwest-Africa and some Pacific Islands were part of the overseas empire. Tanganyika in East Africa was probably the most significant of all German colonies. In terms of profitability and population, it was the largest colony.<sup>94</sup> Despite this fact, the main idea was still prevailing that Germany's status was impaired by the larger French and British colonial empires. The main cause for this was the pre-modern history. Britain and France and to a lesser extent the Netherlands, were capable to capture large pieces of land in Asia and the Americas, due to their geographical position and political unity. Even after the German unification in 1871, Britain and France profited more than Germany from the partition of Africa during the 1880s. During the summer of 1911, Germany tried to get a foothold in Morocco which was claimed by France, while it was in fact agreed upon to leave Morocco alone during the Conference of Algeciras in 1906. After French troops

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<sup>92</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen, 1 March 1913. *Der Tag Illustrierter Teil Berlin* 25 February 1913.

<sup>93</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 289-295 and 362-375; Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 741-750.

<sup>94</sup> Strachan, *The First World war*, 495-505 and 569-570.



marched on Fez in May 1911, the Germans decided to take matters in their own hands and occupy Agadir in July 1911. Eventually, this conflict was solved diplomatically between France and Germany. The result for Germany was rather disappointing. In exchange for staying out of Morocco, it only received 263.000 km<sup>2</sup> of territory from French-Congo.<sup>95</sup>

In terms of consequences for the Dutch-German relations, this course of events had only a limited impact. Bethmann-Hollweg took a more lenient course towards the Netherlands, even though there were some issues going on. The Eems-estuary, the Rhine duties and the fortifications of the Dutch-coast were the major conflicts between Germany and the Netherlands at the time. Therefore, we can clearly see the Netherlands was not that much threatened by German nationalism. If we consider all Germany's activities in the international arena between 1909 and 1914, it clearly shows that the ambitions towards colonial rivals were much more evident. France and Britain were the main targets on a worldwide scale. The colonial adventure was mainly nationalistic as it did not have a profitable economic base. Otherwise there would not have been enough reason to continue this endeavor. The reports by Gevers not only show evidence of the above, but also of an increased German involvement on the continent, especially regarding France, Belgium and Russia. Beside the 1913 military expansions, the foundations for difficulties were already there before that moment. Nationalism played a major role to establish a larger influence exerted by Germany on the European continent. What we can see is that regardless of the conflicts mentioned between the Netherlands and Germany, German foreign policy decisions did not involve annexing the Netherlands between 1909 and 1914, regardless of military pragmatism when being pulled into a war with Britain. The fact that the Netherlands was kept out of the revised Von Schlieffen plan, coincides with a more realistic policy by the *Auswärtiges Amt*. The reasons why Germany left the Netherlands alone in the Von Schlieffen-plan, cannot be answered with the help from the primary sources, at least not immediately.<sup>96</sup>

The secondary literature indicates the German need for a neutral port in the event of a war with France and Britain. Rotterdam was to be that harbor, as it was the most important waterway to the Ruhr area.<sup>97</sup> This explanation comes close to the liberal international relations theory when assuming that a neutral country will continue to trade without a

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<sup>95</sup> Dann, *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland*, 180-188; Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 263-276.

<sup>96</sup> Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 781-789; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 79-91.

<sup>97</sup> Fischer, *War of Illusions* 28-30; Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 699-702 and 741-750; Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 1067-1073 and 1079-1082 and 1109-1111; Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen* 177-180 and 190-198 and 238-245. Klemann, *Waarom bestaat Nederland eigenlijk nog?*, 18-23.

blockade from one of the belligerents. Britain would not have been allowed to intervene in the merchant shipping to and from Rotterdam, while Germany could continue to profit from this port, as the Northern German seaboard would suffer from a British blockade. A realist explanation would be that leaving the Netherlands unoccupied would provide the British with less cause to enter the war. An invasion of only Belgian and French territory including the coastal areas would be less threatening to Britain, compared to German domination of the Dutch coast. Even though the First World War has shown us this reasoning was unsound, the Dutch government found out that German officials used this way of thinking. Gevers reported to Minister of Foreign Affairs John Loudon (1866-1955), that Germany would respect Dutch neutrality in the event of a war with France. According to him, the Germans had repeatedly confirmed their promise to keep the Netherlands out of such a war. Both the hope of a British stand-down as well as the value of a neutral neighbor, were mentioned as reasons provided by the German government. These major considerations were dominant in Germany's posture towards the Netherlands, during 1913 and 1914.<sup>98</sup>

What lacks in these sources, is a clear explanation on how Germany would react on a war against both France and Britain. No explicit answer is given. All evidence available points towards a passive attitude. Germany would only invade the Netherlands to secure its interest concerning Rotterdam and would otherwise leave the Netherlands alone. It would prefer to occupy the port city itself, rather than to leave it in enemy hands. The mentioned options are thus second and third in hierarchy. The first preference would be a neutral and unoccupied Rotterdam. Perhaps one of the reasons why so little detailed information on the German course of action can be found in the diplomatic sources, might have had to do with security risks, as Germany did not want to fully reveal its military plans.

