

A «UNITED FORCE OF MERCHANTS AND DENIZENS»? THE DEFLECTION OF THE MONOPOLY GRANTED TO THE WIC, 1600-1800

KARWAN FATAH-BLACK*

INTRODUCTION

Why were the attempts at monopoly formation in the Dutch Atlantic deflected and even discontinued at an early stage, despite being important for the military and economic strategy of the Dutch Revolt and subsequent foreign and trade policies of the Dutch Republic? This chapter suggests that this question should be approached by looking at some of the conflicts that arose as a result of the granting of monopoly rights to the Dutch West India Company. The institutional framework of the company itself was already the result of tensions between formal monopoly formation and the more informal expansion of trading networks by those operating outside scope of the monopoly holding company². With the expansion of the territory of the company, we should add, metropolitan authority was increasingly challenged by people in its empire overseas³. This last aspect is often glossed over in the Dutch literature due to a peculiar denial of the territorial aspects of the Dutch overseas expansion⁴.

* Leiden University.

¹ See for example the introduction of POSTMA & ENTHOVEN, 2003; Although the authors are generally pessimistic about the long term contribution of the Atlantic expansion to the Dutch economy, the conquest of Atlantic domains was regarded as important. VRIES & VAN DER WOUDE, 1997: 396-402; VRIES, 2005: 1-29; OOSTINDIE & ROITMAN, 2012: 129-60.

² HEIJER, 2005: 45-50.

³ FATAH-BLACK, 2015.

⁴ EMMER, & KLOOSTER, 1999: 48-69.

The charter granted by the States General provided the WIC with exclusive rights to trade, settle and make treaties in its Atlantic charter area⁵. The WIC was granted several of these exclusive rights with their first charter, although in some areas pre-existing claims by Dutch merchants resulted on some infringements of the monopoly⁶. Although the company survived for 170 years, its exclusive rights over trade, settlement and treaties were reduced over time. The conflicts that created the early infringements were primarily based in the metropolis. Cities and provinces that were united in the States General claimed pre-existing rights. The spirit of the Union of Utrecht was to recognize and protect local privileges⁷. This fragmentation in the metropolis, however, was not the only force that was deflecting the initial course of complete monopoly that was envisioned in the initial formation of the WIC. In the colonies people were beginning to challenge the monopoly as well, albeit in a different way than in the metropolis⁸.

We can distinguish three forms (metropolitan, colonial and illicit) in which the process of colonial monopoly formation was deflected, all with their specific outcomes and effects on the monopoly of the WIC. The three forms of monopoly deflection resulted in different outcomes for different sections of the formal monopoly and the company that was holding the monopoly rights. While the formal monopoly was often questioned, evaded and broken; battles over its existence were rarely fundamentally questioning the existence of the exclusive charter as such. Challengers of the monopolies rather tried to reform import duties or restrictions on trading in certain areas or for certain products, than dismantling the institution itself. Therefore it seems fitting to speak of deflecting in the sense of bending, changing course, redirecting, or when ascribing malicious intention, the disorienting of the company, rather than breaking it. This conceptualization points toward an interactive relationship between state, the monopoly holding company and private entrepreneurs in the Dutch Atlantic.

DEFLECTING THE MONOPOLY

This chapter regards the life cycle of the Dutch West India Company, an early modern chartered company that was granted the formal monopoly over the Atlantic trades from Dutch ports in 1621. The granting of the monopoly and the formation of the company granted a shell of protection to the exploits of the entrepreneurs from Dutch towns, while simultaneously excluding others. The combining of different interests was done through the «chamber» system, which was created at the founding of the company. The central board of the company was formed by the *Heeren XIX*, which was formed based on lower

⁵ Anonymous, 1621.

⁶ HEIJER, 2013: 25-27.

⁷ FRUIN, 1901: 366.

⁸ KLOOSTER, 1995; RUPERT, 2012; FATAH-BLACK, 2015.

urban or provincial directorates known as chambers. The chamber of Amsterdam provided eight directors, the Zeeland chamber four, and the other chambers (Rotterdam, West Friesland as well as Friesland and Stad en Lande) all had two directors on the board. In addition, the States General had one representative, making the tally come down to nineteen members⁹. Both the granting of positions in these boards and the extent of the charter expressed the power to include or exclude people from profiting from Atlantic colonization and trading ventures.

The WIC's institutional framework was challenged from the outset and was therefore reformed several times. Due to great financial trouble the company was declared bankrupt, although it was immediately refounded in 1674 with a leaner structure and scope¹⁰. This second WIC faced major metropolitan and colonial attempts at further deflection of its monopoly, and in fact the dismantling of its competencies as a monopoly-holding company. It was finally dissolved in 1791 and the possessions of the company came under more direct control of the Dutch state¹¹.

