

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SAILORS, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MARKETS AND NATIONAL IDENTITY, 1600–1850

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On 15 June, 1667, the *Abraham's Sacrifice*, a Genoese merchantman, was taken by an English frigate some 45 miles from Blackrock near Galway in Ireland. The ship had sailed from Genoa to Amsterdam with a cargo of wine, wool and salt, and was returning to Genoa with cinnamon, pepper, iron, lead, logwood, ebony, Brazilwood, whalebone, tar and brass. The captain, Antonio of Genoa, had perhaps opted for the unusual route around Scotland and Ireland out of fear that the ship might get caught in a battle between the English and the Dutch navies which were fighting the Second Anglo-Dutch War.¹ In fact, that same day the Dutch were already returning from a successful raid on the Medway, having decided the war in their favour, but this cannot yet have been known off the west coast of Ireland.

The state of war was directly reflected in the composition of the crew of the *Abraham's Sacrifice*, which included seven English and nine Dutch sailors. Most, if not all of the Englishmen had been taken prisoner by the Dutch earlier in the war. Lawrence Man from Dartmouth and Anthony Laghorne from Truro in Cornwall later, when questioned by the English authorities, declared that they had escaped from the Dutch before they mustered on the *Abraham's Sacrifice*, at Texel and in Amsterdam respectively. Another English national, Luke Merritt from Jersey, simply declared that “being a prisoner in Amsterdam, about the beginning of December last, he was there Enterteijnd bij the Cap^t: Antonio of Genoa, Comander of the shipp Abrahams Offering of Genoa [...] to saijle in the said shipp as a Marriner at the rate of twentij Guilders per month.” The large number of Englishmen

¹ TNA, HCA 32/8 II. The Englishmen declared that they had expected the ship to take what one of them, John Pomerij, called “the direct waij”: through the Channel. They believed captain Antonio to have a passport from the Duke of York, the commander of the English fleet, allowing him to sail that route.

on board the *Abraham's Sacrifice* seems to suggest that the Dutch allowed Captain Antonio to hire prisoners.² It seems unlikely that all of them escaped and found their way separately to the Genoese ship, which was furthermore mainly manned by Dutch sailors who must have known that the Englishmen were former prisoners of war.

Nationality came to the fore when an English man-of-war was sighted. Captain Antonio ordered his crew to prepare for a fight. One of the Englishmen, Joseph Bluett, "told him that he was not willing to fight against his own nation." Antonio answered that he would not resist a ship of the English king, but that he would fight a privateer. Bluett insisted that he thought fighting an English privateer just as wrong as fighting a ship of the king, as privateers had a commission from the king. The captain then threatened to cut Bluett down with his cutlass if he would not fight. In the end, Antonio did not have to resort to drastic measures. He did not put up a fight and the *Abraham's Sacrifice* was taken as a prize.

The incident off Galway in 1667 points to a number of aspects of the early modern European maritime labour market. Crews were not necessarily recruited from one nationality, nor of the same nationality as the owners of the ship or the captain. In some cases a majority of the crew did not share the ship's nationality.³ Both national and international recruitment and migration patterns among sailors emerged in

² If they did so, the Dutch authorities avoided the costs involved in feeding, housing and guarding the prisoners, while the prisoners were still not able to serve on board British men-of-war before the end of the hostilities. Prisoners themselves would surely have preferred working, especially as pay was good while the war lasted, over being kept in prison, especially at a time when money spent on feeding prisoners had to compete with war expenses. The other side certainly did employ prisoner-of-war sailors, even in its own merchant fleet. On 11 January, 1666, Charles II had ordered that no English ship was to leave port without at least a fifth of its crew consisting of Dutch prisoners of war. Already in the previous summer the king had shown concern about Dutch prisoners escaping and so insisted on a system of documentation of any prisoners serving in the English merchant marine. CSPD 1664–1665, 469; 1665–1666, 198, quoted in Kerling, 'Nederlandse krijgsgevangenen in Engeland,' 5–13, 16, 51. We are grateful to Jaap Bruijn for this reference. TNA, SP 44, Entry Book 17, 164. We are also grateful to Andrew Little for his comments on this issue. By the time the *Abraham's Sacrifice* left port, the Dutch fleets would have been manned and recruitment problems on the Dutch side would have been manageable. We owe this observation to Andrew Little.

³ For instance on the *Catharina en Sara Hendrina*, a Dutch vessel taken on 14 October 1778 off Dover (TNA, HCA32/289 (289/6), where the crew consisted of five Dutch, four Danes, four inhabitants of Bremen and one Russian. Further examples are given below.

the seventeenth century as the incident shows. The changes open the question of the degree to which international labour markets could be more or less effective than national ones. According to labour market economics, international labour markets should be more efficient than national ones as they enable a better allocation of labour at the lowest costs. International recruitment also has obvious disadvantages. *Ceteris paribus*, miscommunication will arise more often in a polyglot labour force, which is no small matter in situations where commands have to be executed by several crew simultaneously. Ethnic and national rivalry may even promote counterproductive behaviour of one segment of the crew against another. In wartime, when distinctions between commercial fleet and navy became blurred, the loyalty of foreign crew members might become doubtful, as the example of Joseph Bluett shows. This links up with other questions of identity, especially with the debate on class consciousness aboard early modern ships.⁴

For the examination of crews no matter their origins, in short, labour productivity is measured in the generally accepted, though crude, way as average ship's burden, expressed in tons, per sailor on board. The costs of the sailors are not considered. Instead, attention is principally directed at their skills, expressed in literacy, numeracy and to a lesser extent also in regional origin, as well as to their motivation. Skills and motivation combined, along with other factors not considered like health for example, result in the sailor's total performance or, in a larger sense, the productivity of labour.

The 1667 incident points to an abundant and valuable underutilized source of information about the maritime labour market and indirectly about roots of changes in labour productivity. In times of war, merchant ships belonging to the enemy were regarded as lawful prizes, taken and sold for profits by navy or privateer ships. This, of course, required a procedure to establish whether a ship did indeed belong to the enemy. In the case of the *Abraham's Sacrifice*, English suspicion was quite understandable: it sailed from Amsterdam with cargo taken in Amsterdam and with a crew the majority of whom were Dutch. To establish whether a ship was actually enemy property and therefore a lawful prize, or not, the English over the seventeenth and eighteenth century developed a distinct and elaborate procedure. They would confiscate any ship's papers or other written material found on board

⁴ On identities Heerma van Voss and Van der Linden, *Class and Other Identities*.

and a special naval court would question the skipper and a number of other crew members. Each had to answer a list of questions, which under Charles II had become a set questionnaire of 18 items, and which subsequently evolved until it contained 34 questions under George III.⁵ Knowledge of the incident on board the *Abraham's Sacrifice* stems from an early example of such an examination. The English authorities also enquired about the size the crew and the cargo. A sample from the answers to these questions offers a basis for assessing labour productivity in shipping as well as a number of other aspects of the maritime world of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

As is clear from the crew of the *Abraham's Sacrifice*, crews on board early modern ships could be multinational. Early modern sailing in northwestern Europe involved the mobilisation of large numbers of workers, both for the merchant marine, and—especially during wars—for the navies. The great demand for sailors, in particular in maritime centres, necessitated recruitment from a wide catchment area. Besides, crews continually had to be refreshed under way, not only because of loss of lives but also because part of the crew would chose to jump ship. For these two reasons maritime labour markets tended to be not local or regional but rather national, sometimes international or even intercontinental. This is what makes them—together with the labour market for mercenaries—stand out among early modern labour markets.⁶ In northwestern Europe the large turnover of maritime labour led to a free labour market, even if taking the infamous “press” in the United Kingdom into account. This international labour market was largely monetized, although board and lodging were part of the remuneration.

Comparing the two leading maritime nations of northwestern Europe in this period, that is the Dutch Republic and England, it is clear that the Dutch maritime labour market was international while the English one was national. Because of this substantial difference in the recruitment patterns between Stuart and Hanoverian England and the Dutch Republic the two need to be studied alongside other maritime countries to see if England was the exception to the European

⁵ Based on all this evidence the court decided whether the prize had been taken rightly or wrongly and what had to be done with the ship, its cargo and its crew. Examples in TNA, HCA 32/8 (ships *St. Anne of Newport, Bogen*); HCA 32/800 (ship *La Pauline*).

⁶ Lucassen and Zürcher, ‘Introduction. Conscriptio and Resistance,’ 1–19.

norm or the Dutch Republic was the oddity.⁷ Geographical patterns of recruitment, measured in kilometres, differed much less between Holland and England than patterns based on nationality.⁸ To put it simply Holland's small size in relation to its maritime performance nearly automatically implied the recruitment of foreigners for the Dutch merchant marine and navy.

With the Dutch relying on foreigners this may have affected performance of the maritime labour force. International labour mobility poses important questions regarding self-definition and identity of those involved, both along class and national lines. Marcus Rediker has argued that the international labour market for sailors, especially in the Atlantic in the eighteenth century, also created the first international proletariat with class consciousness.⁹ On the other hand, especially in the context of the Navigation Acts in England and of the English and French navies, national identities of sailors were also underlined in the very same centuries. This seems to have been a prelude to the general nationalization of labour markets in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Since between 1600 and 1800 the Dutch maritime sector had such an international character this may have created problems of loyalty which other nations, apparently, tried to prevent. To assess the impact in economic terms is to ask what were the consequences of different class and national identities of crew for labour incentives and labour productivity.

So far, the study of maritime labour markets in different European countries has been done mainly on the basis of macro-sources, especially cross-sections, based on contemporary enumerations and estimates of national tonnages and crews. This gives a figure for the labour productivity of an entire fleet. A summary for early modern Europe has been provided in 2001 by Lucassen and Unger.¹⁰ Since then, new national figures have been proposed, for example by Leos Müller for Sweden, by David Starkey for England and by Jelle Van Lottum and Jan Lucassen for the Netherlands.¹¹

⁷ Cf. Davids and Lucassen, eds., *A Miracle Mirrored*.

⁸ Cf. Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, chapter 3.

⁹ Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 288–292.

¹⁰ Lucassen and Unger, 'Labour Productivity in Ocean Shipping, 1450–1875,' 127–141.

¹¹ Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs and Commerce*, 154–159; Starkey, 'Quantifying British seafarers, 1789–1828,' 13–42; 83–103; van Lottum and Lucassen, 'Six cross-sections.'

While these overall estimates have the advantage that they are based on large numbers, they also have their disadvantages: the size of total tonnage and crews is often based on contemporary or later estimates. Overall figures do not give information on the composition of the labour force. They also conflate the figures for different trade routes and sizes of ships concerned. However, as Yrjö Kaukiainen has pointed out, men per ton is not a linear but a curvilinear ratio: it normally declines more steeply between 50 and 200 tons than between 500 and 1,000 tons. Thus, aggregate productivity of the national fleets depends on the distribution of ships over the different tonnage classes.¹²

Supplementary micro sources bearing names of sailors, in particular muster rolls, allow us to study the maritime labour market more closely. In the historiography of Dutch maritime history these have been used by a number of historians. For the Dutch East India Company *scheeps-soldijboeken* or the ships' pay roles have been partially preserved. They have not only been used to analyze careers within the company or to get a closer look at pay rates for crews, but also in research on a wide range of other topics, varying from the origins of sailors, to fringe benefits, or to the marital status of the crews on board.¹³ For the rest of the Dutch merchant marine, such sources are less abundant. Only by using the extremely time consuming notarial archives of Amsterdam was Paul Van Royen able to bring greater insight into the functioning of the Dutch merchant marine at the start of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ For the end of the eighteenth century Van Royen used the muster roles of Amsterdam merchantmen from archives of the so-called *Waterschout* or water-police to determine the origins of sailors on board.¹⁵

A type of micro source that has not been used much in this context, but which is explored here, is the so-called Prize Papers.¹⁶ The taking of prizes involved a lot of paper work as we have seen, parts of which

¹² Kaukiainen, review of Leos Müller.

¹³ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*; Van den Heuvel, 'Bij uitlandigheid van haar man'; Bruijn and Lucassen, eds., *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*; Gelder, *Naporra's omweg*; Lucassen, 'A Multinational and its Labor Force,' 12–39. Also the following very valuable Norwegian MA theses: Olsen, 'Nordmenn i hollandsk tjeneste 1600–1800'; Aarsbog, 'Med Mars og Merkur.'

¹⁴ Van Royen, *Zeevarenden op de koopvaardijvloot omstreeks 1700*.