Why was Germany not planning to incorporate the Netherlands? In essence there are three possible answers based on what we have seen in this as well as in the previous chapter. In chapter 2 it became clear that the Pan-Germanic agenda did not determine the official foreign policy. Of course, this does not mean that the *Alldeutsche Verband* and other organizations were powerless, but the lack of official influence in the *Auswärtiges Amt* meant a serious deficit when it comes to the Pan-Germanic ambitions. Regular German political nationalism was not that keen on incorporating non-German Germanic areas. Nationalistic ideas based on similarities in culture and language were not that important, as the general idea

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<sup>98</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, The Dutch envoy Gevers to Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees van Swinderen, 20 March 1914; Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 343-348; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 74-91; Fischer, *War of Illusions*, 330-332.

of the limits of the German nation differed from the Pan-Germanic doctrine. Essentially, only Germany itself and the regions with German majorities were supposed to be subject to incorporation. A second reason was the fact that Rotterdam played a vital role to keep the German economy running in the event of a war with Britain and France. Rotterdam had the opportunity to send import goods to the Ruhr-area in Germany if the Netherlands remained neutral throughout the war. A British blockade would have been legal, if the Netherlands would either have chosen sides with or was to be occupied by Germany. This explanation is abundant in the sources, especially the Gevers reports to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Beside this reasoning, the realist view also provides an explanation as to why the Netherlands was left out of Germany's expansionist politics. British naval superiority balanced against Germany westward ambitions. The perceived threat in the eyes of Britain was most significant when it concerned the Dutch coastal region. This was the main reason why the Dutch fortifications at Vlissingen became so important. The Germans perceived Britain to be mainly concerned with Dutch neutrality and willing to ignore a Belgian occupation. Whether or not this was sound reasoning, the Germans went ahead and remained more aggressive towards Belgium and France. The French revanchist posture, dating back to the Franco-Prussian War, was considered to be threatening to Germany. France was therefore the main target in German foreign policy.

## Chapter 4: Dutch Reactions

This chapter will shift attention away from Germany to the Netherlands. In what way was the German foreign policy towards the Netherlands perceived? There are two major actors within the Netherlands whose accounts are considered to answer this question. According to realist theory, the national government is the important actor. Therefore, the communication between the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch envoy to Germany in Berlin will provide us with information on this issue. For this reason the following question was formulated: *What was the reaction of the Dutch government on the German behavior towards the Netherlands?* Another major aspect was the reaction of the Dutch journalists as part of the elite. The diplomatic communication was at the time classified as secret. Therefore, no clear opinion could have been formed by the elite based on the internal governmental deliberations. Newspaper articles provide a wholly different view. Journalists are usually part of society's elite and mainly well informed. Journalists could also pose as a bridge between the governmental elite and the electorate, within a democratic state. Therefore, in this chapter also this question will be answered: *What was the reaction in the Dutch newspapers on the German behavior towards the Netherlands?*

### 4.1 Government

When it comes to the Dutch governmental sources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it becomes quite evident that three major topics concerning Dutch-German international politics are dominant and almost exclusively determined the communication between the envoy and Minister. This coincides with the accounts by Lademacher and Beening in the literature.<sup>99</sup>

### 4.2 Rhine Duties

The Rhine Duties were a German initiative to tax the commerce on the Rhine. It was essentially meant to make Germany profit from the Rhine trade taking place within its borders and raise government income. The traditional free trade countries, such as Britain and the Netherlands, were strongly against this policy. The British did not have a large share in the Rhine trade, and also considering the fact that they had many other navigation activities

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91 National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*.

worldwide, it could hardly have had a large impact on the British economy in general. The Netherlands, lying directly in the Rhine estuary, would have suffered heavily from the increasing costs. Not only the direct relationship between the Rotterdam port area and the Rhineland in Germany as its hinterland was of great influence, also the limited size of the Netherlands made the impact of these Rhine duties more significant. On 2 July 1909, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Reneke de Marees van Swinderen wrote to envoy Gevers in Berlin on the latest meeting of the *Centrale Rijnvaart Commissie (Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine)*. The Dutch delegation was led by W.F. Leemans (1841-1929). This commission was established in 1816 to ensure free trade on the Rhine. It was an international organization involving all countries with access to the Rhine, including Germany and the Netherlands. The Act of Mannheim in 1868 determined that every nation and operator had free access to engage into trade on the Rhine. The strange issue was that Germany was not that keen to uphold the spirit of the treaty any longer. The Dutch government did no longer want to wait and see what the next course of action on the German side would have been like. The expectation was that the Prussian government would be co-operative also in relation to the Rhine duties, which was the major political topic in Dutch-German relations in those days.<sup>100</sup>

On 14 July 1909, the Dutch ambassador Gevers wrote to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Wilhelm Eduard Freiherr von Schoen (1851-1933) that the Dutch government was displeased with the German initiative to interfere with the free navigation on the river Rhine. He mentioned the Central Commission meeting on this issue and expressed his hope of finding an acceptable solution for both parties.<sup>101</sup> The Germans hoped to find a way to persuade the Dutch to give their consent to charging traffic on the Rhine. During May 1914, Gevers was convinced that the Germans were less willing to give in on major topics as the Eems question was showing little progress. Therefore, Gevers thought a political chess game was being played by the Germans to put pressure on the Netherlands on multiple fronts. At the same time, Gevers perceived the situation to be less solid from the German perspective as well. He mentioned that several German state officials, who remain unnamed, were not entirely behind this part of German policy. Also the fact that several key individuals left

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<sup>100</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, The Minister of Foreign Affairs Reneke de Marees van Swinderen to envoy in Berlin Gevers 547-548. Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine. <http://www.ccr-zkr.org/11010200-en.html> (02-07-2012).