The life cycle of this company can be split into three phases, all with their specific dynamics. First we see a process towards monopoly formation. In towns there are actors pushing for the formation of the company, conceptualizing it as one with monopoly rights. The formulation, ratification, instating and upholding of this formal monopoly was a negotiated process with clearly identifiable winners and losers. The outcome of the process was institutionalized with the granting of the charter. The second phase in the life cycle of the monopoly grant that is studied here is the deflection of the monopoly. Deflection does not simply mean the breaking down of the monopoly, but can conceptually be used to incorporate a measure of the effectiveness of the charter and what was threatening the upholding of the monopoly as it was chartered to the WIC. In its third and final phase the company was first dismantled and then disbanded.

Based on the trajectory and forces shaping the WIC formal charters and the whole of Dutch Atlantic activities we might draw up a table of three types of deflection and their impact. A typology of deflections in turn gives opportunity to conceptualize the reasons behind the trajectory a colonial monopoly has taken, deflecting a monopoly renders a formal monopoly on colonial activities less effective without necessarily abolishing it. The dynamics behind the deflection of the scope of the WIC monopoly can be situated geographically both in the Dutch Republic and in the overseas settlements. Added to this, the distance between the two created room for illicit activities. Together these created roughly three forms of deflection through which the company's reach and jurisdiction was altered by entrepreneurs operating both inside and outside the company. These three forms by which the monopoly was deflected are the result of the centers of (economic) power and

⁹ HEIJER, 2013: 28-30.

¹⁰ HEIJER, 2013: 107.

¹¹ HEIJER, 2013: 182-185.

control, which were able to deflect the course of the company. In the long run the outcome of the different forms of deflection was either the splintering, disbanding or formal perpetuation of the (now ineffective) colonial monopoly. Deflections as a result of illicit trade led to perpetuation of monopolies as empty shells, metropolitan deflections led to the disbanding of monopolies and deflection because of the development of economic and social forces in the colonies led to a dispersion of the monopoly in a variety of local arrangements.

Table 1: Types of deflection and their outcomes in the long run

Metropolitan	Disbanding of the company
Colonial	Dispersion into smaller, more localized charters
Illicit	Perpetuation of the company as empty shell

Since the emphasis of this chapter is on the colonial deflection of the monopoly, I will be discussing three specific, geographically ordered cases of colonial monopoly formation and deflection in the Dutch Atlantic: the colonies in the Guianas (plantation colonies), the Caribbean islands (trade nodes) and the North American east coast (inland trade and agriculture). The inclusion of the other cases, primarily Dutch Brazil and the West African forts would not result in a different view. Especially Brazil could, despite its short time span, give a very similar result regarding the described dynamics. After having looked at how trade networks and monopoly formation interacted I will argue that there were two fundamental reasons why Dutch monopoly formation was deflected in the Atlantic. First there are the opposing interests between those overseas and metropolitan administrators, often coming down to a choice between the security (favored by those overseas) or the profitability of the enterprise. More concretely, the geography of competitive trans-Oceanic colonization resulted both in long distances between the colony and the metropolitan centers, while limiting the distance between colonies, this, in turn, eased transgressions. This colonial monopoly deflection resulted in the dispersing of the WIC monopoly into a set of fragmented privileges. Secondly there were the opposing interest between freighters, merchants, investors and producers that were forced to work within the same chartered monopoly. This was metropolitan monopoly deflection, and resulted in the disbanding of the deflected aspects of the monopoly.

THE WIC

In the decades after the initial steps in the Atlantic and Asia two major monopoly companies were chartered by the States General: The VOC (United East India Company) and the WIC (West India Company). In the two centuries after the initial Dutch expansion

into the Atlantic the WIC monopoly first had to be heavily supported by the States-General, then had to rely time and again on state sponsorship, all the while its formal monopoly was taken apart by the instating of patroonships in the seventeenth century as well as the opening up of its trading privileges. In 1621 the Dutch West India Company was founded as a company holding the monopoly over trade and rights to settlement for the Dutch in the Western hemisphere. It went bankrupt in 1674, was re-founded that same year and then lasted until 1791, when the lease of its charter was not renewed. Over the course of its existence its monopoly became ever smaller, hardly ever expanding its reach, although the Amsterdam Chamber, on occasion, was able to curtail Colonial Deflections, especially in the seventeenth century.

The charter of the Dutch West India Company was remorseless about those who acted in parallel to the company: The charter stated that none of the Dutch, or even Inhabitants of the Republic would be allowed to be engaged in trading and shipping in the WIC's chartered area. When breaching this, the punishment for «the shipping companies and participant therein» to be impounded for the value of the ship and cargo that had trespassed¹². This strict regulation is not hidden somewhere in the many articles of the charter, but features prominently in the preamble. For the case of the Dutch, Earl Hamilton has argued in his discussion of the role of monopolies in overseas expansion that «the flag not only followed the private trader, it was firmly planted by him»¹³. But the preamble of the charter is hardly a text that celebrates the free trader. It seems almost unthankful of the States General to chastise the free traders even before the full plans of the company had been laid out. Had it not been the intrepidity of free traders defying the Habsburgs who had paved the way for the WIC and the power of the Dutch in the Atlantic? On the other hand, one could argue, the members of the States General were well aware that even amongst themselves there were men who would leave no chance unabated to trade for their private interest to the detriment of the prospected company.