¹⁵ Van Royen, 'Moedernegotie en kraamkamer'; Lootsma, 'De zeevaart van Hindeloopen.'

¹⁶ Braunius, 'Het leven van de zeventiende-eeuwse zeeman'; Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise*.

have been preserved. The most famous collection is the Prize Papers in the National Archives at Kew, London, England, where documents pertaining to tens of thousands of ships, mainly Dutch, and French, but also Spanish, Portuguese, Scandinavian, German, Italian and American have been preserved. These ships and all their paperwork were taken by English privateers or men-of-war between ca. 1650 and 1815. Other similar collections, albeit more limited in scope, are known to exist in Denmark, Sweden and France.¹⁷

What makes this time-consuming but readily-available source remarkable for research into the questions discussed here are two types of data they contain. First, they combine data for each ship about origin, route and planned destination, tonnage, freight and crew members with their origins. These records then provide detailed information about labour productivity on the level of the individual trip. Secondly, they contain the results of the interrogations by the Prize Courts of the most important three or four men on board mainly from the early eighteenth century onward. Part of these interrogations consisted of pertinent and detailed questions about citizenship, national allegiance and personal migration history. These especially provide insight into self-ascribed identity. A systematic analysis of this source, to which a very moderate start is made here, provides alternative information to the sources discussed above. As the Prize Papers are international in nature, they make possible comparisons between different maritime nations. The results here are based on a non-random sample of boxes with dossiers on prizes and their interrogations.¹⁸ From these comes a

¹⁷ In Denmark, at the Rigsarkivet Prize Papers are to be found in the records of the *Tyske Kancelli Indenrigske Afdeling* and in those of *Admiralitetet*, which cover the early 1810s. Other examples are in the archive of the *Københavens Søret*. We thank Erik Goebel at the Riksarkivet for this information. The French *Archives Nationales* have Prize Papers in the *Fonds de la Marine, serie F²* and elsewhere. In the Swedish Riksarkivet are the records of the *Kommitterade till överseende av fördelningen av arméns flottas priser* and of the *Kommitterade över Prisreglementet (Priskommissionen)* and the *Uppbringningar (SE/RA/757/42)* and *Kaperiräkenskaper (SE/RA/51303)* have records on ships seized. Also in the Swedish Krigsarkivet are the records of the *Kungl. Maj:ts till 1714 års prisräkningars reviderande förordnade kommission 1726–1727*, and the *Amiralitetskollegium, Kommissioner, Ej inordnade handlingar* which also contain papers concerning ship seizures and privateering during the Great Northern War. The Landesarchiv Greifswald has reports on Prussian prize ships captured in Pomerania, 1710–1714.

¹⁸ Boxes were selected so as to cover different wars and regions of Europe. By and large within boxes we made no further selection but processed all interrogations we found to contain a useful minimum of data.

database of 221 ships which aims at a representative overview of ships from northwestern European maritime nations and of the periods for which the Prize Papers provide information, that is the naval wars in which England was involved from the second half of the seventeenth until the early nineteenth century.¹⁹

From the onset of the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic found it difficult to allocate labour to keep up with the growing demand in different sectors of the economy. To keep up with the rapid economic growth labour from outside the country's boundaries had to be attracted. It has been estimated that halfway through the seventeenth century 8 per cent of the population of the Netherlands consisted of foreigners.²⁰ In the Republic's core region, the province of Holland, the share of foreigners was much larger, around 15 per cent in 1600, 18 per cent in 1650, 12 per cent in 1700, 14 per cent in 1750 and again 12 per cent in 1800. In individual cities this figure could be much higher still. For Amsterdam the percentages of the population born outside the Republic for the same years were 40, 38, 25, 27 and 23 respectively.²¹

There was much variation in the participation of foreigners in the Dutch labour market, and over time within the same sector the share of

¹⁹ The data come from TNA, HCA 32/8 (1, 2); 32/13; 32/64 (1, 2); 32/76 (1); 32/145; 32/208 (1, 2); 32/225; 32/289; 32/316 (1, 2, 3); 32/332 (1); 32/333 (1, 2); 32/335 (1, 2); 32/338 (1, 2); 32/343 (1, 2); 32/346; 32/356; 32/366 (1, 2); 32/369 (1, 2); 32/371 (1, 2); 32/ 372 (1, 2); 32/ 373 (1, 2); 32/374 (1); 32/395 (1, 2); 32/396; 32/453 (1); 32/488 (1); 32/800; 32/801 (1, 2); 32/802; 32/1063; 32/1068. The series HCA 32 contains documents collected from ships taken near the British Isles. The series HCA 49 contains documents collected from prize courts elsewhere (Cape of Good Hope, Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Madras, Halifax, etc.). We consulted HCA 49/5 (1, 2, 3); 49/14; 49/98; 49/99; 49/100; 49/101. From these a small number of ships was added to the database. When England was at war with other maritime nations she took suspect ships as prizes. This happened in the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch Wars (1664–67, 1672–74), the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48), the Seven Years' War (1756–63), the War of the American Revolution (1776–83), the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780–84) and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793–1815). In most eighteenth century wars, France was among England's foes. The number of French vessels, often small fishing vessels, that the English took, was very large. The focus is on northwestern European vessels in order to generate a sample of transport vessels from different nations which were involved in similar trips, namely north- or southbound voyages along Europe's continental coast. The sample contains data from the several wars mentioned, but a much larger sample of the records would have to be taken to relate the sample to, for instance, the size of the fleets concerned.

²⁰ Lucassen and Lucassen, 'Niederlande.'

²¹ Lucassen, *Immigranten in Holland 1600–1800*, 25.

foreigners could fluctuate widely. However, it has been argued that the participation of foreigners in the Netherlands during the early modern period consisted of two distinct periods. The first period, which lasted from roughly 1600 to 1670 was characterized by a large influx of foreigners, who were mostly sedentary migrants, settling for a number of years if not permanently.²² In the second period (1670–1785/90) the total share of foreigners remained substantial, even if it declined somewhat. Among those foreigners the number of temporary, non sedentary migrants increased strongly while that of sedentary migrants declined.

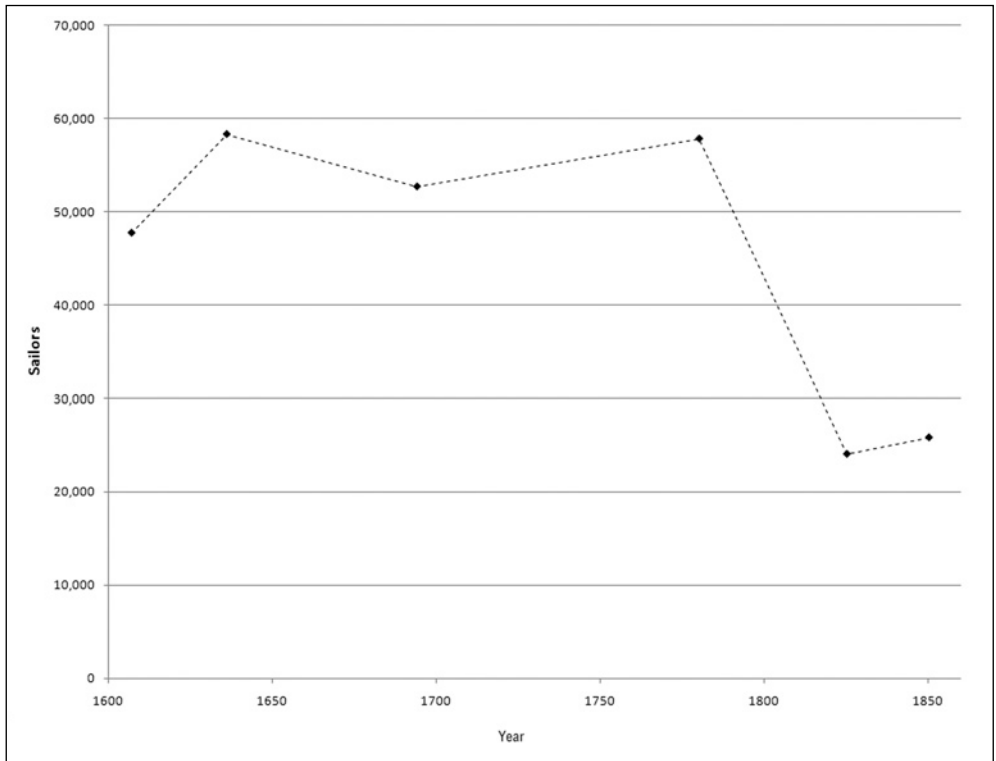
The latter development can also be traced in one of the most important sectors of the Dutch labour market, that for maritime workers. The most recent estimate of the size of the Dutch maritime labour market from 1600 to 1850 (Figure 13–1) shows first of all that the labour market was important from the very onset of the Dutch Republic.²³ In 1609 an estimated 47,000 men were already working on Dutch ships. Employment grew by a little over 10,000 men in less than 30 years. This increase is in line with what could be expected from the economic expansion of the Dutch Republic in general.²⁴ The subsequent contraction of employment in the maritime sector during the following decades does not come as a surprise since general economic performance worsened. Compared to 1635 employment by 1694 had shrunk by about 6,000 men. During the eighteenth century the size of the maritime labour market rose again to almost the 1635 level. In the 1780 cross-section, close to 60,000 men were employed in the maritime labour market.²⁵ Subsequently the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, the dissolution of the VOC in 1798 and the blockade of Dutch ports during the Napoleonic period had drastic consequences for maritime employment (Figures 13–1 and 13–2). In 1827 the number of sailors had more than halved to less than 25,000 men. By 1850 there were by no means impressive signs of recovery of employment

²² Cf. Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, chapter 4.

²³ This seems to support the interpretations of Van Zanden and Van Bavel who stress the high levels of Dutch economic performance even before the Golden Age. Van Bavel and Van Zanden, 'The jump-start of the Holland economy.'

²⁴ It is likely that this increase persevered in the subsequent two or three decades but insufficient quantitative data exist to test this hypothesis.

²⁵ This deviates from the assessment made by Lucassen and Bruijn in the 1970s. The results of Knoppers, 'De vaart in Europa,' confirm this development, but it is unclear how he reached these.



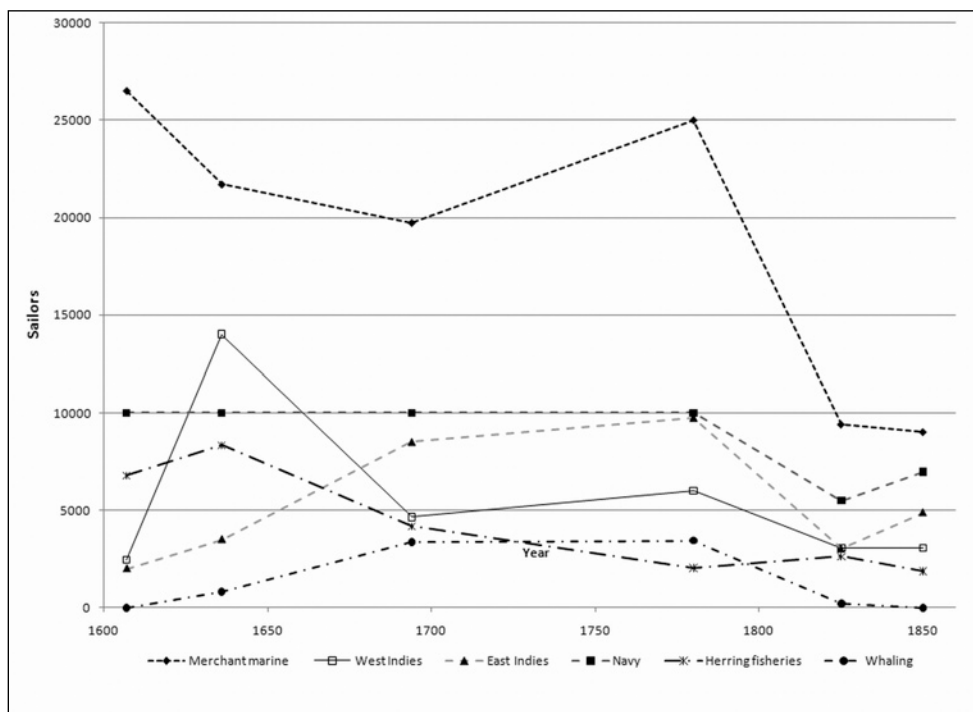
Source: Van Lottum and Lucassen, 'Six cross-sections' (Selected years, chosen depending on availability of data nationwide and for all sectors)

Figure 13–1 Employment in the Dutch Maritime Labour Market, 1600–1850

levels.²⁶ The end of the eighteenth century not only marked the end of the Netherlands as a leading seafaring country, but the maritime labour market would never be as important for the national economy as it had been during the early modern period.