<sup>101</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, Dutch ambassador Gevers to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Wilhelm Eduard Freiherr von Schoen, 549-550. National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen, 5 December 1911.

office shortly before, made finding a solution for the fortification issue, in his eyes, not obtainable on a short term.<sup>102</sup>

For some time this issue dragged on and continued to be an issue until well into 1914, when eventually the First World War put off the introduction of the Rhine duties.<sup>103</sup> The Dutch government tried to waste time hoping the Germans would give up.

### 4.3 Fortifications

Another major issue concerning the difficulties, in the relationship between the Netherlands and Germany, had to do with the German demand to increase the strength of the Dutch fortifications on the west coast. The German government was convinced that a neutral country lying in between two rival nations, in this case Germany and Britain, had to explicitly show its neutral standpoint. Germany was convinced that it would face more difficulties to enter the Netherlands than Britain would have in the event of a war between these two European major powers. The whole approach by Germany indicates that the German government thought according to realist theory. The balance of power between Britain and Germany was disrupted by the fact that the Netherlands was inconsequent in its self-help policy. Theoretically, the Netherlands would have seen Britain and Germany as more or less equal threats. The German army was of such strength, that it would have overrun the Dutch defenses easily. On the other side, the British with their enormous naval power would have had little difficulty executing a naval invasion on the Dutch west coast. Within the doctrine attached to realist theory combined with the assumption that the Netherlands was a neutral country, a more balanced policy towards both superpowers was expected by the Germans. For this reason the German government started to complain about the Dutch lack of defensive works on the western seaboard. The Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees van Swinderen and, from September 1913 onward, John Loudon (1866-1955), tried to satisfy the Germans repeatedly, in the end the fortification process was never completed. How much pressure was there on the Dutch government? The Germans made some threats within the secret diplomatic world, in the form of the alleged letter to Queen Wilhelmina. Within our research timeframe the

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<sup>102</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; The Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Loudon, 27 May 1914. Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, The Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Loudon, 27 May 1914 971-972.

<sup>103</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, The Minister of Foreign Affairs Reneke de Marees van Swinderen to the Dutch Rhine Commissioner Leemans 561-562, The Dutch envoy Gevers to Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees van Swinderen 586-587; Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 297-312.

fortification issue had already taken shape over the years. From 1911 onward the situation concerning this issue became more prominent.<sup>104</sup>

The Dutch envoy to Berlin, Gevers, repeatedly received messages from German ministers and subordinate state officials to urge the Dutch government to finally commence reconstructing the fortifications, especially in the Schelde region at Vlissingen. Belgium made some complains against the construction of these fortifications, as it would interfere with the navigation to Antwerp harbor. The Dutch government deemed it highly unlikely that Germany would take the risk of occupying Zeeland, as this would provoke an international conflict with Britain and Belgium, beside the Netherlands itself. Dutch government officials, led by Minister De Marees Van Swinderen, agreed that the Germans would never have gone that far.<sup>105</sup> It was expected that the British would have secured Dutch and Belgian neutrality with the help of their superior naval power. Therefore, it is fair to argue that the Dutch did not haste the construction of the Vlissingen fortifications, since the German threat, concerning this issue was deemed unlikely to materialize. The assumption was that, because of the fact that the British would have balanced against Germany, the German occupation of the coastal regions would have caused a serious war. Of course, the Dutch would have been rather certain about the fact that Britain would have intervened in such an event.<sup>106</sup>

How the Dutch government was so sure about this, remains hidden. The diplomatic conversations between the British government and the Dutch diplomacy on the one hand, and the Dutch government and the British diplomacy on the other, remain rather general and the Foreign Affairs documents do not provide any answer to this issue. Were the Dutch afraid of the British in the case of fulfilling all German demands? As there is no indication that the British-Dutch relations were influenced by this issue at all, there is no reason to think that the British were concerned that much with the fortifications. In terms of any concrete reaction from the Dutch towards any German invasion in general, there is one important communiqué. The Dutch envoy in Brussels, P.R.A. Melvill de Carnbee, reported to De Marees van Swinderen that the Belgians were willing to unite their army with the Dutch army in the event

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<sup>104</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, Mellvill van Carnbee Brussels to De Marees Van Swinderen, 3 September 1911, 695-698, The Dutch envoy Gevers to Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees van Swinderen 24 November 1910 646; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 79-84.

<sup>105</sup> National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen 2 November 1911.

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National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen 26 May 1911; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 91-94.

of a German invasion of Limburg. This unified army should have formed on Belgian soil near Limburg in order to strike back. The fortifications of Namur and Liège were considered strong enough to keep the Germans occupied until the French would come to the aid of the Belgians and the Dutch. Of course an occupation of Zeeland was likely to begin with a German invasion in Limburg, followed by a march either through Noord-Brabant or Belgium. The gravity that has to be attributed to this course of action is doubtful. This is the only concrete plan in the evidence relating to warfare as a response to German pressure, of course only in the event of an invasion of any part of Dutch soil. One could ask the question whether or not this scenario was a bit optimistic relating to the strength of the German army. The fortification issue went on for three more years without any watersheds or explicitly notable occurrences. During the last couple of years before the First World War, the Dutch diplomatic corps, headed by Gevers, was not that worried about the concrete danger of a German invasion. The potential danger was there because of the size of the German armed forces. In reality, the Germans were rather cautious and remained on speaking terms with the Dutch all the time. This reassured Gevers that much, that he was convinced that Germany would not have invaded the Netherlands in case of a major European war. In that sense, the Foreign Ministry was not alarmed to a large extent, even not during the rather uncertain years after 1911. When the First World War began, there was still no solution found for this issue. In essence the expectation was prominent that Germany would not have taken the risk of facing war with Britain, only to take the Zeeland region, when no offensive action was taken by any power to neglect Dutch neutrality.<sup>107</sup>