Some would argue that the Dutch granting of monopoly rights to the WIC was an example of what Adam Smith called the mercantile system. Historians have long argued that mercantilism or colonial monopoly formation was based in early modern economic philosophical notions that trade was central to wealth and that the quest for wealth was a «zero sum game». Economic historians increasingly insist, however, «that we cannot speak of a “mercantilist school” in a rigorous sense»¹⁴. Put more strongly, Steve Pincus insists that «There was no mercantilist consensus»¹⁵. The Dutch took a very pragmatic stance when it came to their own chartered companies for the East and the West. Grotius strategically removed his plea for an open Atlantic from the final draft of *Mare Liberum* in his *De Jure*

¹² Anonymous, 1621.

¹³ HAMILTON, 1948: 33-53.

¹⁴ RONCAGLIA, 2005: 41-44.

¹⁵ PINCUS, 2012: 3-34.

Paedae as not to upset the negotiations for the Twelve Years Truce with the Iberians¹⁶. Nevertheless, both for Asia where the Dutch had a monopoly company, and for the Atlantic where such a company was not yet established, Grotius argued the same right of plunder and free trade for the Dutch¹⁷. The limits to the ideological coherence behind mercantilism, and the subsequent informing of practices of maritime empires (such as the instating of monopolies), is widely noted. There has been a lively debate on the question to what extent there was a mercantilist consensus amongst the European ruling classes, but one of the conclusions appears to be that the «mercantilist» practice did not correspond to any neat set of ideological dogma's, but had a high level of rather practical self-interest at its core¹⁸.

This «practical self-interest» was far from monolithic and in the Dutch case the different factions fought over how to formulate, instate and uphold the WIC monopoly. An important colonial dynamic that undermined colonial monopolies was the closeness of the colonies to each other, compared to the distance between the colonies and their colonizer in Europe. Intercolonial as well as interimperial trade and smuggling were rampant, and perhaps even constitutive for the Atlantic world in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Empires (including the Dutch) had «messy interimperial economies». As Cathy Matson argued in the recent debate on mercantilism:

«though merchants and small producers in the colonies were keenly aware of imperial officials' ideological starting points as well as their mercantile policy objectives, they regularly found flexible ways to regulate port city commerce and internal economies on their own terms or to simply smuggle what they wanted when conditions seemed to warrant it»¹⁹.

While this was the case, and even high officials in the metropolis were aware of this, there was nevertheless a recurring drive to monopolize, formally charter and restrict trade along imperial lines. This trend is common across the maritime European empires. For the Dutch the WIC's Order of Government of 1629 functioned as a constitution for its western domains, but local governing councils were given the possibility of issuing bylaws. As Kunst has noted «[t]he necessities of everyday life led to the creation of special legislation for trade in the West Indies»²⁰. While this new legislation had to be approved by bodies in the Republic it did provide those in the colonies with tools to deflect unwanted elements in the monopoly.

In the metropolis there were several forces trying the change, amend and fight the colonial monopolies. Often merchants from Amsterdam played a central role both in the formation of the monopoly, as well as in attempts to deflect it. For the chambers of the

¹⁶ ITTERSUM, 2007: 59-94.

¹⁷ ITTERSUM, 2007: 59-94.

¹⁸ MATSON, 2012: 35-40.

¹⁹ MATSON, 2012: 35-40.

²⁰ KUNST, 1981: 61.

WIC outside of Amsterdam, the maintaining of the monopoly was generally a way to curb the freedom of Amsterdam traders. Here another issue played in the background, those who had invested in the VOC and WIC were eager to get a return on their investment rather than supporting the opening of the monopolies for their trading ventures. Amsterdam itself often supported free trade, counting on its superior staple market and shipping industry to defeat the competition²¹. In the Order of Government (1629) the rules and regulations for the governing of the WIC, its ships and its landed possessions were laid down²². Without going into the details of the Order, what is important here is that it was initially an attempt to create a centralized government in the colonies. This was part of a grand design of the Dutch in the Atlantic. After this failed, the Dutch have been said to have continued with an «expansion without empire»²³. The aspiration to form a centralized (and as a result more autonomous) government *in* the Atlantic was undermined by both the States of Holland and Zeeland²⁴.

The importance of intercolonial/cross imperial connections has given rise to new conceptions of European expansion in the Atlantic, understanding it as an integrated Atlantic world²⁵. Research into trading networks rather than formal governmental structures has shown that Dutch Atlantic colonies functioned as nodal points through which trade, migration, news circulated both within and across formal imperial boundaries²⁶. What took place in the overseas Atlantic as a result of that has been labeled as the creation of «interimperial microregions» by Jeppe Mulich. With this concept Mulich aims to transcend national perspectives on Caribbean colonies, and show how they were all necessarily integrated in their regional context with its own logic of rivalry, cooperation and exchange²⁷.

