

Description of the data

Wouter de Nooy, 30 November 2006

Introduction

This paper describes the network data on the administrative elite in The Netherlands in April 2006. The data was collected by the major Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* as a special journalistic project led by Wilco Dekker and Ben van Raaij. Database design and network analysis was done by Wouter de Nooy. The project yielded 10 full-page articles in *de Volkskrant* (22/4/2006, 29/4/2006, 6/5/2006, 13/5/2006, 20/5/2006, 27/5/2005, 3/6/2006, 10/6/2006), which were collected and extended in a book: Wilco Dekker & Ben van Raaij, *De elite. De Volkskrant Top 200 van invloedrijkste Nederlanders* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2006).

Data selection

Based on advice by insiders and the newspapers editors, the organizations and administrative bodies have been selected that are most important to the Dutch government across all social sectors. The Dutch government (cabinet and queen) itself was excluded because the analysis is limited to the network outside the government. The members of the Dutch House of Lords ('Eerste Kamer') were included. All advisory councils of the Dutch government listed by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior in 2004¹ were included if they were still operational around 2006. Foreign organizations have been excluded with few exceptions (some EU bodies and international think tanks, such as the Conference board and the Trilateral commission).

For each organization, the principal administrative body or bodies have been selected. Bodies include boards of directors, supervisory and advisory boards. In the case of regional government, individual officials were also included, notably Royal Commissioners and the mayors of the 25 largest Dutch cities. The selected bodies' members around the beginning of 2006 were included in the dataset but data collection was restricted to people of Dutch nationality.

The network of the Dutch elite

The Pajek project file **DutchElite.paj** contains the entire network (DutchElite.net). It is a 2-mode network consisting of 3810 persons (mode 1) and 937 administrative bodies (mode 2). A total of 5221 memberships connect the persons to the bodies. Note that the bodies may belong to the same organization and, furthermore, organizations may be part of a mother organization. The network contains multiple relations. Each relations represents a particular role, e.g., relation 2 represents chairmen, relation 3 refers to vice-chairmen, etcetera. In Pajek, use the *Info>Network>Multiple Relations* command to obtain an overview.

In addition, the project file contains several partitions specifying properties of the persons or bodies:

- **2-Mode partition of DutchElite.net:** 1 – persons, 2 – administrative bodies.
- **Weights.clu:** a special code used to calculate the influence of administrators. The Top200 published in *de Volkskrant* was calculated using these weights. See the next Section for

¹ <http://www.andereoverheid.nl/NR/rdonlyres/B7C581AD-A669-4B77-B200-C2B238548C12/0/BeterBestuurlijkToezichtdeel3.pdf>

details. Classes: 1 – administrative body is a point of reference and its chairman belongs in the absolute top of the ranking, 2 – other administrative bodies that function as a point of reference to the government, 3 – remaining administrative bodies.

- **Organisation.clu:** ID number of the organization to which the administrative body belongs. With this partition, bodies connected to the same organization can be joined.
- **MotherOrganisation.clu:** ID number of the mother organization to which an administrative body's organization belongs. With this partition, bodies connected to the same mother organization can be joined.
- **Domain.clu:** the social sector in which the organisation is primarily active. Social sectors are categorised by Ministry: 1 – General Affairs, 2 – Foreign Affairs (incl. EU), 3 – Defence, 4 – Economic Affairs (including industry), 5 – Finance (incl. banks, etc.), 6 – Justice, 7 – Agriculture & Nature, 8 – Education & Science, 9 – Culture (excl. media), 10 – Social Affairs, 11 – Transport, 12 – Health & Welfare, 13 – Sports, 14 – Spatial Planning & Environment, 15 – Interior (incl. regional and local government), 18 – Media. Note that the domains of some Ministries have been split in separate sectors.
- **Task.clu:** the primary task of the administrative body: 1 – Advice, 2 – Administration, 3 – Management, 4 – Unknown, 5 – Other, 6 – Inspection, 7 – Representation of the people, 8 – Arbitration/administration of justice.
- **YearOfBirth.clu:** the year of birth of a person. Administrative bodies are in class 0 and people with unknown year of birth have code 9999998, which is interpreted as a missing value by Pajek.
- **Sex.clu:** A person's sex, 1 – female, 2 – male, 9999998 – unknown. Administrative bodies are coded 0.
- **Top200.clu:** a person's position in the Top 200 of most influential people as published in *de Volkskrant* in 2006. See the next section.