#### 4.4 Eems-estuary

Beside the fortification issue, there was another complicating affair that clouded the relationship between the Dutch and the Germans. The river Eems, which has its estuary in the border area in the Northeast of the Netherlands and the Northwest of Germany, was subject to a major quarrel between these two countries. What becomes evident, is that this issue had a rather judicial and legal connotation. The difference in opinion on where the border between the Netherlands and Germany was exactly located was not an issue that would have led to war. The major influence of the Eems-estuary affair was, however, that the friendly posture between the two countries was ended, even though the fortification issue would also have

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<sup>107</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 362-375; Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, Envoy in Brussels Mellvill van Carnbee to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen, 3 September 1911 695-698.



added to that. Furthermore, nationalism played a major role when it comes to concrete cases, where the boundaries of a nation-state exactly had to be drawn.<sup>108</sup> This was therefore more a matter of principle than a *casus belli*. The way in which the Germans refer to the Eems-estuary as belonging entirely to their territory, indicates a well-researched historical narrative. The documents in the archives and *Bescheiden Betreffende de Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland* show that the German government refers to historical data, including royal claims from the past. Professor Daniel Josephus Jitta (1854-1925) reported essentially what the Dutch historian Robert Fruin (1823-1899) sent to him in January 1914.<sup>109</sup> This very extensive report dealt with claims going back to 1744 and 1795 in which the Germans apparently claimed the entire river-estuary was theirs. Jitta concluded that the Germans had a valid point by claiming the entire Eems-estuary. He, however, recommended the Dutch government not to go along with the German demands as these were not that convincing. This report does only provide information on what the basis was of all German claims. It does not show what a logical course of action would have been like. The Germans first of all claimed that the Eems consisted of two rivers, the western of which was to be divided and the eastern belonging to them entirely. Secondly, the Prussian sovereignty from 1454 claimed possession of the river-estuary as well. Another claim dates from establishing ownership of the Eems during the French period in the Netherlands starting from 1795. The real value of these claims depended completely on the judgment of an impartial party, having the difficult task to make a valid ordeal. The Dutch government would never give in to the German demands.

The Dutch peace conference delegate W.H. De Beaufort (1845-1918) also made recommendations for the Dutch government.<sup>110</sup> He first issued the general question whether the Eems-estuary is a river or a gulf. He concludes that the estuary was to be divided from the Dollard until the North Sea. The Germans claimed the whole estuary. The historical evidence shown by De Beaufort was essentially the same as Jitta's. De Beaufort finally concludes that international law states that borderline rivers are to be regarded as common property, which has to be divided equally. Beside this, he claimed that the Germans had a point when referring

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<sup>108</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden Betreffende de Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland*, Minister of Foreign Affairs De Marees van Swinderen to Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers 10 December 1909, 582-583. National Archive, The Hague; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cabinets Archive Political Reports; access code 2.05.19, Political reports by envoys. Berlin, inventory number 21; Gevers to Minister De Marees Van Swinderen, 14 February 1914. Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 85-96.

<sup>109</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden Betreffende de Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland*, Professor Josephus Jitta aan de minister van buitenlandse zaken Loudon, 9 February 1914, 884-902. Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 335-348.

<sup>110</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden Betreffende de Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland*, Professor Josephus Jitta aan de minister van buitenlandse zaken Loudon, 9 February 1914, 884-902; W.H. de Beaufort in zake de Eemskwestie (no date) 903-914.

to the historical evidence, even though he did not consider that to be convincing. De Beaufort recommended that the Netherlands, in the event of a ruling in favor of the Germans, should not go against it, except for trying to request for safety-guarantee on paper from the Germans. Obviously, this issue has never been solved and started to fade away in when the First World War broke out. The fact that some economic interests were attached to the Eems, having to do with fishery and duties, does not deny the relevance of German nationalism. In essence, the Eems-issue was never solved, since the Dutch government managed to buy enough time before the First World War broke out. Gevers was convinced it was best to follow Jitta's and De Beaufort's advice to consult with a foreign third party. Even in the weeks before the German invasion of Belgium and France, Gevers remained stubborn not only in relation to the Eems-issue, but also towards the fortification issue and the Rhine duties. The first attempts to find an arbitrary party were unsuccessful, since no politician or diplomat qualified enough could be found in a short amount of time.<sup>111</sup>

#### 4.5 Newspapers

The German behavior towards the Netherlands was observed at the government level as it was their duty to protect the country from any foreign intervention. The Dutch government had to consider the Dutch press as well, since the Netherlands was a rather liberal country in that perspective at the time. The influence of journalists on the general public cannot be underestimated. It could have had severe consequences for election results. Therefore, the government had to be considerate on the way the public thought about Germany, even if the government cannot exert any direct influence except for official communiqués. The way in which the public perceived a German threat was mainly influenced by newspapers. This part of the research will answer the following question: What was the reaction of the Dutch newspaper towards German foreign policy towards the Netherlands? To limit this research in time and space, the periodization will be the same as for the other research questions (1909-1914).