The Dutch were in no way unique in this. April Lee Hatfield has convincingly summarized how in all the different North European empires, interimperial connections that subverted monopolistic designs from the metropolis were the norm rather than the exception in the seventeenth century Atlantic World²⁸. She suggests that while there are clear differences between the North American mainland and the Caribbean, the New England colonies could in themselves be regarded as islands in the way they connected to the larger Atlantic world at the time²⁹. Hatfield discusses how the Dutch being especially capable in adapting to a British environment, and that many of those who we would now call «Dutch»

²¹ KUNST, 1981: 111.

²² SCHILTKAMP, 2003: 320-34.

²³ EMMER & KLOOSTER, 1999: 48-69.

²⁴ KUNST, 1981: 58.

²⁵ ARMITAGE, 2002: 11-30; BAILYN, 2005.

²⁶ OOSTINDIE & ROITMAN, 2012: 129-60.

²⁷ MULICH, 2013: 72-94.

²⁸ HATFIELD, 2003.

²⁹ HATFIELD, 2003.

actually came from a range of societies in Northern and Western Europe³⁰. In this way, the Dutch proved themselves as essential middlemen greasing the wheels of the seventeenth century Atlantic world³¹. In the eighteenth century this middlemen position was challenged when New England took over the middleman role in the Atlantic³². Regardless of who was playing the role of middlemen, it might be more important to consider between what these middlemen were mediating. The eighteenth century saw a massive boom in land exploitation, urbanization and labor migration in the Atlantic world. Rather than trade, the increasing productivity and the concentration of economic power in colonial urban centers reconfigured the relationships between motherlands and colonies. Colonial elites became more powerful, while metropolitan powers began to lose some of their control. In this context, colonial deflection of the formal monopoly took a new turn for the Dutch.

NEW NETHERLAND

Together with Brazil, New Netherland formed the mainstay of the Dutch Atlantic territory in the seventeenth century. New Netherland was in part governed as a patroonship, which meant that the colony's government was farmed out to a Dutch family. Before the WIC arrived there were small trading stations operated by Dutch merchants. Already at an early stage the colony saw clear examples of colony-based opposition to the monopoly, which forced the WIC to grant «freedoms and exceptions» and later the patroonship for Kilian van Renselaer, who had initially spearheaded the push for the before mentioned freedoms³³.

The challenge to the «company's monopoly on the fur trade» came already «by the early beginnings of the colony.» One of the colonists, *ondercommies* (Second Commissioner of the WIC) Gerrit Fongersz, offered to ship beaver pelts of other colonists on his own to the Republic³⁴. The WIC monopoly and the *commies* as its representative overseas were not the only officials to enforce the formal monopoly in New Netherland. Because the monopoly of the WIC was outsourced into patroonships, the patroonship holders, like Van Renselaer in New Netherland attempted to enforce the WIC restrictions. However, there seems to be no indication that this outsourcing of the monopoly resulted in effective restrictions³⁵. It was actually the shareholders themselves who started to organize a large share of the illicit transports. Already in 1640 the metropolitan deflection of the monopoly resulted in the company having to give up its fur trading monopoly as well as its shipping

³⁰ HATFIELD, 2005: 205-28.

³¹ KOOT, 2011.

³² VRIES, 2005; KIMBALL, 2009; OOSTINDIE, 2012: 28-55; POSTMA, 1998: 107-31; POSTMA & ENTHOVEN, 2003: 287-322.

³³ HEIJER, 2013: 80-81.

³⁴ JACOBS, 2005: 203-204.

³⁵ JACOBS, 2005: 204.

rights to the colony³⁶. This metropolitan attack on the monopoly resulted in a deflecting and even for a time disbanding the formal restrictions on trade. What did remain in place, however, was the exclusive Dutch access to the colony: «When the shipping was decontrolled in 1640, this requirement [that all imports and exports pass through the WIC warehouse in New Netherland] was maintained»³⁷. Legally, the foreign trade had been allowed at an early stage, but the main issue became the level of taxation in the trade connection. Morton Wagman has argued that it was «virtually impossible for the settlers to challenge the power of the West India Company' in the middle decades of the seventeenth century»³⁸.

A recurring issue of contention between the colonists and the WIC was the height of the trade tariffs imposed by the WIC. The WIC chamber of Amsterdam, interested in trading more than agriculture in the patroonships, began to retract the initial freedoms the WIC had granted the New Netherlands in 1640. An export tariff of an impressive 16 per cent was to discourage New Netherlanders from trading³⁹. By 1645 this policy was radically altered. New Amsterdam was granted increased independence. The trade in tobacco and slaves was freed from duties, and the remaining elements of the monopoly were steadily broken down⁴⁰. This all to great annoyance of the Amsterdam Chamber of the WIC.

The colonial deflection of the monopoly was primarily informed by attempts to evade the «ten percent export duty in Holland on all merchandise bound for America». The challenge to the monopoly was posed by regional imports «directly from neighboring Puritan colonies in New England.» When this was still on a small scale this was not much of a problem, but soon the local council «decided to plug this loophole by enacting an ordinance that levied a ten-percent tariff on all goods imported into the province from foreign colonies»⁴¹. The opposition to the placard by a wealthy merchant was quelled by the governor. Also in the case of a tax on beer to pay for the stationing of troops in the colony, the protest by the inhabitants was successfully subdued⁴².