Naturally, the Dutch maritime labour sector did not consist of one market, but was divided into multiple sub-markets, each with its own dynamic and its own recruitment pattern of foreigners. The Dutch maritime labour market between 1600 and 1800 can roughly be divided into six sub-markets: the intra-European merchant marine, which was involved in relatively short distance trips within Europe, the vessels destined to the West and the East Indies which predominantly sailed

²⁶ Van Rossum, 'Hand aan hand (Blank en Bruin),' shows that recovery came only after WWI but that employment never reached the late eighteenth century level.



Source: Van Lottum and Lucassen, ‘Six cross-sections.’

Figure 13–2 Employment in the Six Maritime Sub-markets of the Netherlands, 1610–1850

under the flags of the Dutch West and East India Companies (the WIC and VOC), the herring fisheries, whaling and finally the navy. The overall development of employment in the maritime labour market (Figure 13–1) masks diverging developments of its sub-markets (Figure 13–2).

The new estimate for employment in the six sub-markets first of all shows that intra-European trade was without doubt the largest employer of maritime labour in the Netherlands. Although there was a significant decline in this sector during the seventeenth century, by the 1780s manpower levels had recovered to a point close to their early seventeenth-century peak.²⁷ Like the overall development in

²⁷ Oudermeulen, ‘Iets dat tot voordeel der deelgenoten van de Oost-Indische Compagnie kan strekken,’ 177, states that before the end of 1780, the numbers were without any doubt 25 per cent higher than in 1785. This would raise the overall result for the 1770s to some 65,000 men which was most likely an all-time high. Van

this sector, this recovery in particular diverges from earlier estimates, which showed a decline during the eighteenth century.

The numbers of sailors involved in the trade with the East and West Indies show a development rather similar to that of the intra-European merchant marine, the major difference being the small number of people at the start of the seventeenth century, indicating the early stage in the development of long-distance trade. In 1635 the trade with the West Indies already involved about 15,000 people. Their number declined considerably during the next interval, mainly due to a decrease in the South American salt trade and remained relatively stable after that and through the eighteenth century. The trade with the East Indies shows a different development. During its existence the VOC increasingly demanded more people. After its dissolution at the end of the eighteenth century employment levels declined dramatically. The navy, in peace time, remained relatively stable in its labour demand throughout the early modern period.²⁸ The number of men involved in the fisheries and whaling were numerically less important. Especially after the seventeenth century the number of men involved in the herring fisheries declined significantly from over 8,000 in 1635 to less than one-third of that number in 1780.²⁹

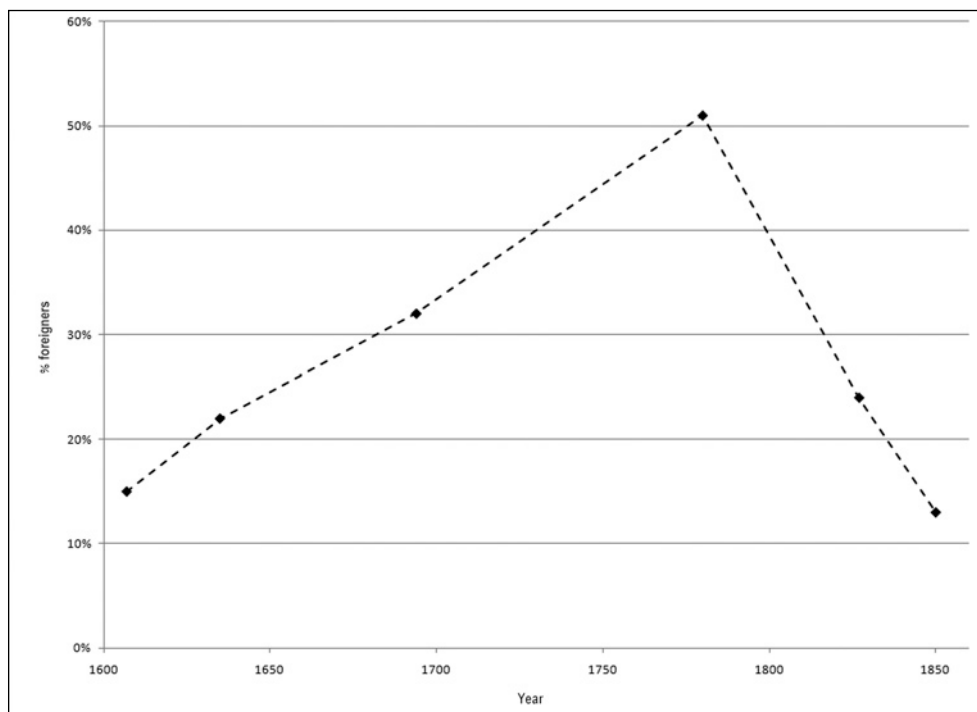
As was already pointed out, immigrants were necessary to man Dutch ships since the native population was not large enough to keep up with the expansion in this sector—as was the case in other sectors. The importance of migrants in the maritime labour market, however, changed significantly over time. It is not easy to determine the share of foreigners in the Dutch maritime labour market, but figure 13–3 shows the best that is possible at the moment.

While between 1635 and 1785 the total number of people employed in the Dutch maritime sector remained relatively stable (Figure 13–1), the share of foreigners during the early modern period only increased (Figure 13–3). In 1607, about 15 per cent of all sailors were born abroad. In 1635 this had risen to slightly over 20 per cent to increase to a little over 30 per cent at the end of the century. The eighteenth

Lottum and Lucassen, 'Six cross-sections,' Appendix 4, and 24n36 for the Van der Oudermeulen report.

²⁸ During war-years the number of people in this sector naturally was much larger, mainly at the expense of the merchant marine and fisheries, which were forbidden to sail out if the necessary men for the navy had not yet enlisted. Van Lottum and Lucassen, 'Six cross-sections'; Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy*.

²⁹ Poulsen, *Dutch herring*.

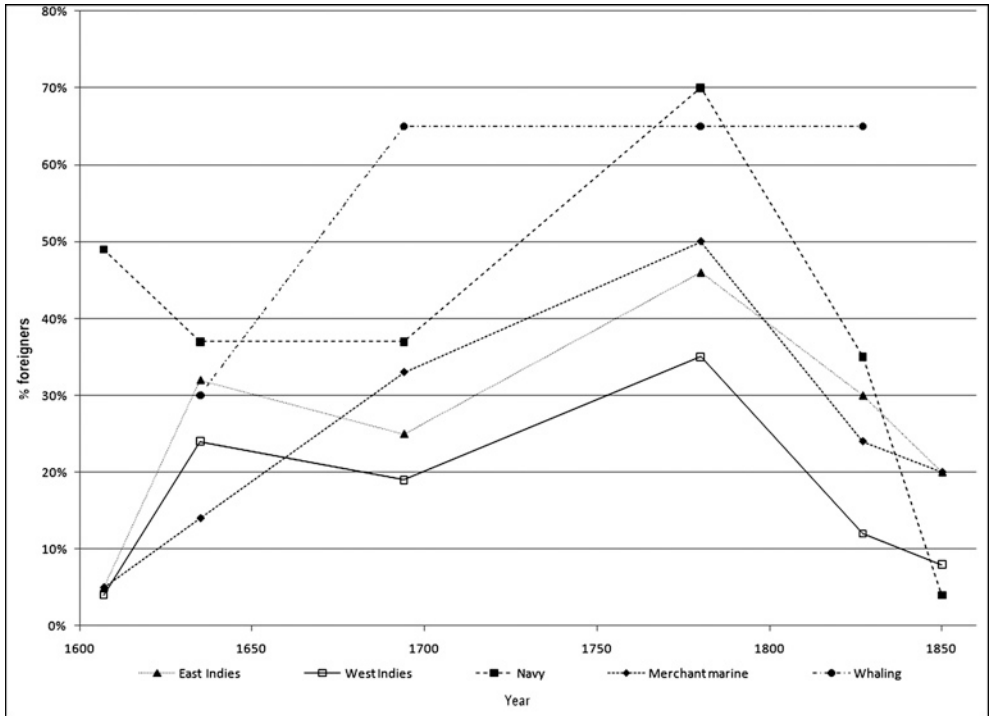


Source: Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 136.

Figure 13–3 Share of Foreigners in the Dutch Maritime Labour Market, 1600–1850

century, for which only one survey year is available, shows continued growth of the share of foreigners. Between 1694 and 1785 the share of foreigners rose from slightly over 30 to slightly over 50 per cent. After the end of the eighteenth century the share of immigrants declined quickly. In 1827 less than 25 per cent of the maritime work force consisted of foreigners and in 1850 only about 13 per cent.

The share of foreigners in half of the segments shows a more or less similar development (Figure 13–4). In fishing, foreign labour was almost unknown and the navy, which already had a large number of foreigners in service at the start of the seventeenth century, saw the number decline in the first interval unlike in most branches. Elsewhere, as in the overall labour market in the Netherlands, the share of immigrants rose during the first interval, and strongly so. The increase of foreigners in the most attractive branch, the merchant marine, lagged somewhat behind the overall rise. It is to be expected



Source: Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 137.

Figure 13–4 Share of Foreigners in Five Branches of the Dutch Maritime Labour Market

that this increase would have continued in at least the two decades that followed. During the next interval, that is 1635–1694, however, three out of five branches show either a decline or stagnation in the share of foreigners, the exceptions being whaling and the numerically important merchant marine where the share of foreigners continued its steady increase to catch up with other branches. In whaling the share increased rapidly until by the start of the eighteenth century two thirds of crews consisted of foreigners.³⁰

The following interval shows that while in the seventeenth century it was the less attractive branches of the maritime labour market, that is the West and East India Companies and the navy, which especially attracted foreigners, during the eighteenth century all branches,

³⁰ Because of the size of the merchant marine the number of foreigners in the overall maritime labour market showed an albeit minor increase during this interval.

including the merchant marine, witnessed a significant growth in the share of foreigners. The merchant marine even reached a level of about 50 per cent foreigners, the same order of magnitude as the share of foreign sailors on VOC ships,³¹ and significantly more than on the vessels destined for the West Indies. Furthermore, the navy appears to have had the highest share of foreigners in crews with an impressive proportion of foreigners of about 70 per cent. Finally, whereas the eighteenth century saw an increase of foreigners in the maritime labour market the subsequent century witnessed an overall decline. In 1850, the shares in all branches are on more or less the same level as 200 years earlier and in the navy it was much lower.

English maritime labour research in the past decades has focussed on the Royal Navy, for instance in the impressive body of work by N.A.M. Rodger. Comparatively, other important branches of the English maritime labour market such as the merchant marine and the East India Company have suffered some neglect. Even if the English maritime labour market has perhaps not been studied as broadly as its counterpart across the North Sea there is no doubt that the two strongly differed in character. Whereas the Royal Navy knew the notorious 'press', the Dutch labour market was a free one without institutionalized forms of coercion. The sole exception was during war emergencies when Dutch merchant ships were forbidden to leave Dutch ports until the navy had been manned.³² When, for instance, in 1667 the *Abraham's Sacrifice* was allowed to sail with a crew of Dutch and English sailors, the Dutch navy was already manned and at sea.

A second remarkable difference was the countries of origin of the sailors. Compared to the Dutch labour market, the English one was much less international. Whereas the Dutch relied for a large part on immigrants the English maritime labour market did not attract many foreigners. Certainly, it has been documented that even the Royal Navy attracted a number of non-natives sailors.³³ Usually, the literature fails to mention numbers, but these clearly were not large, certainly not as large as in the Dutch Navy. The English merchant marine was not

³¹ It is interesting to note that the VOC also employed many foreign soldiers. See Lucassen, 'A Multinational and its Labor Force.'

³² Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy*, 130.

