

POPULATION GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH:  
AMSTERDAM AND LISBON IN THE 17TH CENTURY  
– A COMPARISON

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**Abstract**

Population growth in Early Modern times often triggered urban expansion. This urban expansion was mainly due to the increase of the housing areas for the segments of the population arriving in the city. However, dwellings were not enough to answer the needs of overcrowding cities. Infrastructural developments such as streets, markets and ports had to adapt to the new reality presented by explosive or sustained demographic growth. The presentation will particularly focus on the issues arising from urban expansion. To what extent infrastructural developments in Amsterdam and Lisbon during the seventeenth century supported or hindered economic development. My argument will show that the same type of expansion and growth may often lead to different outcomes on what concerns economic development. There are external factors to urban expansion and infrastructural improvement that played a significant role. That was the case of particular jurisdictional disputes, taxation rights and laws, environmental change, links between the city and the hinterland and the development and sustainability of urban consumption markets.

**1. Introduction**

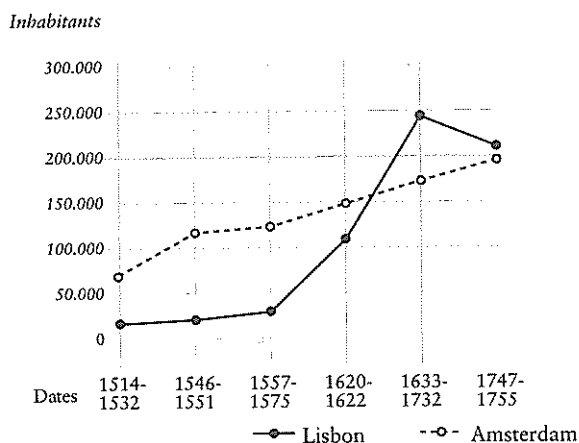
Population growth in Early Modern times often triggered urban expansion. This urban expansion was mainly due to the increase of the housing areas for the segments of the population arriving in the city. However, dwellings were not enough to answer the needs of overcrowding cities. Infrastructural developments such as streets, markets and ports had to adapt to the new reality presented by explosive or sustained demographic growth.

This article will particularly focus on the issues arising from urban expansion. For example, to what extent infrastructural developments in Amsterdam and Lisbon dur-

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ing the seventeenth century supported or hindered economic development. My argument will show that expansion and growth may often lead to different economic developments. There are external factors to urban expansion and infrastructural improvement that played a significant role. That was the case of the links between the city and the hinterland, particular jurisdictional disputes, taxation rights and laws and the development and sustainability of urban consumption markets. All these factors together revealed the more or less economic success of Amsterdam and Lisbon during the seventeenth century.

## 2. Population growth and infrastructural solutions



Graph 1 – Population growth in Lisbon and Amsterdam from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>

Source: T. Rodrigues, 'Um espaço urbano em expansão. Da Lisboa de Quinhentos à Lisboa do século XX', in *Penélope: fazer e desfazer a história*, 13 (1994), 96. H. Nusteling, 'The population of Amsterdam and the Golden Age', P. van Kessel & E. Schulte et al (eds.), *Rome and Amsterdam. Two growing cities in the seventeenth-century Europe* (Amsterdam 1997), 74.

Amsterdam and Lisbon were two growing Early Modern ports. By analysing the data gathered by Nusteling and Rodrigues and summarized in graph 1, we can argue that Amsterdam was growing fast in the first half of the seventeenth century. Commercial success, economic prosperity and inter-European migration meant population growth. On the other side of Europe, Lisbon's economic expansion decreased, after a sixteenth century of growth. This did not necessarily imply that population growth stagnated. Lisbon's population grew steadily since the fifteenth century despite the effect of plagues, wars, and political turmoil.