The regional context of the colony provided however some alleys for inter-imperial exchange that breached the formal monopoly of the WIC. New Amsterdam became a place to where Dutch ships could legally sail, and then connect to English colonies without paying the recognition fees levied from 1640 onwards⁴³. New Amsterdam came to function as a transit port between the Dutch Republic and the English colonies on the North American east coast. New Amsterdam Merchants «distributed the imported goods in small yachts or other crafts throughout the rest of New Netherland, as well as New England, Maryland,

³⁶ JACOBS, 2005: 205.

³⁷ JACOBS, 2005: 256.

³⁸ WAGMAN, 1999: 495-500.

³⁹ A patroonship is feudal grant to a Dutch nobleman of part of the Atlantic charter area of the WIC.

⁴⁰ KUNST, 1981: 68.

⁴¹ WAGMAN, 1999: 495-500.

⁴² WAGMAN, 1999: 495-500.

⁴³ JACOBS, 2005: 256.

and Virginia»⁴⁴. «New Amsterdam became a point of brokerage, repair and provisioning for ships» and it also became quite common that New Englanders «engaged Dutch ships» to service local trading ventures⁴⁵. The governing council of New Amsterdam instituted a weekly marketplace that was open to «both foreigners and inhabitants»⁴⁶. And to encourage the importation of livestock English placards were «sent to towns in Connecticut, New Haven and Long Island to advertise the fairs». Todt argues that the commercial infrastructure was such that New Amsterdam quickly became a place with established connections to the English colonies. The New Netherlanders could provide «subsistence commodities» in the early stages of a colonization attempt. Food went out from New Netherland, often in exchange for livestock. Todt argues that «New Netherlands had a legal infrastructure that reinforced commercial transactions (...) and sought to accommodate foreign merchants». Court cases «convey a sense of porousness between the colonies regarding trade». While trade flourished, territorial conflicts could hamper the connections between the colonies. When war came between the Dutch Republic and England in 1653, this initially barred trade, but in the overseas context both the Dutch and New Englanders quickly sought ways to reconnect their colonies. However, the responses from the different New England colonies varied. While some closed off the connections and persecuted trespassing, in Providence, Rhode Island colonists argued to continue trade. Between New Haven and New Netherlands it was agreed that «payment for debts already incurred» would be secured⁴⁷. In the end the military challenge posed during the Second Anglo Dutch War (1665-1667) could not be withstood, and during the peace negotiations the States General decided not to demand the return of the colony to Dutch hand, if in exchange they could hold on to their conquest in the Guianas.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

The Dutch held several Caribbean Islands, but their activities extended beyond those. The islands that did not fall under the WIC did also have communities of Dutch merchants in both the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Since the activities of these merchants have only recently come to light, it is as of yet unsure what the relation of these communities to the WIC was⁴⁸. For Curacao and St. Eustatius the picture is much clearer. Curacao was captured from the Spanish in 1634 to serve as a replenishing station for WIC privateers and secondly as a trading station to the Spanish Main Land. This trade was not allowed by the Spanish monarchy, but provided a welcome service to the colonists in Tierra Firme. While

⁴⁴ JACOBS, 2005: 258.

⁴⁵ TODT, 2011: 348-78.

⁴⁶ TODT, 2011: 348-78.

⁴⁷ TODT, 2011: 348-78.

⁴⁸ KLARENBECK, 2014: 113-29.

still under the impression that the Dutch could realize an Empire in the Atlantic that would be ruled from Dutch Brazil, Curacao initially fell under the Dutch Brazilian government. But this structure changed when Governor Peter Stuyvesant was moved to New Netherland, and a vice-governor was made responsible for the island under the supervision of Stuyvesant. In 1664 New Netherlands fell from Dutch power, as Brazil had ten years earlier. From then on the Amsterdam chamber of the WIC became responsible for the colony and the appointing of governors. However, decisions of the local council could only be overturned by the States General⁴⁹.

As with most of the WIC personnel at the time the governors and commissioners were banned from private trade. This rule was imposed to prevent the local officials of the WIC from turning a blind eye to illicit trading. This trade did however take place, sometimes on a large scale⁵⁰. But besides the officials, there seems to have been fairly little need to evade the company's regulation, as these were limited to the obligation to obtain a patent from the colony. Organized attempts to infringe on the monopoly, either through court or through merchant associations seem to have come to nothing⁵¹. Once a captain had such a patent he could freely trade in Curacao's port. In 1784 two major merchants from Curacao sought revision with the States General of several court sentences that had condemned them to paying recognition fees to the WIC⁵². Curacao Governor Abraham de Veer wrote a long letter explaining the practice with trade, duties and restrictions on the island. The merchants contested the WIC recognition fee since, as they claimed, the States General had not bestowed the right to levy taxes on the WIC. Secondly, they stated that Kunst writes that indeed there is no clear reference in the Order of Government, nor the Charter of 1674 that grants the WIC that right⁵³. While the argument failed short to impress the States General, it should be noted that the system of recognition fees on Curacao was based on customary tradition, rather than official guideline. What the merchants actually protested was that they were excessively high⁵⁴. Two commissioners who visited the island reported that the calculation of fraud regarding the recognition and excise fees came to f94.000 for 1789 alone⁵⁵.