³³ Rodger, *The Wooden World*, 158.

different in this respect.³⁴ Using the geographical origins of deponents in the High Court of Admiralty, Peter Earle showed that of about 1,500 sailors 83 per cent were born in England, about 12 per cent came from Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the Channel Islands, while only a meagre 5 per cent came from outside the British Isles.³⁵

The obvious question is why in this respect the English maritime labour market was so different from its Dutch counterpart. To give a simple geographical explanation the migration fields from which these two centres recruited their immigrant workers were next to each other and were largely mutually exclusive (Figure 13–5). Holland and England each had its own recruitment area which was sufficient to man the ships of her fleet. Concentric circles drawn around London and Amsterdam at 60, 170 and 450 kilometres define four regions in each case. For the Dutch the two regions closest to the core roughly cover the Dutch Republic, or the “national” labour market. In the numerically important third region (*Region III*), Dutch masters hired sailors from East Frisia, Hamburg, Bremen and the Duchies of Holstein and Schleswig. Their English counterparts relied on large numbers from the equidistant coastal regions of northern England.³⁶ On the English side the third concentric circle covers England, Cornwall and Wales (*Region 3*). While Amsterdam drew from the fourth concentric region (*Region IV*) on Norwegians, Danes and Swedes, London attracted Scots and Irish to serve in its fleet (*Region 4*).

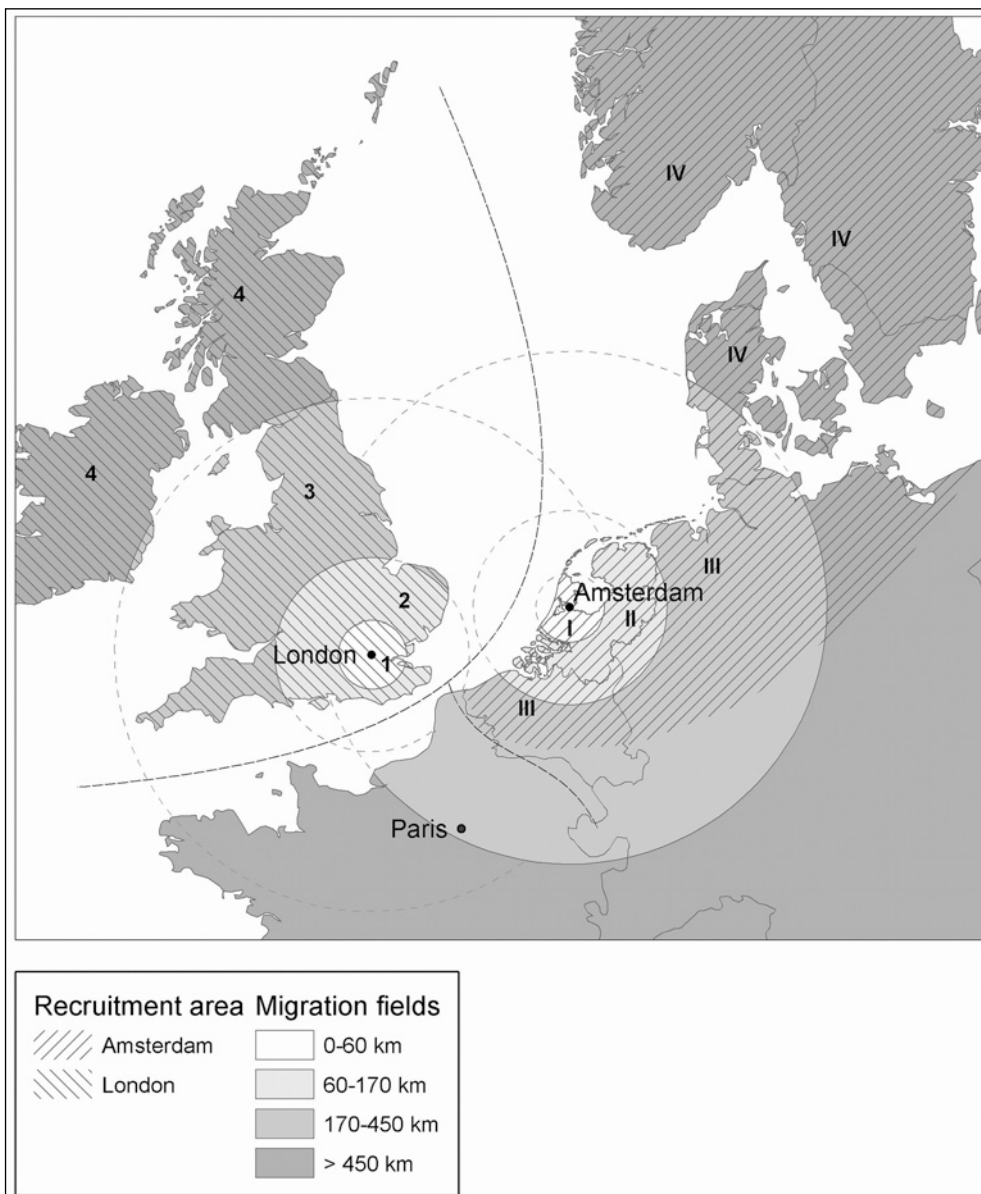
General migration figures, which are more readily available than those for the maritime labour market alone, offer a closer look at the composition of migration streams. Amsterdam’s migration field (Table 13–1) was remarkably stable over time.³⁷

³⁴ Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, 307. Also Earle, ‘English Sailors,’ 81, Table 4.

³⁵ Earle, ‘English Sailors,’ 81, Table 4. Andrew Little has suggested that foreign sailors might be underrepresented in the records because they were too transient to press their cases or to appear as witnesses.

³⁶ Earle, ‘English Sailors,’ 76, Table 2. Andrew Little has, however, urged caution in using Earle’s figures since they are based on ‘the number of sailors usually employed’ in each of the ports in the various regions so they are not, strictly speaking, calculations of the origins of personnel. Those numbers do offer strong indications and a valuable proxy for more direct data.

³⁷ For a more extensive discussion of what follows, see Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 107–125.



Source: Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 109.

Figure 13-5 Dutch and English Recruitment Areas

Table 13–1 Amsterdam's Migration Field in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

	Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	total
17th century	15%	27%	43%	15%	100%
18th century	14%	32%	40%	14%	100%
1600–1800	14%	31%	41%	14%	100%

Source: Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 109, Table 3.2.

During both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, about one in seven of Amsterdam immigrants originated from *Region I*, which roughly includes the province of Holland. The second region for migrants to Amsterdam, *Region II*, which comprised the rest of the Netherlands, shows a little bit more change. During the seventeenth century 27 per cent of the migrants were born in the 'non-core' provinces of the Dutch Republic. The share rose to 32 per cent in the following century. Consequently the proportion of migrants from the two remaining regions declined slightly. However, *Region III* remained by far the most important source for non-autochthonous workers in Amsterdam. Although more than 450 km away from Amsterdam, *Region IV* was also an important supplier of labour. The share of migrants from Denmark, Norway and Sweden was at par with that of *Region I*.

The best sources available to make a similar assessment of London's migration field are apprentices and freemen's records.³⁸ The type of source used by John Wareing in his study of the geographical distribution of migrants to London is, however, not without problems,³⁹ but it

³⁸ For an overview of migration patterns to London, also: Finlay, *Population and Metropolis*, 66. Most studies in which the geographical pattern of migration has been analyzed focused mainly on migration to provincial towns. Perhaps the first study in this respect is Pelham, 'The immigrant population of Birmingham,' Other good examples of studies on migration to specific towns are: Buckatzsch, 'Places of origin'; Clark, 'The migrant in Kentish towns'; Pickles, 'Labour migration.'

³⁹ Cf. Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 100–111; Kitch, 'Capital and Kingdom,' 225; Wareing, 'Migration to London,' 357; Finlay, *Population and Metropolis*, 64–66. Although marriage registers and apprentice registers include people within roughly the same age cohort, marriage registers are of course less selective. The very low share of *Region 4* is a little suspect, and can perhaps be attributed to the type of source. In another study by John Wareing, where he uses records of indentured servants, the share of this group is much higher, in both centuries around 12% (Wareing, 'Migration to London,' 376, Table 4). This issue is not dealt with further here, but it is

Table 13–2 London's Migration Fields Based on Apprentice Records

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	total
17th century	16%	52%	31%	1%	100%
18th century	18%	54%	27%	1%	100%
1600–1800	17%	53%	30%	1%	100%

Source: Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 111, Table 3.3.

does make it possible to draw a picture, albeit a slightly impressionistic one, of London's recruitment area.⁴⁰ As was the case in Amsterdam, London's migration field appears to have been relatively stable over time. There was a slight contraction of migration from *Region 3* which declined in favour of *Regions 1 and 2*.

In the seventeenth century the migrants born in *Region 3*, which included many migrants from northern England, declined from 31% to 27%, while the shares from *Regions 1 and 2* grew by 2 per cent each. Looking at the general composition of London's migration field it very much resembles the Dutch with one major difference. Where for Amsterdam migrants the dominant group came from within a range of between 170 and 450 km, London recruited most of its labour force from shorter distances, that is mainly from *Region 2*, the area of between 60 and 170 km away from the metropolis.

Although shifts can be noticed in the importance of the four supplying regions in the two labour markets, the watershed between the two labour markets did not alter during the early modern period.

The fact that the English fleet could rely on Irish and Scots does, however, not explain fully why it did not attract Scandinavians and Germans. As the crow flies the distance between the western parts of Denmark and the southern parts of Norway to London is not much greater than to Amsterdam. Furthermore it is known that most Scandinavians and North Germans did not have to travel to Amsterdam or London, but boarded Dutch or English ships while these called at Scandinavian or German ports. As they worked on board a ship, they could travel for free, or for a small bonus, to the capitals and then change masters as they liked. In that sense, sheer

clear that Scottish sailors were of more importance to the English fleet than the figure in Table 7 would suggest.

⁴⁰ Cf. Kitch, 'Capital and Kingdom,' 7; Patten, *English towns*, 128.

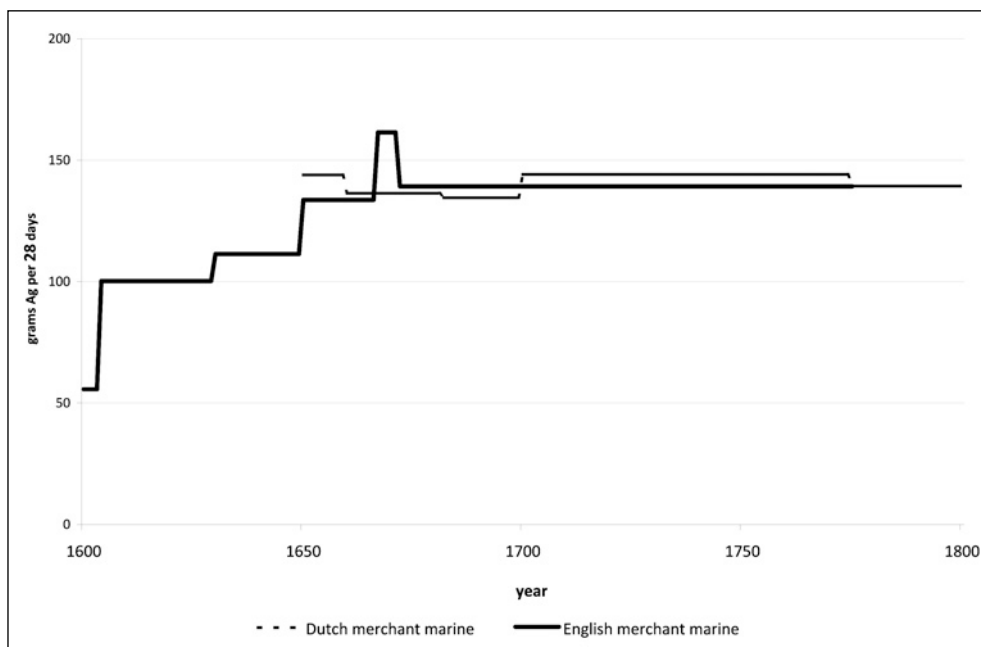
travelling to Amsterdam or London did not have to make a difference. Three other possible explanations for the English failure to recruit in the coastal regions of Scandinavia and the Baltic in *Region IV* (Figure 13–5) were: wage differentials, institutional limitations to migration and transaction costs.⁴¹

The first explanation of these peculiar migration patterns that comes to mind is wage differentials. Sailors were paid both in kind, in the form of lodging and food on board, and in money. Food on both the British and the Dutch fleet was, under normal circumstances, probably plentiful even if the menu was monotonous.⁴² For other workers it usually is more logical to look at real wages to be able to decide what a nominal wage was worth in consumables. Sailors' monetary wages were mostly spent on shore, but not necessarily at home. So silver wages were what counted for sailors. The nominal wages for the merchant marine in the two countries (Figure 13–6) appear not to have differed very much.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine whether the wages at the start of the seventeenth century differed more between the two countries. Halfway through the seventeenth century Dutch wages in the merchant marine were slightly higher than on English ships, and it seems reasonable to presume that the wages in the Dutch merchant marine were higher in the decades before. If that were the case, migration patterns favouring Amsterdam over London can have been estab-

⁴¹ Cf. Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 117–124.