The sample of newspapers will involve all newspapers involving articles concerning German foreign policy in this period, limited to national Dutch newspapers and disregarding Dutch East Indian newspapers. The selected newspapers are the following: *Algemeen*

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<sup>111</sup> Smit, *Bescheiden Betreffende de Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland*, Minister of Foreign Affairs Loudon to Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers, 27 June 1914, 983-985; , Minister of Foreign Affairs Loudon to Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers, 12 July 1914, 987-988; The Dutch envoy in Berlin Gevers to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Loudon, 17 July 1914, 988-989.

*Handelsblad, Het Centrum, Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad, De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad, Het volk: dagblad voor de arbeiderspartij.* The general differences between these newspapers do not become that evident when examining the articles involved. Of course, *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad* is a Jewish paper, *De Tijd* is a reformed Christian newspaper and *Het Volk* is a working class socialist paper. The other newspapers are rather liberal. In terms of German foreign policy, the reports of journalist are mostly concerned with Germany's international relations with other countries. Especially the German interests, both political as well as economical, in the Central-European and Balkan regions are reported frequently. Also the rising tensions through the years between Germany and Britain, mostly relating to the naval arms race, was a major theme in those days.

Newspaper articles provide more detailed information on foreign politics, although there always remains some doubt where this information originated. For the envoy reports goes the same of course, but then the information usually comes from the official channels, within the diplomatic world. In general, there is no reason to doubt the factual reports in these newspapers as it is coherent with later published secondary literature. The representation of Germany is rather positive. German people are being regarded as similar to Dutch people as being hard working. German nationalism in the form of foreign ambitions was not playing any role concerning a concrete threat for the Netherlands. The general German foreign policy was observed carefully, with most reports concerned with the colonial adventure in Africa. In the government reports we have seen that the Rhine duties, the coastal fortifications and the Eems affair were most prominent in the Dutch-German relations. When it comes to the newspaper articles it is roughly the same.

When it comes to the fortification issue the general discussion did not take off until September 1910. In the newspaper *Het Centrum* released on September 13 1910, there was an article concerning the defense installations on the Dutch west coast.<sup>112</sup> The scenario of a war between Britain and Germany was analyzed in this article, leading to the main issue concerning the Dutch political position in this conflict. A direct invasion of British forces into German territory was deemed rather unlikely, since the German coastal defenses would have been too strong. Therefore, this possibility was considered much too risky. In relation to the natural resources, most prominently foodstuffs, such as grains, the role of Britain as being excluded from these resources was examined. An English occupation of the Dutch harbors as a result of this deprivation was discussed. My personal view is that this article does not further

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<sup>112</sup> *Het Centrum*, 13 September 1910.

explain why this would help the British cause in the first place, since the Dutch harbors are dependent on their own supply lines as well. The Germans could easily block the flow of foodstuffs towards the harbors in the Netherlands, for instance Rotterdam. What is clear, however, is the fact that the Dutch harbors were considered vital for the existing international trade routes and would have had an elevated importance during wars. The possibility of the Dutch harbors falling victim as a result of German and British ambitions for the purpose of their strategic location in between the two rivals, was deemed unlikely. Both nations already had a sufficient amount of naval bases along their own coastlines and it was to be expected that the major battles would be fought out on open seas, relatively far away from the Dutch northern coast near Denmark and Norway.

The main threat resulting from this scenario was the possibility of ships seeking refuge in neutral Dutch waters or harbors. This would politically put more pressure on the Netherlands to be careful and adaptive in its approach towards both belligerents. In case of an English invasion on Dutch soil, the Germans were regarded as more than capable of repelling such an effort. This would have led to a threat of full scale war on Dutch terrain, without direct Dutch military involvement or the possibility for political gain. Effectively, this would only cause severe damage and was therefore considered the least wanted option. In essence, the Germans wanted a neutral neighbor on their western border, because of the benefits of a neutral country as a supply line. This was, however, conditional to the extent that the Netherlands should remain untouched by the British. As a result of this, Germany had an interest in a high capability on the Dutch side to defend itself against any invasion. Because of the fact that in those days the international threat was increasing, with both Germany and Britain expanding their armed forces on land and on sea, the Dutch also needed to enlarge their armed forces or at least their defensive works. This article shows that some Dutch journalists were not at all inconsiderate towards the German demands for a stronger coastal defensive line in the west. A neutral country should have been fortified equally and not enable one or more belligerents to have an easier entry path in case of any international conflict.

A few months later, a totally different conclusion was drawn amongst journalists of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* on 16 January 1911.<sup>113</sup> Here it was reported that Belgium would raise protests against the fortification of Vlissingen, since it would have had severe repercussions on the shipping lanes towards Antwerp that enter Dutch waters from the North Sea on their way to the Belgian border and the port of Antwerp just behind it. The French

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<sup>113</sup> *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 16 January 1911

Minister of Foreign Affairs Stephen Pichon (1857-1933) declared that several countries had serious objections against these fortifications. What exactly these objections entailed, was not mentioned.