In the case of Curacao, we can clearly see that an extensive network of trade developed that was beyond the reach of the company. While this was encouraged by the WIC, for

⁴⁹ KLOOSTER, 1998.

⁵⁰ KLOOSTER, 1998 (proefschrift).

⁵¹ When a Company for trade and shipping by citizens of Curacao (Societeit van commercie en navigatie der burgerije uit Curacao) was founded, this was successfully blocked from Amsterdam. KUNST, 1981: 202, cites NL-HaNA, WIC 209, 67 and 474, 67.

⁵² See the case before the Appeals Court for the West Indies between the merchants Adriaan Webb and Gerard Stridels and the WIC. NL-HaNA, *Staten Generaal, processtukken van rechtbanken in West-Indië*, 1.01.02 inv.nr. 9591.

⁵³ KUNST, 1981.

⁵⁴ KUNST, 1981.

⁵⁵ It is noted that this seems an excessive amount. However, the official committee visiting the island stated that the levying of the fees cost f 114.500, while the income from levying them was only f 55.613. This left the company f 58.000 short. The report stated that it was estimated that f 94.000 was lost due to smuggling. FORTMAN, 1919: 452.

example by making Willemstad a Freeport, it also meant that they were barely able to keep control over what was going on in the colony and effectively tax the shipping that went on. As the trading communities on islands such as St. Christopher show, the WIC seems to have been unsure as how to deal with these infringements. The substantial illicit trading on Curacao resulted in a situation where on the surface the monopoly of the company seemed to stay intact. The government of the colony remained in the hands of the WIC and there were no really significant legal changes. However, the scale of the evasion of the monopoly hollowed out its reach and effectiveness tremendously. The illicit trade made the formal monopoly simply an empty shell.

THE GUIANAS

Berbice, Demerara, Essequibo, Pomeroon, Suriname are just a few of the many colonies that the Dutch possessed on the Guiana coast. In the seventeenth century about fifteen expeditions attempted to found some form of colonial settlement. Many of these received their own charter from the WIC. David Nassy negotiated his own charter for the colony of Cayenne, Van der Perre did the same for Essequibo, although these subcontracts should not be seen as challenges to the monopoly of the WIC. The count of Hanau, Frederik Casimir, received a charter from the WIC to start a «*Hoogduitsche*» (German) colony in the Guianas⁵⁶. The area was granted to him a «loan or Feudum» and was conditional on having to cultivate and build upon the seashore of the chartered area⁵⁷. This and the other patroonship charters show that the private «patrons» accepted the monopoly of the WIC in full, and could be mobilized to execute its charter, even though the company's funds and reach had started to diminish.

The granting of patroonships worked well as a way to delegate some of the responsibilities of upholding the monopoly of the company to third parties. However, this created problems in its own right, especially in the mid to long term. One of the most prominent charters that was granted in the WIC's charter area was that of the Suriname Company (*Sociëteit van Suriname*). The *Sociëteit* was founded after the States of Zeeland decided to relinquish their claim over the colony. The States of Zeeland had funded the operation to capture the colony from the English, after which they simply refused to hand over the colony to the WIC as charter holder. When the military challenge posed by the Amerindians began to outweigh the financial benefit of managing the colony the States of Zeeland sold the colony to the WIC. The WIC then found the city government of Amsterdam and the family Van Aerssen Van Sommelsdijck willing to found the *Sociëteit* as the charterholder for the colony of Suriname⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ HARTSINCK, 1770: 270.

⁵⁷ HARTSINCK, 1770: 217.

⁵⁸ HARTSINCK, 1770: 623-624; FATAH-BLACK, 2015.

During the Zeelandic period of Suriname interlopers were infringing on the WIC's slave trade monopoly. The entire period from 1667 to 1682 can be read as a gross metropolitan challenge to the formal monopoly. The interloping became less salient once the WIC took possession of the colony outsourced its management to a Chartered Company (*Sociëteit van Suriname*)⁵⁹. Suriname, now by far the largest of the Guiana colonies also took in most of the WIC's slaves in the eighteenth century. In this way, the WIC had managed to wrest control of the colony from the states of Zeeland, and by participating for one third in the *Sociëteit* they also had more ways to enforce their monopoly over the slave trade. However, their advantage did not last. Especially from Zeeland, and often conniving with colonists, smugglers began to infringe on the monopoly⁶⁰. Also plantation owners began to pressure the company since it appeared to be unable to satisfy their demand. In 1730, when the WIC charter was to be renewed, merchants from Zeeland managed to pry open the slave trade monopoly of the WIC by being allowed to trade on the African coast⁶¹. The exclusive access for the WIC was retained for the Guianas until 1738, when it had to give this up allegedly because of diminished returns, but in practice because of the opposition by the private slave traders in the metropolis.