⁴² Macdonald, *Feeding Nelson's navy*, 169–173, 177, calculated a caloric intake of about 5,000 calories per day for the English navy around 1800. Bruijn, 'Voeding op de Staatse vloot,' calculated that the diet on the Dutch fleet in 1671 equalled 4,700–4,800 calories per day, and documented that the food supplied to sailors in the Dutch navy did not change much over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It seems likely that food was supplied on both Dutch and English men-of-war in roughly comparable quantities. It was probably more than what a sailor could expect to eat on shore, even if the menu was monotonous and the quality of the food left something to be desired, especially on long trips. Rations decreased when foraging was difficult and voyages were longer than expected. A radically different view on the food situation on board Dutch ships is proposed by one of the few comparative overviews on the quality of food on board different fleets. In 1782 the Swedish admiralty physician Arvid Faxé published a comparison of the meal regulations of the fleets of 16 European and Mediterranean nations. Based on this overview, Söderlind, *Skrovsmål*, 131–147, calculated the caloric intake for 14 navies. Of these, the English, at 5,618 calories per day was the highest and the Dutch at 1,968 was the lowest but one. Söderlind thinks this improbable, given the wealth of the Dutch Republic and presumes that Dutch captains bought more food during the trip. This practice is confirmed by Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy*, 137, but also for British ships by Earle, 'English Sailors,' 88–89.



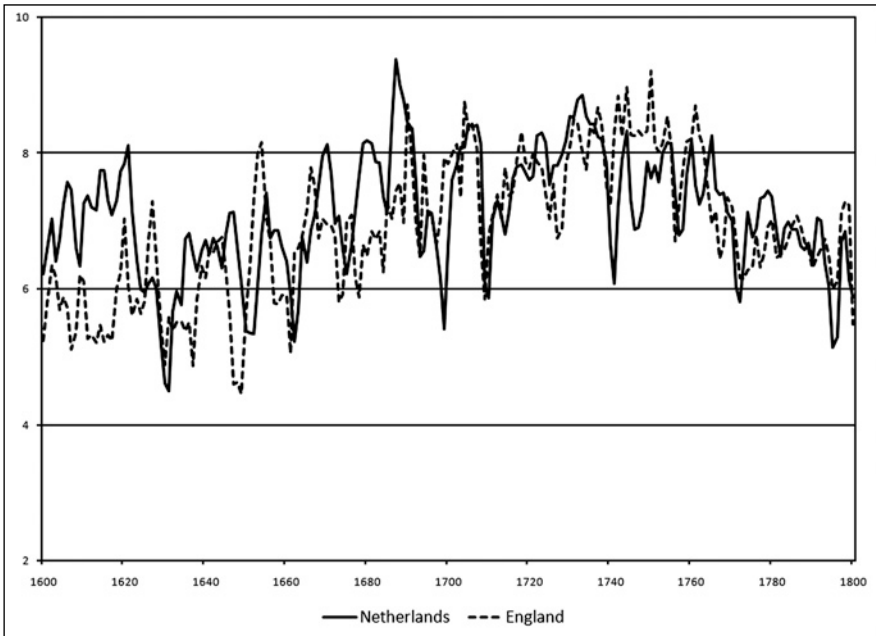
Source: Van Lottum, *Across the North Sea*, 123, Figure 3.10

Figure 13–6 Nominal Silver Wage, Dutch and English Merchant Marine, 1600–1800 (gr per 28 days)

lished in the early seventeenth century and remained sticky for some time afterwards.

Real wages in England and the Netherlands did not differ very much either (Figure 13–7). This is only relevant for sailors from the periphery that migrated permanently with their households to the maritime metropolises. During the early decades of the seventeenth century real wages in Dutch and English construction converged, and they remained on more or less the same level throughout the eighteenth century. Nominal silver wages reached a similar level at the end of the seventeenth century.

The relatively similar development of nominal wages at sea and real wages on shore masks the fact that within England and the Netherlands the ratio between wages on land and at sea differed significantly. If one compares the nominal wages of labourers and merchant marine sailors (Figure 13–8) it becomes clear that throughout the entire early modern period in England wages on shore were more than twice as



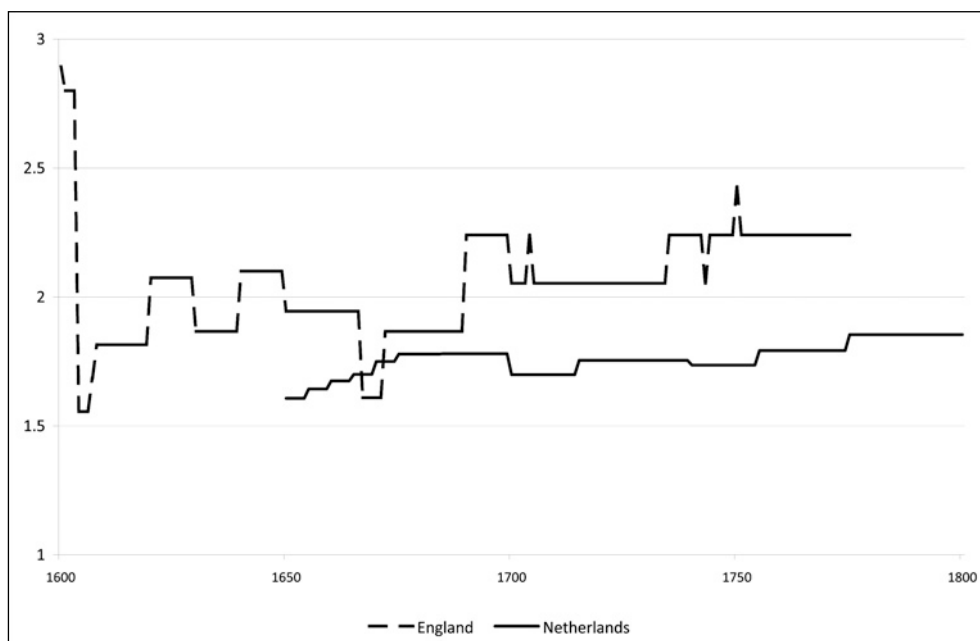
Source: Allen, Database of consumer price indices: www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/users/allen/data/craftweb.xls; www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/users/allen/data/labweb.xls

Figure 13–7 Real Building Wages in the Netherlands and England, 1600–1800 (Ten Year Moving Average)

high as seamen's wages whereas in the Netherlands the ratio of land wages to wages paid to seamen was around 1.75:1.

English skippers had much more difficulty competing with land based employers than did their Dutch counterparts. They nevertheless did not resort to recruiting foreigners on as large a scale as the Dutch. This can be explained by different attitudes towards migrant workers. Institutional limitations on migration were particularly strong in England. The provisions in the Navigation Acts may partially explain the absence of large numbers of foreign seamen in the English merchant marine. Officially three-quarters of the crew of a ship had to be Englishmen for a ship to be treated as English.⁴³ Research by Ralph Davis has shown, however, that this maximum of one quarter of foreigners for the merchant marine was not even reached. On the contrary, according to Davis thousands more foreign sailors could have

⁴³ Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, 307.



Source: calculated from the data used in Figures 13-6 and 13-7

Figure 13-8 Ratio of Wages on Land and at Sea (nominal on shore wages divided by wages at sea)

been recruited without infringing on regulations of the Navigation Acts.⁴⁴

There were more institutional barriers to foreigners than just the Navigation Acts, though, and they were considerably older. For those sailors who wished to settle in England, a proposition which as such is not too strange since a portion of the foreign sailors actually settled in the Netherlands, serious barriers had to be cleared. These barriers were not specific to sailors but applied to all foreigners irrespective of their occupations. In the early-modern period Holland not only lacked anything resembling the Navigation Acts, legal regulations regarding immigrants in general differed widely between England and the Netherlands.

In the federal Dutch Republic admission and settlement policies were basically left to the local authorities. There was nothing like national

⁴⁴ Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, 136.

or even provincial legislation on immigration. This resulted in a situation where the towns in the western, maritime provinces developed a system of liberal admission and settlement policies.⁴⁵ In comparison to the eastern provinces and certainly the regions beyond it was cheap and easy to establish oneself in towns like Rotterdam, Gouda, Leiden or Haarlem. Most liberal of all was Amsterdam with its sizeable Jewish minority and its strong segment of foreign-born population. When from the 1680s onwards many a town started to demand *acten van cautie*, in which the sending town promised to pay for any poor relief the migrant might come to need, Amsterdam never did so. It simply could not afford such preventive measures because its labour market needed all hands too dearly, even if they were poor relief-prone foreign proletarians.

The situation in England was totally different. Not only was it one of the most centralised polities in Europe from the Middle Ages onwards, it also monitored all incoming foreigners carefully and settlement in the British Isles from abroad was not at all easy. In principle the king or his government—in most cases the Privy Council it seems—decided upon admissions to England and asked personal allegiance from newcomers. Admission was not a right, but a concession which could be granted.

During the Middle Ages merchant groups from Cologne, Lübeck and Hamburg received privileges and they united in 1281 into the Hanseatic *Kontor* or factory in London. Also Jewish, Lombard and Flemish merchants were admitted occasionally. All in all these groups were very small.⁴⁶ Besides, it is striking to see how regularly mob violence led to the lynching or driving out of foreigners. To give just a few examples: the large-scale massacre of Jews in 1189–1190, of Flemings by Wat Tyler's men in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and the large scale anti-alien riots on Evil May-Day in London in 1517.⁴⁷ After the loss of Calais to France in 1558 a law decreeing the expulsion of all

⁴⁵ Lucassen, 'Holland, een open gewest,' 181–215, 493–495, 505–506; Lourens and Lucassen, "Zunftlandschaften" in den Niederlanden'; Lucassen and Penninx, *Newcomers. Immigrants and their Descendants*; Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad*.

⁴⁶ Panayi, *German Immigrants in Britain*, 3–7.

⁴⁷ Gwynn, *Huguenot Heritage*, 44–45. Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 51, Rappaport, *Worlds within worlds*. Many examples of anti-alien measures and violence can be found in Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*.

Frenchmen was barely defeated in Parliament by only a few votes.⁴⁸ A proclamation in 1601 ordered the expulsion of all blacks.⁴⁹

International relations changed thoroughly with the advent of the Reformation. As a consequence the English king started to regularly admit Protestant refugees from the continent, first Flemish and Dutch Calvinists and later on French Huguenots who were also Calvinists. In 1550 letters patent established what were to become the French and Dutch churches of London. According to the careful estimates of Robin D. Gwynn the numbers of Calvinist immigrants had swollen very rapidly in 1572–1573 to 10,000. At the end of the century their number may have reached 15,000. Thereafter, because of the success of the Dutch Republic, the figure shrank again to 10,000 by the 1630s.⁵⁰ These were the years when the foreign churches in England came under severe attack from Archbishop Laud of Canterbury. To put these figures in perspective: the much smaller Dutch Republic received some 100,000 Calvinist refugees in the same period. A second boost to foreign Calvinism in England was the settlement of between 40,000 and 50,000 Huguenots in Britain around 1700—as many as in the much smaller Republic. As a result, both in the 1570s and around 1700 aliens comprised 5 per cent of the London population, but in between this figure was much lower. In some other towns their share was greater for some time, in particular in Norwich and Canterbury where they were up to 30 per cent at the end of the sixteenth century.⁵¹

For the first time since 1290 Jews were admitted to the country in 1656.⁵² The passing of the Toleration Act in 1689, not by chance under Dutch King Billy, was a breakthrough for the granting of more concessions to religious refugees, like those from the Palatinate in the Rhineland fleeing from Catholic persecution in 1697. Nevertheless, also after admission the government monitored this and similar groups carefully and under popular pressure decided to disperse the group across England, Ireland and North Carolina.⁵³ Each new group of immigrants caused parliamentary debates, even the refugees from

⁴⁸ Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 51.

⁴⁹ Holmes, *John Bull's Island*, 6.

⁵⁰ Gwynn, *Huguenot heritage*, 29–41; cf. Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 10–21.

⁵¹ Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 62.

⁵² Panayi, *German immigrants in Britain*, 11.

⁵³ Panayi, *German immigrants in Britain*, 10, 12–14; Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*, 249–253.