Amsterdam and Lisbon were growing during the seventeenth century against all odds. Amsterdam was prospering during the first half of the century, though by the second half population growth had slowed down significantly. Lisbon had been a prosperous growing city in the sixteenth century, but her growth decreased by the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the end, we can argue that both cities grew throughout the Early Modern period in a more or less sustainable cycle. They seem to have been immune to the general economic crisis and political turmoil that was devastating Europe during the 'long sixteenth century'.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Amsterdam's commercial and industrial capacity increased. This growth was the consequence of three main factors. First,

the inner growth and development of the urban economic activities. Second, the general expansion of the Republic overseas. And third, the decline of Antwerp after the closing of the river Schelde.<sup>2</sup>

Amsterdam's expansion continued during the seventeenth century. Of a total of 1790 acres that Amsterdam had in the beginning of the eighteenth century, 1334 were added during the preceding century. Amsterdam's expansion was well studied and often planned. The famous 'plan of the three canals', developed by Council Architect Frans Hendrickszoon Oetgens, Council Surveyor Lucas Sinck and Council Master-BUILDER Hendrik Jz. Staetz., was a clear attempt to establish a systematic and regular division of urban plots.<sup>3</sup>

The original plan encompassed the development of three main concentric canals (*Herengracht*, *Keizersgracht* and *Prinsengracht*) to surround the centre of the city.<sup>4</sup> These canals would be prolonged from the *Brouwersgracht* to the river Amstel, and by so doing, several radial canals and streets were created. The new area was used to build new housing, local churches, market places and a park, the *Plantage*.

The new canals became the residence of the elite.<sup>5</sup> The area of the *Jordaan* became the neighbourhood for the less prosperous, including French refugees and Jewish immigrants. The *Jordaan* became, therefore, the industrial and poorer area of seventeenth-century Amsterdam.<sup>6</sup>

The development of the 'ring of canals' was an attempt to promote the building of a new residential area. In fact, the political, economic and religious centre of the city was kept between the old city boundaries: the Dam Square and surrounding area harboured the new Town Hall, built after the Peace of Munster, in 1648, the Stock Exchange, built in 1608, and the Nieuwenkerk.<sup>7</sup>

Expanding the city meant renewing the infrastructure. Large warehouses were built around the harbours to store all the goods arriving to the city. The construction of these warehouses was extended to the *Brouwersgracht*. On the other hand, the old medieval centre was rebuilt under the supervision of Council Architect Daniel Stalpaert (1615-1676) and a new line of fortifications was created to protect the city. Stalpaert was also the man who fulfilled the 'plan of the three canals'. His aim was to provide the city with business houses, living quarters for merchants and residential areas for the middle class. However, the effective development of the city was mainly achieved by private enterprise, either by individuals or housing societies, such as the *Noortsche Bosch*.<sup>8</sup>

The expansion plans of Amsterdam went beyond the inner urban area. New plots

2 W. Montague, *The delights of Holland: or, three months travel about that and the other Provinces. With observations and reflections on their trade, wealth, strength, beauty, policy, etc. Together with a catalogue of rarities in the Anatomical School of Leyden* (London 1696), 120, argues that Amsterdam controls now what used to be the commerce of Antwerp, Seville and Lisbon.

3 E. A. Gutkind, *Urban development in Western Europe: the Netherlands and Great Britain*, vol. 6 (New York & London 1971), 63-64.

4 K. Ottenheim, 'The Amsterdam ring of canals: city planning and architecture', P. van Kessel & E. Schulte et al (eds.), *Rome and Amsterdam. Two growing cities in seventeenth-century Europe* (Amsterdam 1997), 34.

5 *Ib.* 39.

6 *Ib.* 39.

7 *Ib.* 40.

were being developed for industrial purposes. The general expansion of the Republic during the first half of the seventeenth century had brought the VOC (Dutch East India Company) to a prominent position in the economic life of most Dutch cities at the time. Amsterdam was no exception. The VOC *Kamer Amsterdam* had a high demand for a specific area in the city where to build new ships and repair old ones. The VOC was then given the island of Oostenburg to build on. Later on the complex was known as Oostenburg, although in reality next to Oostenburg, the island of Wittenburg was also being built on by private entrepreneurs. The whole complex expanded further in 1657 to the island of Funen, also called Keerweer, where the company decided to install all the wood works.<sup>9</sup> The Admiralty also joined the general VOC expansion by building a depot on the north western part of the newly developed plots of the inner city, on the island of Katenburg.<sup>10</sup>