On May 2 1911, there was a newspaper article in *Algemeen Handelsblad*. Here a general overview on the German military capabilities was accompanied by specific details on the different branches of the German armed forces. The major topic was the fortifications at Vlissingen. The importance of a neutral harbor connected to Germany was already recognized here, before it would come into practice during the First World War. The general idea was that the Netherlands would remain neutral for exactly that reason.<sup>114</sup> The observation that the military strength of the Netherlands was limited was also made, but more importantly was the recognition that Belgium's territory was of vital strategic value when Germany would get confronted with France and Britain as opponents in a war. The Ardennes was considered a weak link within the Belgian defensive line as there was a lack of fortifications in this forested area. What this article showed was that pragmatic issues also tended to play a major role in deciding whether or not to invade another country. Here it was foreseen that Germany, in case of a major war involving France and Britain, would indeed invade Belgium, but leave the Netherlands alone for economic motives. In this case nationalism is not of much influence at all. From the summer of 1911, Germany provoked the second Morocco crisis. This issue was also a major topic in the Dutch newspapers, especially in *Algemeen Handelsblad*. From this moment on the German overseas ambitions were taken more seriously, since the Morocco-crisis almost caused a real war with France. The articles did not mention any real possible consequence for the Netherlands itself. It was, however, suggested that if the German naval capabilities would have developed further, the Dutch East Indies would have come within range. The Dutch colonial possessions were potentially under threat, although no indications of any concrete German ambitions became evident.<sup>115</sup>

Another issue at the time, was the introduction of Rhine duties by the Germans. Eventually, these were not implemented, although the matter itself provoked some negative sentiments. This shift in posture towards the Germans was mainly caused by this proposed measure. Of course one could discuss upon this issue as being either domestic or international. Technically, the Germans were fully within their right to implement any kind of measure within their own territory. Apparently, the navigation on the Rhine was that

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<sup>114</sup> *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 2 May 1911.

<sup>115</sup> *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 28 January 1911, 26 April 1913, 11 June 1913, 17 June 1913, 10 June 1914; *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 2 February 1911, 24 April 1913; Lademacher, *Zwei ungleiche Nachbarn*, 79-91; *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 23 September 1910, 7 January 1911.

profitable for foreign vessels, that it was provoking protectionist measures from Germany. The government supposedly wanted to protect its own industry and trade. The Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine was promoting free trade since the Vienna Congress in 1815 and was used as an instrument against this policy proposal. The Dutch newspapers were clearly in favor of free trade, just as the Dutch government was. This was a general principle, although it is difficult to measure the real influence of the financial consequences of these Rhine duties for Dutch trade. It can be assumed that these negative expectations played a role in determining a certain political standpoint. Most Dutch newspapers, especially the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* and the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, were apparently in favor of free trade, just as the Dutch government was. Both newspapers claimed that the Dutch commerce was under threat due to these proposed German measures.<sup>116</sup>

Beside this, the rising tension resulting from the military reforms from 1913 onward played a major role. As we have already seen in the envoy reports, the German government decided to take action against the Belgian, French and Russian military reforms. The dramatic increase in the number of soldiers immediately available for warfare in these three countries caused the German government to do the same. Especially when it came on expenditures, it had some dramatic consequences on the tax burden. The amount of weaponry meant for the western front increased significantly, causing a reaction from the Dutch newspapers. The six different newspapers that are involved in this research reported excessively about this specific subject. In terms of the tone of the reports and the amount of criticism, all newspapers are approximately the same. *Algemeen Handelsblad* was probably the most critical on the German military expansions, because of the perception that economic liberalism might be endangered. This newspaper had a general tendency of reporting a lot on trade and commerce.<sup>117</sup> When it comes to the amount of reports concerning the German military expansion during 1913, *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad* and *De Tijd* were apparently not that interested in this issue. *Het Volk* and *Algemeen Handelsblad* were relatively a lot more concerned with the possible threat towards the Netherlands. The major discussion in the newspapers was still what the direct causes of these German measures really were. Apparently, many journalists did not have a complete overview on the international situation as we have today. Sometimes these reports contradict the available secondary literature. As most authors today usually agree on the German expansions being caused by the French and

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<sup>116</sup> *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 5 June 1909, 6 June 1909, 5 June 1912, 21 May 1913; *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 2 April 1914, 3 April 1914, 21 April 1914; *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 12 August 1910.

<sup>117</sup> *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 24 February 1911.

Russian reforms and expansions, this was at the time rather unclear. Of course, journalists may have been specialized in foreign relations; still a lack of knowledge was possible. There does not seem to be any specific reason why these journalists would have moved away from this notion. The Balkan Wars of 1913 were given as a cause for the German military expansions.<sup>118</sup> The arguments presented in the newspaper articles deal with the weakness of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Central Europe. The nationalistic uprisings were supposedly targeted at the Austria-Hungary. Personally, I would contradict this view and claim that beside some tensions with Serbia, most of the aggression was pointed at the Ottoman Empire. The first Balkan-War was explicitly targeted against the Turkish oppressors, with many new nations, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria gaining territory and Albania becoming an independent state.<sup>119</sup>