Table 13-3 Forms of citizenship in early-modern England

<i>legal status</i>		<i>manner in which acquired</i>	<i>privileges</i>			<i>double taxation (subsidies and custom duties)</i>
			<i>protection</i>	<i>Personal property</i>	<i>Real property</i>	
Subject	Born	Allegiance from birth to the king of England	YES	YES	YES	NO
Denizen	Naturalised	Parliament	YES	YES	YES	NO
	Adoptive subject	Letters patent from the crown	YES	YES	YES (but transmission restricted to children born in England)	YES
Foreigner Stranger	Friend	Subject of a prince at peace with England	YES	YES	NO	YES
	Enemy	Subject of a prince at war with England	NO (except with safe-conduct)	NO	NO	?

Source: Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 53

revolutionary France. The Aliens Bill of 1793 stipulated that only with a good reason could aliens come to England. They had to register and produce their passports when called upon to do so. If necessary they could be expelled, as duly happened in some cases (Table 13.3).⁵⁴

Until the end of the nineteenth century immigration into England was limited, not least because of legal restrictions as becomes clear from the forms of citizenship and the concomitant status as that which prevailed before the second half of the nineteenth century.

On top of these legal restrictions on immigrant status at the national level, there were several restrictions at the local level. In the language of the time the *stranger* was alien to the country as a whole while

⁵⁴ Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*, 257.

foreigner denoted the newcomer to the city.⁵⁵ Foreigners were not entitled to public charity, although they had to pay rates twice, once to the local English parish church “to which they only belonged in a fictitious way” and once to their own community.⁵⁶ From at least 1484 foreigners were also limited in their economic possibilities, in particular by the guilds. Apprentices in guilds could act as a dangerous and violent mob. As a London pamphlet of 1598 expressed it: “Be it known to all Flemings and Frenchmen that which follows: for that there shall be many a sore stripe. Apprentices will rise to the number of 2336. And all apprentices and journeymen will down with the Flemings and strangers”.⁵⁷ Another example of economic resentment comes from Great Yarmouth at about the same time. There the fishers’ interest resented the “Frenchmen”. First restrictions were put on foreign fishermen and finally they were expelled.⁵⁸ The legal limitations on immigration in early-modern England were effective in strictly limiting the number of foreign-born inhabitants and the small numbers accepted were heavily concentrated in London. Legal restrictions then limited the number of foreigners available for the maritime labour market.

A final explanation could be the transaction costs of migration. Although more research needs to be done on this subject, it is likely that the transaction costs for migrating to the Dutch Republic were much lower because of the high immigration intensity. For southern Norway, for instance, a region that supplied the Dutch labour market with thousands of sailors and servant girls, it is known that through letters and through returning migrants people were very well informed about the labour markets in Amsterdam and other Dutch towns.⁵⁹ The Norwegian immigrant community in Amsterdam became so large, that someone from a village in South Norway was more likely to find a spouse from the same village in Amsterdam than in a local centre like Kristiansand.⁶⁰ Such a well-trodden migration path was not simply abandoned because of equal or only slightly higher wages in England.

⁵⁵ Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 54.

⁵⁶ Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 73–77; Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*, 161.

⁵⁷ Cottret, *The Huguenots in England*, 54–65, 77 (quotation); Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*, 164–186.

⁵⁸ Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*, 153–154.

⁵⁹ Cf. Sogner, ‘Young in Europe’; Van Lottum and Sogner, ‘Magnus og Barbara.’

⁶⁰ Sætra, ‘Norske sjøfolk i hollandsk tjeneste,’ 74–82, 77.

England was able to man its fleets without resorting to massive immigration while the Dutch Republic had to do just that to keep its fleet in operation. Elsewhere in Europe maritime recruitment more resembled the English than the Dutch case. A brief *tour d'horizon* along the European coasts indicates that, with some qualifications, the international recruitment typical of the Dutch Republic was the exception and that mainly national recruitment as seen in England was the rule.

In France, maritime recruitment was overwhelmingly national, especially along her Atlantic coast. Besides, it may have been even more difficult for foreigners to settle in Old Regime France than in England.⁶¹ Spain like France manned its fleets mainly from within its borders. In a measure that resembles later English legislation, Spain in 1568 limited the number of foreigners to six per ship for security reasons. In Spain, as in France, war time naval demands on the national labour markets for sailors could lead to somewhat higher numbers of foreigners on other fleets. The main catchment areas were Portugal, Malta and Italy.⁶²

Initially the two maritime empires of Denmark and Sweden seem to have shared many characteristics with the larger strong nation states to the south and west. In Denmark-Norway the building of a national fleet was seen as important, both to comply with mercantilist notions that dominated policy and to guarantee the availability of naval crews in times of war. Danish fleets usually were manned from Denmark and other possessions of the Danish crown.⁶³ In Norway some immigrant Dutchmen held positions in the fleet but crews consisted mainly of

⁶¹ Sahlins, *Unnaturally French*; Le Goff, 'The Labour Market for Sailors in France,' 300–311, shows that for most French fleets in the eighteenth century the percentage of foreigners in the crews was very small. The main exception was Basques employed in the French whaling fleet. Italians working in the French Mediterranean fleet were somewhat more numerous, and Bayonne in the Southwest and Dunkirk-Calais-Boulogne in the Northwest of France were also exceptions. In the first years of naval wars, as French sailors were absorbed by the navy, the numbers of foreigners on ships from these French ports would increase. This was especially true for corsairs from northwestern France. The French muster rolls found among the English Prize Papers confirm this analysis. Cabantous, 'Vers l'affirmation des spécificités,' 373–377, while stressing the international character of French port towns, actually confirms the limited presence of foreign sailors.

⁶² Phillips, 'The Labour Market for Sailors in Spain,' 337–339; Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's men of the sea*, 54–55.

⁶³ Johansen, 'Danish Sailors,' 244–246.

Norwegians, supplemented by Danes and Swedes depending on which country Norway was subjected to politically.⁶⁴

If the larger maritime nations thus resembled England more than the Dutch Republic some smaller maritime nations shared its difficulty of a small homeland combined with large maritime ambitions. The city-republics in northern Germany like Hamburg and Bremen had such small hinterlands that they often had to rely on what were technically foreign crews. However, these were found nearby and the majority of them were both culturally and linguistically German.⁶⁵ Another solution was found by Venice and Portugal, maritime nations which in their population size and maritime importance were not unlike the United Provinces. However, they not only relied on free recruitment like the Dutch, but also on the recruitment of forced labour, slaves and other unfree sailors provided by their colonial empire to man their fleets.⁶⁶ In this sense the Spanish and French navies had two faces; a Mediterranean one with unfree labour on their galleys and an Atlantic one with free workers.⁶⁷ On the other end of the continent, in the Baltic, unfree sailors and galleys were also to be found. The Swedish state which had little private maritime interest it could rely on manned its fleet, and its army for that matter, through conscription, including conscription in dependent Finland. In coastal areas, sets of four farms had to supply one sailor, and house and feed him outside of the campaign season.⁶⁸

The European maritime labour market of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries then consisted of three zones:

- a central zone, the Dutch Republic, with a free labour market which dealt routinely with crews which consisted for one half of foreign nationals,

⁶⁴ Sætra, 'The International Labour Market for Seamen.'

⁶⁵ For Hamburg, North, 'German Sailors,' 256–258. For Bremen, Gerstenberger, 'Ganze Dörfer widmeten sich vorwiegend dem seemännischen Beruf?'

⁶⁶ Lucassen, 'Labour and early modern economic development,' 376–378; Scammell, *The World Encompassed*, 106–108, 268–269 with similar observations on Genoa in *Ibidem*, 173–176; Cabanes, *Histoire de l'Adratique*, 249–251.

⁶⁷ Zysberg, *Les galériens*; Glete, *Warfare at sea, 1500–1650*, 54–59.

⁶⁸ Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe*; Kaukiainen, 'Finnish Sailors'; Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, 54–66, pointed to the difference between capital intensive and coercion intensive paths to state formation. This overview seems to suggest that the coercion intensive way to man the fleet existed both where capital was scarce (Sweden, Russia), and where slavery was more accepted (Venice, Spain).

- an intermediate zone, consisting of Denmark, England, the German city states, the Austrian Netherlands, France and Spain, with a labour market which was mainly free and mainly recruited its own nationals, supplemented with usually not more than 10 per cent foreigners, and
- an outer zone in the Baltic and Mediterranean, which recruited both free and unfree sailors, that is conscripts, convicts, prisoners of war, slaves, from among its own population, dependent states and slave-selling areas.⁶⁹

Data from the Prize Papers offer a method of confirming the pattern. Ships from the Mediterranean or the Baltic which did not leave these inland seas are not included in the sample.⁷⁰ There is a slight bias in the data. Some of the interrogations give figures for different nationalities in the crew. Others mention that all belong to a certain nation, or that the crew is “from diverse nations”, or consists of “Swedes and Danes” or other nationalities. Of these answers only those that mention that all crew belonged to one nation can be quantified. The table (Table 13–4) therefore somewhat underrepresents mixed crews.⁷¹

Table 13–4 Crews and Nationality, 1664–1803

	N ships	N crew	nationals	foreigners	total
Dutch Republic	71	551	62%	38%	100%
Scandinavia and Germany	36	307	94%	6%	100%
France c.a.	28	904	99%	1%	100%

Source: Database Prize Papers, July 2008

⁶⁹ In the case of unions of the crown in the second group, fellow subjects of the prince (e.g. Scots and Irish on the English fleet, or Norwegians and citizens of the Duchies on the Danish fleet) are not counted as foreigners.

⁷⁰ The British navy occasionally took ships in the Mediterranean, but ships passing British waters were much more likely to turn up in the Prize Papers.

⁷¹ Calculated from those examinations in our sample that either mentioned that all crew were from one nation, or numbered the crew members for each nationality. This excluded a number of Dutch ships where the skipper declared that his crew was of different countries, for example the ship *Bogen* in 1672, TNA, HCA 32/81, or the *Eendraght* in 1780, HCA 32/316. Only skippers of Dutch ships gave this answer. Some answers were of the type “Swedes and Danes” and these were also not included as they were not specific enough to count. This means that crews from one nation are overrepresented in the table. Another bias was that earlier Prize Papers only seldom offered the complete data used in this table. The full data set of 221 ships contains 2 ships taken in the 1660s and 14 taken in the early 1670s. Of these just one supplied the data essential for this table, therefore it mainly reflects the situation in the eighteenth century. Two ships from the USA, which had as diverse crews as the Dutch ships, and one ship from Britain were not included in the table.

With the limitations mentioned above, the sample confirms the impression derived from the literature: the crews on Dutch ships were much more international than those from the intermediate zone.

The fact that the Dutch Republic had a much more open labour market than countries in the intermediate zone might have had consequences for labour productivity. On the one hand, hiring from a larger pool of maritime labour may have led to better qualified crews. Migrant workers in a whole range of different occupations often came from specific towns or regions. This would mean that they had acquired the requisite skills, often from a young age. Sailors, for obvious reasons, were recruited in coastal regions. The comparison of the migration fields of Amsterdam and London shows that the British Isles contained certainly as much coast and as large a population as the Dutch international catchment area.

Recruiting internationally might have had disadvantages based on different national allegiances, languages or work customs. Clear differences between national languages were recognised at the time. In fact, language has been brought forward as an explanation for the one-sided orientation of Irish and Scots to London and of Scandinavians and Germans to Amsterdam. Even if contemporaries distinguished between languages, these were both less uniform and less clearly demarcated from each other than they would become in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Standard varieties of national languages were only in the process of being formed and defined. Inhabitants of even quite small nations were used to being unable to communicate with compatriots who spoke a different regional dialect. On the eastern shores of the North Sea and the southern shore of the Baltic *Platt-deutsch* functioned as a *lingua franca*, as did English on the western shores of the North Sea.⁷² Since many Scandinavian and German seamen served on board Dutch vessels it is very likely that they must have spoken at least a little bit of Dutch. This is illustrated by the request of the Swedish skipper Johannes Dahlman of the Stockholm vessel *Maria*. When he was brought ashore in Great Yarmouth by an English privateer on the 1st of August, 1778, he requested a Dutch interpreter since he could not understand English.⁷³ From the Prize Papers it is clear that British

⁷² Heerma van Voss, 'North Sea culture, 1500–1800,' 25–28.