On the other side of Europe, Lisbon witnessed the political and commercial centre move from the hill of the Moor castle to the lower part of the city, near the river: *Baixa, Terreiro do Paço* and *Rossio*.<sup>11</sup> The expansion overseas brought wealth to the city and the first sign of that wealth was the planning and execution of several squares in residential quarters and the upgrading of private and public buildings. The new squares outside *Rossio* and *Terreiro do Paço* (main squares until then) and the opening of the city to the waterway gave Lisbon her well-known shape.<sup>12</sup> Lisbon was now mainly a shipping port. And therefore the dock area also developed, especially the warehouses to store goods and allow for the collection of taxes and fees. That was the case of *Casa da Índia* particularly destined to store overseas products.

Next to the warehouses, which were meant for the overseas goods, there was also the *Alfândega das Sete Casas*, storage point of the city's provisions.<sup>13</sup> The permanent shortage of wheat in the city was also a reason why the *Alfândega do Trigo*, used to control precisely the amount of wheat arriving and distributed, was created. Hundreds of ships arrived and departed per year, full of luxury products and new visitors.<sup>14</sup> But life went on beyond the waterfront. *Rossio* became the place where the city met the hinterland. The area had become a place of supply and demand and soon became a real market, surrounded by different streets where all sorts of professional activities took place.<sup>15</sup> The new axis *Rossio*-harbour was then the centre of commercial, administrative and political life.<sup>16</sup>

The Spanish period (1580-1640) did not bring about any major changes to the city;

8 Ib. 34 & 38.

9 A. J. Bonke, 'De Oostelijke eilanden: de aanleg van een zeventiende-eeuws industriegebied', J. B. Kist et al (eds.), *Van VOC tot werkspoor: het Amsterdamse industrieterrein Oostenburgh* (Utrecht 1986), 37-61. J. B. Kist, 'De VOC op Oostenburgh. Gebouwen en terreinen', J. B. Kist et al (eds.), *Van VOC tot werkspoor: het Amsterdamse industrieterrein Oostenburgh* (Utrecht 1986), 13-34.

10 Kist, 'De VOC op Oostenburgh', 15.

11 J. A. França, *Lisboa: urbanismo e arquitectura* (Lisbon 1980), 19-20.

12 H. Carita, *Lisboa Manuelina e a formação de modelos urbanísticos da época moderna (1495-1521)* (Lisbon 1999).

13 I. Moita, 'A imagem e a vida da cidade', in *Lisboa Quinhentista. A imagem e a vida da cidade. Exposição temporária, Museu da Cidade* (Lisbon 1983), 10 & 22.

14 Ib. 15. J. Cortesão, *Páginas Olisiponenses* (Lisbon 1975), 132-133.

15 A. H. de O. Marques, *Novos ensaios de história medieval portuguesa* (Lisbon 1988), 39.

still Lisbon was the biggest Atlantic port of the Habsburg Empire. And that was the reason why Philip II thought of making the river Tagus navigable to Aranjuez, in an attempt to connect the Atlantic to the centre of Iberia. But natural difficulties and political criticism put an end to the project. However, the new king was still aware of the privileged position of Lisbon. And that seems to have been the reason to allow the *Armada* to depart from this harbour.<sup>17</sup>

The Portuguese became independent from the Habsburg Empire on December 1, 1640, with the recognition of John, Duke of Braganza, as the new king of Portugal, John IV. Lisbon was the stage of all the political movements that brought the new king to the throne. The new dynasty adopted Lisbon as its capital and built up its power structure and ideology on the urban space, which had been promoted to be the head of the Empire and the world during the rule of Manuel I. Once again, the royal power allowed Lisbon to become the largest receptacle of economic prosperity and one of the most important European cities.<sup>18</sup>

One of the first acts of the new king was to order the construction of several forts on the coastline between the city and Cascais, in order to protect it from any possible attack by enemies of the new royal house, especially the Habsburgs. John IV also recognised the need to build a new wall around *Alcântara* (where he ordered the construction of a royal palace) and by doing so, he defined a whole new area of urban growth, greatly needed because the population was, for a long time now, scattered beyond the medieval walls.<sup>19</sup> However, the centre of the kingdom's administration was still located in the corridors of the *Paço da Ribeira*, which became much admired by foreigners.<sup>20</sup>