CONCLUSION

The very act of colonizing sprang from the competition between European rivals, and colonies were often strategically placed: by the British to «enter into the Bowels of the Spaniard in Peru» or by the Dutch to realize «the dark eclipse of the [Spanish] King's treasures»⁶². To this end money and power was invested into a range of different operations. The initial incursion into the Spanish Atlantic was by hit-and-run operations, violently raiding Iberian settlements and fleets. Later, attempts at monopoly formation were made to support more structural backing to the Atlantic operations. Once settled overseas, the colonists often found themselves in precarious conditions, in which survival depended on the supply of provisions and colonists. Geographically, the European incursion into the Atlantic world was very diverse, from icy waters of New Foundland to the Gulf of Mexico, down the entire South American coast to Chile. This vast and diverse continent created many possibilities for exchange between colonists of different empires. The circuits of exchange were far more resilient than the European attempts to close them down. When going back to the early modern period we can see that monopolies were formed to benefit not just merchants or the mercantile sector, but that it integrated producers, bankers, landowners and then spilled over into colonization.

⁵⁹ FATAH-BLACK, 2015: 153-157.

⁶⁰ PAESIE, 2008.

⁶¹ HEIJER, 1997: 297 and onwards.

⁶² HARLOW, 1925; USSELIX, 1622: 12.

The formation of the WIC monopoly was challenged in an early stage due to metropolitan rivalries between the provinces and other interested parties. Free traders also illicitly tried to evade the limits placed on their operations. The emphasis in this chapter has been on the challenges to the monopoly by people who were based in the colonies. The colonists put up their own resistance to the regulations of the WIC. In New England the monopoly of the WIC was subcontracted to Patroons. The illicit trade with the Republic as well as the direct trade with neighboring colonies posed a very direct challenge to the execution of the monopoly. However, the city of Amsterdam managed to roll back some of the deflections of both the colonists and the interlopers. In the Guianas the monopoly over the slave trade was retained by the WIC for longer than in other areas in the Atlantic. This was in part the result of a successful delegation of responsibilities by the company to the *Sociëteit van Suriname*. In the end the combination of both illicit trade and pressure from parties in the metropolis resulted in the disbanding of the important monopoly on the slave trade in 1738. The case of the WIC is one where the formal monopolies were unpacked in quick succession, although some, like that over the slave trade remained in place for much longer, and the formal organization also continued to exist and levy some duties until the end of the eighteenth century.

SOURCES

- HARTSINCK, Jan Jacob (1770) – *Beschryving van Guiana, of de Wildekust in Zuid-America*, vol. 1. Amsterdam: Gerrit Tielenburg, p. 270.
- NL-HaNA, WIC 209, 67 and 474, 67.
- NL-HaNA, *Staten Generaal, processtukken van rechtbanken in West-Indië*, 1.01.02 inv. nr. 9591.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anonymous (1621) – *Octroy, by de hooghe mogende heeren Staten Generael, verleent aende West-Indische Compagnie, in date den den derden iunij 1621*. 's Gravenhage: Jacobsz.
- ARMITAGE, David (2002) – *Three Concepts of Atlantic History*. In ARMITAGE, David & BRADDICK, Michael J., eds. – *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.11-30.
- BAILYN, Bernard (2005) – *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- EMMER, P.C. & KLOOSTER, W.W. (1999) – *The Dutch Atlantic, 1600-1800: Expansion without Empire*. «Itinerario», 23, no. 2, p. 48-69.
- FATAH-BLACK, Karwan (2015) – *White Lies and Black Markets: Evading Metropolitan Authority in Colonial Suriname, 1650-1800*, Atlantic World: Europe, Africa and the Americas, vol. 31. Leiden: Brill.
- FORTMAN, B. de Gaay (1919) – *Curaçao tegen het einde der West-Indische Compagnie*. «De Nieuwe West-Indische gids», 1, no. 6, p. 452.
- FRUIN, Robert (1901) – *Geschiedenis der staatsinstellingen in Nederland tot den val der Republiek*. In COLENBRANDER, H.T., ed. 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 366.
- HAMILTON, Earl J. (1948) – *The Role of Monopoly in the Overseas Expansion and Colonial Trade of Europe Before 1800*. «The American Economic Review», 38, no. 2 (May 1948), p. 33-53, doi:10.2307/1910481.