⁷³ TNA, HCA 32.395 Box 2.

officials expected that they would not be able to interrogate sailors from continental European ships without the help of interpreters.⁷⁴

Differences in work customs within the Dutch catchment area were probably limited. As far as sailors had received a specific maritime education, it is as likely as not that it had been in Dutch. Maritime education, textbooks and teachers in this area typically were often Dutch until well into the eighteenth century. The Prize Papers themselves testify to this fact by the availability of trade documents written in Dutch by non-Dutch traders, for instance on the Danish ships *Petrus* and *Providentia*, both taken in 1794.⁷⁵ Many non-Dutch sailors had acquired their skills on Dutch ships, and Dutch shipwrights and naval officers had transferred their practices overseas, especially to the Scandinavian navies.⁷⁶

Maritime skills were mostly acquired on board, but formal learning was required if a sailor were to rise through the ranks. A master had to keep a log book, correspond with the owners of the vessel and the cargoes, handle documents concerning cargo and tolls. Skippers were expected to be able to determine their location at sea, towards the end of the period increasingly through the use of various instruments. Skipper Jasper de Smidt for instance, could tell his interrogators that his ship the *St Bartholomew* was taken on 15 August, 1672, 3 leagues off the port of Plymouth, whereas his sailor Joos Consaint could only report that this had happened “Off of the port”.⁷⁷ Towards the end of the period some of the masters and mates were able to give their positions in latitude and longitude but common sailors never did.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ The fact that the Swedish prisoner Cornelius Jansen spoke good enough English to dispense with the services of the interpreter warranted special mention. “Does this scribe John Powers and Isaac Minet doe hereby Certifie that Cornelius Janssen did speaks good English soe noe occertion for any Interpreter witness our” (TNA, HCA 32/76, unnamed ship taken off Aberdeen on 30 May 1703). Interpreters were usually local or London merchants such as a certain Pieter van Dijke, a Dutch merchant of 88 Fleet Market in London (HCA, 32/343). In more remote places it seems that everyone who spoke a useful foreign language could act as an interpreter. In 1781 in Penzance (Cornwall) the local Dutch or German silversmith by the name of Lazarus Hart was asked to assist the court in the interrogations of the crew of the Emden ship *De Eendragt* (HCA 32/316).

⁷⁵ TNA, HCA 32/801 part 1.

⁷⁶ Østergaard, *Indvandrerne i Danmarks historie*, 107–108.

⁷⁷ TNA, HCA 32/81.

⁷⁸ For example for the Swedish vessel *St Catherine*, the skipper Eric Sundström could report that she was taken on 18 October, 1779, at 46°21' (TNA, HCA32/289/1) and the American skipper Thomas Robinson who described the position where his

The Prize Papers also offer a direct way to test skills. Interrogated sailors were asked to state their age and sign their name. This gives information on general skills, viz. literacy and numeracy. Even if the relationship between the ability to sign one's name and literacy is perhaps not one-to-one, it is generally accepted that there is a relationship between the two. In a similar way, the ages supplied by the informants give information on their numeracy. People who are not used to working with figures, more often give their age in round numbers, ending with 5 or 0, a phenomenon called age-heaping.⁷⁹ Numeracy can be measured with the alternative Whipple Index, where 100 per cent indicates no age heaping in a population. This measure allows for a clear comparison with literacy rates.⁸⁰ Working from a separate sample of 966 masters and sailors interrogated in 1756–1783, Jelle van Lottum and Bo Poulsen have established literacy and numeracy rates for sailors of different nationalities. As could be expected, masters were both more numerate and more literate than sailors but there was also a remarkable difference between sailors of different nationalities.

For all ranks combined, illiteracy was lowest among Dutch and Scandinavian crew members. Spanish, French and German sailors were noticeably more often unable to sign with their names. Numeracy was highest for Scandinavian sailors with a rate of 100 per cent which implies that they steered clear of age heaping entirely, while French, Dutch and German crews showed clear evidence of age-heaping, and were thus less numerate. Spanish crews were less numerate than those three groups.

ship *Portland* was taken on 11 July, 1793, at latitude 49°22' N, longitude 9°18' W (HCA 32/800 P16).

⁷⁹ A'Hearn, Baten and Crayen, 'Quantifying Quantitative Literacy.'

⁸⁰ The Whipple Index measures the degree to which ages ending in 5 and 0 are overrepresented in the ages reported by a population. The Whipple Index gives scores ranging from 0 (if the ages ending on 5 and 0 are not represented at all) up to 500 (if all ages mentioned end with 5 or 0). Thus if the score for the Whipple Index is 100 or lower, there is no sign of age heaping. A score close to 100 represents a number of ages ending in 5 and 0 one would expect if the sample is distributed normally, but there is some variation, depending on sample size. Scores higher than 100 signify an increasing amount of age heaping.

Table 13–5 Literacy and Numeracy of Sailors from Different Nationalities, 1756–1783

Area of origin	Masters			Sailors			All crew		
	N Alternative Whipple Index (%)	Literacy (%)		N Alternative Whipple Index (%)	Literacy (%)		N Alternative Whipple Index (%)	Literacy (%)	
Germany	27	–	100	41	–	71	115	94	82
Scandinavia	33	–	96	63	100	81	145	100	88
Netherlands	100	100	99	64	86	87	250	94	94
France	68	100	93	72	84	69	216	96	81
Spain	44	–	95	60	82	75	140	90	86
Total *	291	97	96	346	91	75	966	93	85

Source: Van Lottum and Poulsen, 'Estimating levels of numeracy and literacy,' Table 2.

Numeracy only calculated when the number of observations is larger than 50. Numeracy calculated as \bar{W} .

* Including countries with smaller samples such as Ireland, the Southern Netherlands, Italy and Finland.

This leads to an interesting conclusion. Although sailors were on average certainly among the groups with the lowest human capital stock in each individual society, by hiring Scandinavian crew members, Dutch fleets were able to increase their human capital stock.⁸¹ Scandinavians were more numerate and about as literate as Dutch crew members. When hiring Germans, Dutch captains took on board crew members that were as numerate as the Dutch, but less literate. The Dutch migration fields (Figure 13–5) offered not only able-bodied, but also able-minded seamen.

If they recruited from reservoirs of relatively skilled seamen, and linguistic and work custom differences were small, Dutch crews then were probably as efficient as others, their mixed composition notwithstanding. The Prize Papers also supply data to measure this. An example is given in Table 13–6.

Comparable ships, namely those over 30 tons, were chosen from the database and distinguished between northern European (Scandinavian and German), Dutch and southern European (French and Spanish) vessels. On the whole, tons per man were much higher for the Dutch and northern European ships than for the southern European ones.

⁸¹ This assumes that there was no difference between the average skill level of crew members on board ships of different nationalities. If there was a difference, one would expect the well paying Dutch fleets to be able to hire the better crews.

Table 13–6 Average Ship's Burden, Crew Size, and Average Burden per Man, 1672–1803

	Region/country	N	Average burden (tons)	men/ship	ton/men
1672–1704	Northern Europe	6	164	9.8	16.7
	Netherlands	4	293	76.5	3.8
	Southern Europe	10	50	13.7	3.7
1742–1758	Northern Europe	4	202	14.8	13.7
	Netherlands	6	131	8.0	16.4
	Southern Europe	15	123	29.7	4.6
1777–1803	Northern Europe	34	164	8.8	18.7
	Netherlands	68	174	9.1	19.1
	Southern Europe	7	105	14.6	7.2
TOTAL (1672–1803)	Northern Europe	46	165	9.4	17.7
	Netherlands	78	177	12.5	14.2
	Southern Europe	31	108	24.2	4.5

Source: Database Prize Papers, July, 2008

Note: Including all ships with a size of more than 30 tons (15 lasts). The low productivity for Dutch ships in the first period can be explained by the fact that these were on average much larger ships, travelling longer distances, including one destined for the East Indies.

The numbers are rather small so it will be necessary to collect larger numbers of data to say something more about the efficiency of crews from different countries and about the differences among periods.⁸² As

⁸² A special problem concerns establishing the tonnage of Dutch ships. In the case of ships with Dutch papers, the skipper sometimes quoted a burden roughly half of what other crew members declared. If the ships papers are available the official Amsterdam documents confirm the assessment of the skipper. This happens so regularly that false ship papers, which would have lowered the tolls a ship had to pay, were probably for sale in Amsterdam. Examples include *Frederik en Adriana* (TNA, HCA32/335–1 (335/6), where the Amsterdam papers give a burden of 36 lasts (72 tons), and the skipper declared her to be of 120 tons, *Catherina en Maria* (HCA32/289 (289/6), where the Amsterdam papers give a burden of 80 last (160 tons), and skipper and crew think the true figures are 150 last (300 tons) or *De Hoop* (HCA32/356 (356/9), where all witnesses interrogated declared that the burden was 53 last (106 tons), but the Amsterdam papers give 37 last (74 tons), and this was the basis on which tolls were paid.

The data in the Prize Papers at TNA by definition do not contain British ships and therefore do not allow comparison of the efficiency of Dutch and British shipping. However, they do indicate whether Dutch shipping was less efficient than that of nations that could man their fleets from their own national labour markets. The manning mode which is most labour efficient, however, does not need to be the cheapest way. Lowest cost can only be determined by bringing the wage level into the equation.

it is, these data do seem to suggest that Dutch crews were efficient, even if they were composed of crewmen from different nationalities.

From the comparison of the English and Dutch maritime labour markets two quite distinct models arise, both deeply embedded in general attitudes towards immigration and settlement of foreigners. The Dutch had an open system and an international maritime labour market. The English had only exceptional and conditional immigration and thus a national maritime labour market. The position of Scottish crew members is an interesting test case for the extent of nationalism in English manning policies. During the Cromwellian occupation (1652–1660) Scotland may have been joined to England in a commercial and fiscal unity, but in the navy Scots were forbidden from serving more than six to a ship, because the English authorities feared they might mutiny “against those who had both pressed them (on a personal level) and occupied their country (on a political level)”.⁸³ Thus in the 1650s the Navy was more “English” than in any other decade of the seventeenth century. After the Restoration, Scots were welcome again in unrestricted numbers on English men-of-war, but the two countries were split again in commercial policy. Thus, the 1660 Navigation Act classified Scotland as a foreign country, and Scottish crew members counted towards the maximum of one fourth foreigners that were allowed on ships trading with the English colonies.⁸⁴

Differences between the Dutch and English recruitment fields were not very large if the recruitment of sailors is analysed according to distance. The geographically highly concentrated important Dutch and English ports recruited from hinterlands at roughly similar distances. Leaving interesting differences in intensity among the four concentric circles as discussed above aside, the main point on which the two cases differ is political. In the Dutch case the second region partially and the third region definitely comprised foreigners, contrary to the English case where the first, second and third circles comprised solely nationals. In both cases the fourth circle covered foreign soil, although in the English case it included Scotland, joined to England from 1603 under one crown and after 1707 in a Union.

The identities of the sailors according to nationality were primarily superimposed by authorities but consequences of these differences in

⁸³ Little, ‘A Comparative Survey of Scottish Service,’ 334.

⁸⁴ Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, 31–32.