Determining the Top 200

One of the central aims of the project was to establish a list of the most influential people based on memberships of administrative bodies. In order to arrive at a ranking reflecting the reputations that top administrators and executives enjoyed among themselves (many were interviewed and a survey was conducted among 400 of them), it was necessary to distinguish between three types of organizations:

1. Market leaders and information monopolists in the core sectors of Dutch policy and economy: transport, technology (including telecommunication), finance, energy, and labour market. Information monopolists are organizations that collect and analyse information on Dutch society on which the government depends.

These organizations are usually consulted directly by Ministers, so they are regarded as the prime representatives of their businesses or sectors. The closer a person is to these organizations, that is, the more directly one is connected with these organizations, the higher the probability that this person is able to make himself or herself heard by the government. The boards of directors of these organizations are considered to be important poles or points of reference within the network.

In addition, these organizations' CEO's or chairmen of the board of directors are able to contact Ministers directly. Therefore, they are considered to be very influential and they should occupy places in the top of the ranking.

2. Market leaders, largest or most prestigious organizations in the other social sectors.

These organizations are deemed to be the first organizations to be consulted by the government in policy debates concerning their sectors. Their boards (of directors) are also points of reference within the network: the closer one is to them, the higher the probability to be influential.

3. The remaining organizations and bodies.

These administrative bodies do not carry special weight.

The influence of a person was calculated on the basis of the person's summed (inverse) distance to all chairmen of the (primary) administrative bodies of organizations classified in categories 1 and 2. Distance was conceptualized in the graph-theoretic sense of a geodesic, that is, the number of lines on the shortest path between a person and an administrative body. In our application, we counted the minimum number of contacts between people needed for a person to reach the primary chairman of an important organization (category 1 or 2), assuming that contacts are established only through meetings of the administrative bodies that were sampled.

Because it is likely that the probability to be heard will decrease rapidly if the number of in-betweens increases, we calculated 2 to the power of the distance and then we took the inverse in order to have small contributions to influence for large distances and vice versa. Finally, we summed the (inverse, power) distances to the primary chairs of all organizations in categories 1 and 2. This sum reflects the potential influence of a person in the administrative network.

The (primary) chairmen of the category 1 organizations make up the top of the list: positions 1 thru 23. Within the top, they are ordered according to their influence scores. The other people populate the remaining positions, again, ranked according to their influence score. Especially in the lower zones of the Top 200, this approach yielded unduly high positions to members of large, rather central administrative bodies, who did not have other memberships. Therefore, an additional criterion was applied that one needs to have at least two memberships (with different organizations) in order to be included in the Top 200.

Final checks during the publication process and journalistic decisions have led to minor modifications in the bottom of the list (among the lower ranks). Additional corrections and additions have been applied to the dataset. Recalculation of the ranking according to the guidelines described above will probably yield a ranking which is not exactly the same as the one published in the newspaper.

For a more detailed justification, see W. de Nooy, 'Ringten om de macht' in: Wilco Dekker & Ben van Raaij, *De elite. De Volkskrant Top 200 van invloedrijkste Nederlanders*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2006: 85-94)

The network of the Top 200

Apart from the entire network, a Pajek project file (**Top200.paj**) is made containing the Top 200 elite and the (395) administrative bodies to which they are affiliated. This file contains the network and the same partitions (except for the **Weights.clu** partition) as the project file for the entire network.