The tenure of the newspaper articles dealing with the German expansions was rather worrisome. In essence, the security and integrity of the Dutch territory and state was seriously compromised, according to these reports. This seems rather exaggerated afterwards, but we have to see this in the right perspective. If we assume these journalists also had some sort of realist perspective, which would not have been surprising at the time, the threat perception from a neighboring nation expanding its armed forces seems feasible. Apparently, journalists were concerned with the rather weak state of the Dutch armed forces. The difference in strength would of course increase. Others point to the Dutch tradition of neutrality, which had been upheld and respected by other major powers, such as Britain and France from 1815 onward. The integrity of the Dutch defenses was highly doubted as the maintenance and overhaul of these fortifications was considered insufficient to reach a desirable level within the next few years. The different scenarios portrayed in these newspapers most explicitly deal with the possibility of a new Franco-German War in which Belgium functioned as a pathway to Paris. The shortened French-German border was considered too heavily guarded by the French and therefore impenetrable. In fact, the Von Schlieffen-plan was not discussed in these newspapers.<sup>120</sup> It could have been because the content was not known at the time. Another reason was that Von Moltke revised this plan in 1906 and left the Netherlands out of the invasion scenario. If the journalists were aware of it, this is a logical explanation on why the Von Schlieffen-plan was not mentioned. The Dutch neutrality policy was also discussed.

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<sup>118</sup> *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, 25 March 1913, 3 April 1913.

*Het Volk: dagblad voor de arbeiderspartij*, 19 July 1913, 11 August 1913, 19 May 1914.

<sup>119</sup> Strachan, *The First World War*, 45-52.

<sup>120</sup> *Het Centrum*, 28 June 1913, 5 July 1913, 8 August 1913; *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*, 7 August 1913; *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, 2 April 1913, 1 July 1913, 25 September 1913; *De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad*, 30 May 1913, 6 July 1913; *Het Volk: dagblad voor de arbeiderspartij*, 28 February 1913.

Should Britain be allowed access to Dutch soil in the event of a German invasion? There was no real clarity given on this issue. Most journalists were worried a policy change would indeed cause a German invasion and add to German aggression, because of a breach in neutral behavior on the Dutch side.<sup>121</sup>

#### 4.6 Ending remarks

What did the Dutch government undertake against Germany between 1909 and 1914? In essence the Dutch did not do that much at all. As we have seen earlier, it were other nations rather than the Netherlands that shaped most of Germany's international agenda. The sheer lack for the Dutch to make a large impact on German demands was mostly caused by insufficient power, due to the limited size of the population and geographical properties. For this reason, a rather passive policy had to be carried out by the Dutch government, as Germany had the initiative all the time. The Netherlands responded stubbornly and did not haste to meet all the German demands concerning the Rhine duties and the fortifications. Both issues died out once the First World War got on the way. The process of commencing the construction of these fortifications was put into action, especially since it was demanded by international law to uphold neutrality between all other nations, in this case mostly dealing with Britain and Germany. As for the Eems-estuary issue, the result was similar. The Dutch government requested some experts to give recommendations on this issue. De Beaufort and Jitta both reported to the minister of Foreign Affairs that this case was ambivalent and that it was impossible to predict any ruling by an international organization. As the Germans did not rock the boat harder than necessary, the Dutch were not impeded to take any more measures. Essentially, the Eems question remained unsolved.

When it comes to Dutch newspaper reports on the Dutch-German relations, the fortification issue was probably the most prominent. The perceived threat from the Germans started from September 1910 and went on until the summer of 1914. Newspaper articles mostly dealt with the possible scenarios of a war between Britain and Germany. In essence, it was concluded that a war on Dutch soil was rather unlikely. What lacks in the newspapers, is a general idea on German ambitions both concerning the Netherlands as well as the Dutch East Indies. No real indications were provided on this issue. The chauvinistic attitude concerning the possible Dutch damage expected from the Rhine duties proposed by the

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<sup>121</sup> Beening, *Onder de vleugels van de adelaar*, 215-217, 228-229 and 272-288.



Germans was quite evident and essentially the only German measure considered unreasonable.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

It is now time to bring it all together. The first task is to provide an answer on the overarching research question: *What was the role of German nationalism in the Dutch-German relations between 1909-1914?* Of course, it is necessary to start with the concept nationalism. As explained in the introduction, Gellner's ideas on nationalism are used as a basis for this thesis. His analysis provides us with different types of nationalism of which one is applicable on Germany. Unification nationalism, which was also present in Italy from the middle of the nineteenth century onward, was determined by the discrepancy between the nation building ambitions of the political elite on the one hand, and the in the case of Germany educated people in a modern industrial society on the other. Apparently, the unification process never fully finished as there were still German people living outside the German state borders by 1909. What areas were to be included, depended entirely on the exact type of nationalism that was prevalent in Berlin.

Based on the secondary literature and the primary sources, it is fair to conclude that the Klein-German nationalism was far more dominant compared to Pan-Germanic nationalism. Klein-German nationalism was focussed on including all people of German descent and was to include only the German Empire and adjacent areas, where German speaking people were living, mostly in Poland. Compared to Pan-Germanic nationalism, the ambitions of Klein-German nationalism were rather limited. Pan-Germanism foresaw a larger Germany including the adjacent countries with Germanic populations. As these countries did include the Netherlands, the difference between Pan-Germanic and Klein-German nationalism was imperative to understand the possible consequence of German ambitions to the Netherlands. In both cases, pressure groups such as the *Deutsche Flottenverein* played a significant role, with a membership of around 300.000. This organization, obviously based in a military context, was promoting nationalism, especially the colonial adventure. There also was the *Alldeutsche Verband*, which was the major Pan-Germanic organization. This organization had around 30.000 members between 1909 and 1914, and was more civilian in nature and mainly focussed on the domestic policy agenda. Due to the limited influence of Pan-Germanic nationalism, the Netherlands was also from a strict nationalistic perspective relatively safe. Some intellectuals had connections within the departments in Berlin as well as the pressure groups themselves. As the foreign policy was more based on Klein-German