- HARLOW, Vincent T, ed. (1925) – *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana, 1623-1667*, vol. 56. Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society.
- HATFIELD, April Lee (2003) – *Intercolonial and Interimperial Relations in the Seventeenth Century*. «History Compass», 1, no. 1: NH 059, 1-5, doi:10.1111/1478-0542.059.
- (2005) – *Dutch and New England Merchants in the Seventeenth-Century English Chesapeake*. In COCLANIS, Peter A., ed. – *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*. Charleston: University of South Carolina Press, p. 205-28.
- HEIJER, Henk den (1997) – *Goud, ivoor en slaven. Scheepvaart en handel van de Tweede Westindische Compagnie op Afrika, 1674-1740*. Leiden: Walburg Pers, p. 297 and onwards.
- (2005) – *De geotrooieerde compagnie: de VOC en de WIC als voorlopers van de naamloze vennootschap*, vol. 128, *Ars Notariatus*. Deventer: Kluwer, p. 45-50.
- (2013) – *Geschiedenis van de WIC: opkomst, bloei en ondergang*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, p. 25-27.
- JACOBS, Jaap (2005) – *New Netherland a Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, p. 203-204. Available at <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10171539>.
- KIMBALL, Eric Bartholomew (2009) – *An Essential Link in a Vast Chain: New England and the West Indies, 1700-1775*. Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh.
- KLARENBEK, Monique – *St. Christopher as a Trade Hub for Dutch Merchants, 1624-1667*. «Journal of Early American History», 4, no. 2 (July 9, 2014), p.113-29, doi:10.1163/18770703-00402003.
- KLOOSTER, Wim (1995) – *Illicit Riches: The Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1795*.
- KUNST, A.J.M. (1981) – *Recht, commercie en kolonialisme in West-Indie vanaf de zestiende tot in de negentiende eeuw*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers.
- MATSON, Cathy (2012) – *Imperial Political Economy: An Ideological Debate and Shifting Practices*. «The William and Mary Quarterly», 69, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 35-40, doi:10.5309/willmaryquar.69.1.0035.
- MULICH, Jeppe (2013) – *Microregionalism and Intercolonial Relations: The Case of the Danish West Indies, 1730-1830*. «Journal of Global History», no. 01: 72-94, doi:10.1017/S1740022813000053.
- OOSTINDIE, Gert (2012) – *British Capital, Industry and Perseverance' versus Dutch «Old School»? The Dutch Atlantic and the Takeover of Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo, 1750-1815*. «BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review», 127, no. 4 (December 18, 2012), p. 28-55
- OOSTINDIE, Gert & ROITMAN, Jessica Vance (2012) – *Repositioning the Dutch in the Atlantic, 1680-1800*. «Itinerario», 36, no. 2: 129-60. doi:10.1017/S0165115312000605.
- PAESIE, Rudolf (2008) – *Lorrendrayen op Africa: de illegale goederen- en slavenhandel op West-Afrika tijdens het achttiende-eeuwse handelsmonopolie van de West-Indische Compagnie, 1700-1734*. Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw.
- PINCUS, Steve (2012) – *Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. «The William and Mary Quarterly», 69, no. 1 (January 1, 2012), p. 3-34, doi:10.5309/willmaryquar.69.1.0003.
- POSTMA, Johannes (1998) – *Breaching the Mercantile Barriers of the Dutch Colonial Empire: North American Trade with Surinam During the Eighteenth Century*. In JANZEN, Olaf Uwe, ed. – *Merchant Organization and Maritime Trade in the North Atlantic, 1660-1815*, vol. 15, *Research in Maritime History*. St. John's; New Foundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, p. 107-131.
- POSTMA, Johannes & ENTHOVEN, Victor, eds. (2003) – *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817*, vol. 1, *The Atlantic World*. Leiden; Boston: Brill Academic Publishers.
- RONCAGLIA, Alessandro (2005) – *The Wealth of Ideas a History of Economic Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- RUPERT, Linda Marguerite (2012) – *Creolization and Contraband: Curaçao in the Early Modern Atlantic World*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- SCHILTKAMP, Jacob A. (2003) – *Legislation, Government, Jurisprudence, and Law in the Dutch West Indian Colonies: The Order of Government of 1629*. «Pro Memorie». *Bijdragen Tot de Rechtsgeschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 5, no. 4, p. 320-334.

- TODT, Kim (2011) – *Trading between New Netherland and New England, 1624-1664*. «Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal», 9, no. 2: 348-78, doi:10.1353/eam.2011.0018.
- USSELIX, Willelm (1622) – *Anderde discours. By forma van messieue. Daer in kortelijck ende grondich verthoondt wort, de nootwendicheyt der Oost ende West Indische navigatie*, 12.
- VAN ITTERSUM, Martine Julia (2007) – *Mare Liberum in the West Indies?: Hugo Grotius and the Case of the Swimming Lion, a Dutch Pirate in the Caribbean at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century*. «Itinerario», 31, no. 03, p. 59-94.
- VRIES, Jan de (2005) – *The Dutch Atlantic Economies*. In COCLANIS, Peter A, ed. (2005) – *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, p. 1-29.
- VRIES, Jan de & VAN DER WOUDE, A.M. van der (1997) – *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 396-402.
- WAGMAN, Morton (1999) – *Civil Law and Colonial Liberty in New Netherland*. In RUSSEL-WOOD, A.J.R., ed. – *An Expanding World. The European Impact on World History, 1450-1800*. Aldershot: Variorum, p. 495-500.