“nationality”, in particular regarding self-ascribed identity, may not have been shared to the same extent by the men themselves. Thanks to the Prize Papers there is some evidence for the self-perception of the sailors, at least those non-English sailors who were interrogated by the English Prize Courts. The British point of view is missing but first impressions from the records suggest some distinct patterns. Many of the ships taken as prizes were mono-national, with ship, owner, master and crew originating from the same region. Some, however, were very international. The *Patriarch Jacob* was taken on 23 January, 1703, off the Isle of Wight, travelling with wine from Bordeaux to her home port of Stockholm. She had started the southbound leg of the trip in Stockholm with a crew of seven but in Amsterdam two of these had died and two new crew members had mustered. The master was Adrian Hardt, born in Bremen, but living in Stockholm. The steersman was Roeleff or Rolof Smidt, born in Gdańsk, but living in Kalmar in Sweden. The boatswain, who was taken on board in Amsterdam, was Roeleff Matison, born in Uppsala, but living in Gothenburg.⁸⁵

When a prize was taken, several crew members were questioned separately to find out whether the ship itself, its crew or the cargo belonged to the enemy in which case it could be seized. The nationality of the crew members was, therefore, of paramount importance, and the answers given by the crew members did matter. That was not the only reason sailors hesitated when they answered. If they still lived in the same place or region where they were born, and if these places were still governed by the same sovereign, the answer was clear. One of the standard questions was where the sailor had lived for the last seven years. If this was somewhere other than where he was born most sailors felt that after seven years they now were subjects of the ruler where they lived. The ship *The Peace* left Rotterdam early in 1703 with tiles. Late in February she had taken in some 50 casks of tallow and 700 skins in Dublin, and had visited Plymouth and Waterford when she was taken on 13 March by the French and retaken two days later by the English. The 55 ton ship was sailed by six men, “all inhabitants in Rotterdam.” Most crew had also been born there, but one was Scottish by birth. The English officials, however, did not take down his name as William Jacobs, but as William Jacobsoon, using the Dutch equivalent of William’s family name. They did so with good reason, because in

⁸⁵ TNA, HCA 32/76.

reaction to the standard question where he was born and where he had lived the last seven years, William stated “that he was born in the Kingdom of Scotland & hath lived at Rotterdam in Holland for these seven years last and upwards.” Living that long in Rotterdam with his wife and family, he was “in his estimation a subject to the States of Holland”.⁸⁶

If sailors had acquired citizenship in another town or had close relatives there, their allegiance could shift after a smaller lapse of time. Adrian Tijssen, master of the Swedish vessel *Juffrouw Susanna*, taken on 5 July 1704, was Dutch born, had lived two to three years in Stade, and had become a citizen of that town. His wife had died, his children

⁸⁶ TNA, HCA 32/76. Other examples of sailors who felt themselves to have acquired another nationality after having lived seven or more years in another nation, included Hidde Roelofs, master of the Dutch vessel *De Vreede* taken on 2 April, 1745, who was born in Nes on the island of Ameland in the Netherlands, but who lived in Altona and had lived in Denmark for more than seven years and considered himself a subject of the king of Denmark (HCA 32/145 letter p box 1). In other cases the time of residence was not recorded. On the Dutch vessel *De Jonge Arnoldus* (HCA 32/371 letter j, box 2), taken on 10 September, 1778, the mate, Zeijbrandt Janse, was born on Samsö in Denmark, but as he lived in Rotterdam he considered himself “born a subject of the king of denmark but now is a subject of the states of holland”. The Dutch master described the mate as a “Norwayman”. On the same ship the boatswain Joseph Sequinze, born in Porto Speccio, declared that, “he was born a subject of the doge of genoa but now is a subject of the states of holland.” In a third group of cases shorter stays abroad were felt to be enough to become a subject of another sovereign. Volkert Jansen was mate of *De Jonge Catherina*, taken on 19 October, 1779, in the Downs on a trip from Amsterdam to Saint Malo. Born on the island of Just in East Frisia, he had lived “from the time of birth to about three years last past in east friesland. Was subject to the king of prussia, but now subject to the states of holland.” (HCA 32/371 letter j, box 2). It is unclear from the depositions whether the sailors themselves, or just the British officials used the words “subject of” to describe nationality. In some cases the historian is tempted to hear a political statement in the deposition. Master Jelle Claassen Kuyper of the vessel *De Jonge Catharina* was a burger of Amsterdam, but instead of the usual “subject of the staten of holland” he declared that he was a “subject to the prince of orange” (taken on 3 May, 1780, HCA 32/371 letter j, box 2). However, this may of course just be the result of the question of the British officials being phrased in such a way that Kuyper felt that he had to name a prince and not the sovereign States General of the Dutch Republic. Besides the States of Holland, other Republican governments were also mentioned. Carpenter Johan Andreas Wolff on the Bremen vessel *De Wacksamheit* declared himself to be a “subject to the burgomaster and senate of Hamburg” (HCA 32/488 letter w, box 1). Taken on 11 May, 1781, on an Ostend ship with an almost identical name, *De Wacksamkeyt*, foremastman Christian Hendricks said he was born in Bremen but lived in Ostend. Although Bremen was as republican as Hamburg, Hendricks considered himself to be a subject of the German emperor (HCA 32/488 letter w, box 1). Whether he made that declaration because Bremen was part of the Holy Roman Empire or because Emperor Joseph II was also the sovereign of the southern Low Countries and so of the town of Ostend is impossible to say.

lived in Stade, and he considered himself a Swedish subject. On board one vessel these allegiances could have moved literally in different directions. The mate of the *Juffrouw Susanna*, Jan Knol, had known Tijssen for seven years, or since before Tijssen had moved to Stade. Knol was born in Amsterdam, “but his wife & family now live in Flanders” and he therefore considered himself Flemish too.⁸⁷

These different relationships could link one sailor to more than one nation. Jean Audebert, taken on 23 October, 1747, on board the French ship *Le Prophete Elie*, had been raised in Ireland, had lived in Dublin for the past eight years and had a wife and children there but he still considered himself a subject of the King of France “for that he usually sails from there having by his former wife two children more there”.⁸⁸ Even without such family ties some sailors who had lived more than seven years elsewhere still considered themselves subjects of the country they were born in. Anders Janse was interrogated after the Dutch ship *de Petronella* was taken on 13 September, 1747, in the Channel. Jansen was born in Drakøer. He had lived for 12 years in Amsterdam but felt himself to be a “subject of the king of Denmark”.⁸⁹

An oath of allegiance could have constituted the link with the sovereign, or at least strengthened it enough to be mentioned. The *Pellican*, hailing from Westerwick (Västervik) in Sweden, was taken on 13 August, 1703, off Dover, sailing with deals, iron, tar and pitch to Bordeaux. Its master, Paule Bruin, declared that he was born near Stralsund in Pomerania, “but is a Married man and hath lived at Westerwicke for about fowerteene yeares last past And that is the place of his habitation”. He specified that his allegiance was based on an oath, sworn when he was about 28 years old: “that in the year 1689 hee was sworne to bee a truw subject to the Kinge of Swedland, but hath taken no oath since to the former or present Kinge of Swedland, nor any oath since hee had been Master of the said shipp”. In other words,

⁸⁷ TNA, HCA 32/64–2.

⁸⁸ TNA, HCA 32/145 letter p box 1.

⁸⁹ TNA, HCA 32/145 letter p box 1. A similar case is the cook Jan Jacobs on *De Jonge Catharina* (see note 86) who was born in Emden, had lived in Amsterdam for the last seven years, but still felt himself a subject to the King of Prussia. His colleague Johan Hendrik Boesma on *De Jonge Cornelis* was born in “manheim within the lower palatinate”. As he was only 18 years old and declared he had resided for the past 16 years in Holland, he must have left his native soil at about age two, but he still considered himself “a subject of the elector palatine of manheim and is a burgher there of by birth” (HCA 32/371 letter j, box 2).

Bruine had sworn allegiance to Charles XI, and still felt himself to be a subject of his son, Charles XII, on the basis of that oath.⁹⁰

With many caveats it seems possible to say that the specific position of sailors in a multi-national labour force induced them to identify their connections more at a local than at a national level, to stress more urban than national citizenship, and to allow more for mixed and shifting geographical identities than simple single national ones. In the multinational climate of Dutch shipping, nationality seems not to have been very important. Some skippers were the only Dutch national on board their ships as in the case of the *Jonge Jan* which was taken in 1758 on a trip from Rotterdam to Naples and brought into Falmouth. Her skipper, Jan Steegman, was born in Gdańsk but had acquired Rotterdam citizenship in 1733. The rest of the crew consisted of four inhabitants of Holstein, three of Gdańsk, one of Hamburg and one of Sweden. Another Dutch ship, similarly called the *Jonge Jan*, taken in 1780 35 miles SWS of Cape Finistere, had a crew of nine of which only skipper Govert Adriaans was Dutch. The rest were Danish, Norwegian and German.⁹¹

Given the way the English fleet was manned, English sailors were doubtlessly used to predominantly British crews. They also had the experience of international crews when they served on foreign ships and they met with foreign sailors on British vessels. The fact that groups of Scots from a particular locality often served together on British men-of-war strongly suggests that local loyalties were a factor within the British kingdoms too. Depending on the fluctuating political and religious situation, Scots could work on English ships as those of an occupying nation and religion, or as part of the navy of the Scottish king who had also become king of England.⁹² Whichever was the case, it is clear that more loyalties than just nationhood were relevant, and that nationality was not uncomplicated.

In addition to national identities there is also a question about links between work on board and class identity. Marcus Rediker has pointed at the crews of the early modern North Atlantic as some of the first free wage labourers without links to land or ownership of their means of production. This, Rediker argued, created new relations among the

⁹⁰ TNA, HCA 32/76. Westerwicke was the Dutch name for Västervik in Sweden.

⁹¹ TNA, HCA 32/373, 32/800 P14.

⁹² Little, 'A Comparative Survey of Scottish Service.'

workers as “hands” that had to work in unison, or as collective labourers, and they gradually developed class consciousness.⁹³ If so, it is hard to see why the Dutch fleets, manned by a clearly international labour proletariat, should not also have been a cradle of class consciousness. Given the international labour market of the Dutch Republic, as opposed to the closed English labour market, not to mention the cases of proletarian xenophobia in late medieval and early-modern England, the Dutch fleets seem to be an even better place to look for early international working class solidarity. Certainly, conflicts over working and living conditions, discipline and wages, were quite common in Dutch fleets. Herman Ketting calculated that on ships of the Dutch East India Company a serious conflict over work and authority took place every eight weeks. So far, though, neither Ketting nor Lucassen has found proof of class consciousness among Dutch sailors. They estimated that the openness of higher ranks to promotion and the proletarian background of petty officers mitigated class antagonism.⁹⁴ Only further, comparative research can tell us how both fleets compared in this respect.

First of all there is a methodological conclusion to be drawn from the analysis presented here. The data contained in the Prize Papers makes it possible to gauge the efficiency of different maritime nations’ shipping and the skill of crew members, and to assess their national identity. What is more, the Prize Papers offer such data comparatively for all the important European shipping nations, and for the USA. Unfortunately, by the very nature of the sources they offer nothing on the leading maritime nation of the period, Britain itself. Comparison will only be possible by looking at similar data about British prizes taken by her naval competitors, still kept in those competitors’ archives. Mining the treasure of the Prize Papers in the British National Archives will be labour intensive but the data kept there also hold the promise

⁹³ Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 289–291. See also Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*. For another perspective, where sailors are not bearers of early class consciousness, American sailors’ ideas of liberty and patriotism are discussed by Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*. Some authors have suggested that relations between officers and sailors were not influenced by class antagonism, sometimes going as far as painting a very rosy picture of life on board. An example is Witt, *Master Next to God?*

⁹⁴ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 203–211, 204, 266–267. For the eighteenth century navy, see Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy*, 206–207, 214; Bonke, *De zeven reizen van de Jonge Lieve*, 83–86; Lucassen, ‘A Multinational and its Labor Force.’

that in due time more detailed answers to the questions raised here will be produced.

Maritime expansion in the early modern period was not only crucial for economic development at large, it also depended on the active recruitment of labour which involved long-distance migration and the emergence of geographically extended labour markets. In the Dutch case this meant the development of an international labour market from the early seventeenth century onwards, and possibly even before, comprising important parts of continental north-western Europe and even regions outside Europe, a field of recruitment neglected here.⁹⁵ In the contrasting English case it meant the development of a national labour market, covering the United Kingdom. Other countries followed the British example and had mainly national markets for maritime labour, or limited themselves to recruiting fellow subjects of their monarch. Only in the second half of the nineteenth century did a second surge of international maritime labour markets take place. On ships of all nations Chinese, Lascars, Javanese, Philipinos and the like became indispensable.⁹⁶ This situation has not changed essentially since.⁹⁷

One explanation offered here for the differences between the two leading maritime powers of the early modern period, England and the Dutch Republic, is geographical, the other institutional. The geographical explanation points to the fact that migration fields of roughly the same magnitude meant that English fleets could be manned on the whole with crews originating from the United Kingdom. The Dutch Republic was much smaller and therefore recruited internationally. There was also the institutional factor. England restricted immigration, the Dutch Republic facilitated it. That does leave the chicken-and-egg question: did a pro-immigration policy provoke immigration or was it the other way round. No matter the answer the outcome had implications for the identity of the workers involved.

In the English case an extensive national maritime labour market came into existence.⁹⁸ The first example of an international maritime

⁹⁵ Lucassen, 'A Multinational and its Labor Force,' 12–39; Parthesius, *Dutch ships in tropical waters*.

⁹⁶ Fisher, 'Working Across the Seas'; Ahuja, 'Mobility and Containment,' 21–45.

⁹⁷ Gerstenberger and Welke, *Arbeit auf See*; Gorski, *Maritime labour*.

⁹⁸ Here the concept of a national market has to be qualified by the multi-national character of the area ruled by the British monarchs.

labour market, concentrated in the ports of the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resulted in the living and working together of men from very different regional, national, religious and cultural backgrounds. However, these differences did not hamper the efficiency of the Dutch fleet. Linguistic and work culture barriers were limited, and immigrant labour was as skilled as the Dutch hands that the Dutch fleets could muster.