political nationalism, the Netherlands was not part of any program to be included into the German Empire based on the nationalistic feature. There existed circumstances, however, which had to do with the French, Russian and especially the British threat towards Germany, which made the situation more complicated for the Netherlands. As explained in the introduction, realist theory is adopted in this thesis, for it is most applicable on the way statesmen thought at the time. Another reason why realist theory fits in well, is the explanatory value it possesses compared to real events taking place. The British naval superiority was essential to keep the Germans out of the Netherlands as well. The fortification issue, dealing with German demands on the defences on the Dutch coast, clearly shows that Germany was concerned with the power balance in the region. It wanted to secure the Netherlands against British domination. Of course, the liberalist explanation of the Dutch port of Rotterdam being vital for the German economy is in itself feasible, but there also was the issue of possible direct British invasion through the Netherlands. This event would have left the Ruhr-area, Germany's most important industrial area, very vulnerable. Therefore, realist theory is sufficient to explain the course of events that have taken place. Another sign as to why nationalism alone cannot account fully for the German international relations, is the fact that just the lack of a Pan-Germanic agenda would have ruled out infringements concerning Belgium and France as well. Still, Germany increased the pressure on these countries, as a reaction to their military expansions in 1913. More information on the German objectives concerning Belgium and France would be necessary to go into more detail on this issue.

As stated in the historiographical part, nationalism has never been investigated as an aspect in the Dutch-German relations. If we consider the available primary and secondary material, we can finally say that nationalism had only a limited influence within the German foreign policy towards the Netherlands. The pragmatic issues concerning security and economy were more dominant. This nationalism was never meant to incorporate the Netherlands or any other country, unless there was an outside intervention, for example Britain occupying the Dutch coast. Still, nationalism was a determining factor in Germany's policy goals in international politics. Germany was oriented outwards concerning this issue throughout Europe, from the Balkans to Belgium. It was mainly concerned with securing its own interests on a worldwide scale. This resulted in *Weltpolitik*, which aggravated the relationship with Britain and France, due to the colonial endeavour in Africa. The alliance structure existing at the time also worked against Germany to a large extent. Russia, France and Britain were from 1907 onward united in the Triple Entente. This fact was of significant influence on the Dutch-German relations, as the Germans were forced to keep the Netherlands

neutral to maintain peace with Britain. The Netherlands itself reacted rather passively. This was mostly caused by its limited size and military capabilities. The government used international law to determine its course as a neutral country, especially concerning the fortification issue. In this case as well as relating to the Eems-estuary issue and the Rhine duties, the Dutch government remained stubborn and tried to buy time, essentially hoping it would discourage the Germans. Because the First World War broke out in 1914, this tactic just happened to work out. What would have happened otherwise, remains to be seen. The Eems-estuary issue is also a sign that Pan-Germanic nationalism was not that prominent within the German government. It also suggests that Germany had no concrete intention to incorporate the Netherlands. Why go through all the trouble to annex a small strip of water if your general plan was to incorporate the whole country? Germany would not have bothered about the Eems if it wanted to incorporate the Netherlands entirely. Mostly the Dutch government was rather confident that it could remain independent. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, De Marees van Swinderen, and his successor Loudon, as well as the Dutch envoy in Berlin, Gevers, were convinced that Germany would remain a reasonable negotiating partner in sensitive issues. The mentioned Eems-estuary issue was of less importance from a strategic point of view concerning its limited interest relating to resources and state security. There was the threat of a major European war existing between 1909 and 1914. At the same time, the Dutch government was relieved to notice the change in the Von Schlieffen plan in 1906, in which the Netherlands was excluded from the German invasion plans of Western Europe in the case of a new Franco-German War. Apparently, the government officials as well as the diplomatic corps was certain that the Dutch neutrality would be respected by all parties involved, including the British, French, Belgians and Germans. The Dutch newspapers had mostly the same attitude as the Dutch government. The journalists understood the German demands concerning the Eems-estuary and the fortifications, although they remained loyal to the Dutch stubborn policy. They were most critical on Germany when it came to the Rhine duties, which were never put into effect, as well as the German military expansions. The tone in newspaper articles in 1913 and 1914 was rather worried. This mostly had to do with the general political circumstances in Europe at the time. Nationalism within German foreign policy relating to the Netherlands is relatively difficult to measure. The German ambitions towards other countries can definitely be identified as the dominant feature of political nationalism. These ambitions to invade or incorporate other countries were more apparent concerning Belgium and France compared to the Netherlands. Germany saw the Netherlands as a friendly, but also relatively weak neighbor. This resulted in a patronizing policy in which

the German government wanted to have strategic control over its territory, which can be observed at the fortification issue. Perhaps the Netherlands also posed as a buffer state towards France and especially Britain, as these nations were perceived to threaten German dominance on the continent and limiting German capabilities overseas. Of course the economic motives to be reluctant in the international arena as well as British military power contributed to maintain a status quo between Germany and the Netherlands. As we have seen, Dutch neutrality was important to all European powers involved.

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