John IV's project to defend the city and the kingdom started around 1650. The king hired foreign engineers amongst whom Jean Gilot, Charles Legarte and Jean Cosmander. But the dream of building defences along the river and protecting *Alcântara* would take too much time. The king accepted the advice of Marshall Schomberg, who, in 1656, suggested the construction of the same defence lines, but on a smaller scale.<sup>21</sup> The size of the project and the signature of the peace treaty with Spain in 1668 made the whole enterprise useless. The primary project was re-initiated at the beginning of the eighteenth century, this time headed by Portuguese military engineers, who thought a fortified defence line based on the modern models presented by the French was better for the city than the, now out-of-date, Dutch style.<sup>22</sup>

The new political institutions were very fragile. Counter-power groups still connected to the Spanish House seriously threatened John IV's take-over and his succes-

16 Moita, 'A imagem e a vida da cidade', 13. A. H. de O. Marques, 'Le Rossio de Lisbonne: son rôle social au cours des siècles', Alain Leménorel (org.), *La rue, lieu de sociabilité?* (Rouen 1997), 83-86.

17 A. Crespo, *Lisboa mítica e literária* (Lisbon 1987), 79. The Invincible Armada left Lisbon on May 1588. The Armada was composed by 125 ships, under the direct command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia. The goal of the enterprise was to invade England. The Spanish fleet was later in that year heavily defeated by the English.

18 F. A. B. Pereira, 'Lisboa Barroca. Da Restauração ao terramoto de 1755. A vida e a mentalidade: do espaço, do tempo e da morte', I. Moita (coord.), *O Livro de Lisboa* (Lisbon 1994), 344.

19 J. A. França, *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo* (Lisbon 1977), 31-32.

20 *Ib.* 29.

21 Schomberg was a German military advisor of king John IV.

sion became a problem after the death of his first child. Therefore, the appearances and displays of power inside and outside the court were the main key to the success of the new dynasty. On the one hand, the huge processions and receptions organised after the arrival of foreign ambassadors, and on the other hand, the public presentation of the king's children as main candidates to marry into important European royal houses, gave the Braganza dynasty the European dimension John IV had dreamed of.<sup>23</sup>

The capital of the Portuguese kingdom was still suffering from two major problems related to under investment. First, the beginning of the war of Restoration against Spain and the wars overseas to defend the territories outside Europe consumed an enormous part of the financial resources. Second, the decrease of the amount of urban plots used for new buildings and housing showed a lack of private initiative to invest in urban dwellings. In fact, the radical policies against the Jews in the second half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century drove many out of the kingdom, and with them the opportunity for sources of investment. Other social groups were now focusing more on how to gain the favour of the new dynasty than trying to assert their economic prosperity.<sup>24</sup>

Population growth and urban expansion resulted in the traditional problems facing Early Modern Cities. The smell in the streets and the lack of a proper sewage system made part of the urban spaces very unpleasant. There was no public illumination during the night. The narrow streets made circulation dangerous and almost impossible due to the increasing numbers of coaches used by private owners. These daily problems often provoked public arguments and even severe fights between the inhabitants.<sup>25</sup> Of the few improvements promoted by the urban authorities, one can mention the enlargement of some major streets. In 1665, *Rua Nova do Almada* was enlarged to allow a better access to *Santa Catarina*. In 1681, the same happened in *Rua dos Ourives da Prata*. Although these two changes were most appreciated by the citizens, the development of other areas of the city was not planned at all. Even though, five new parishes were created in the new developing areas: *S. Sebastião da Pedreira* and *Nossa Senhora das Mercês*, in 1652, *Santíssimo Sacramento*, in 1671, and *Nossa Senhora da Encarnação* and *Nossa Senhora da Conceição*, in 1698.<sup>26</sup>

To sum up, it is important to stress that during the second half of the seventeenth century Amsterdam and Lisbon were two of the largest ports in Europe. Amsterdam witnessed a prosperous growth in the first half of the seventeenth century as a result of general economic development and expansion. This period of prosperity was the immediate consequence of the fall of Antwerp as the largest international market at the time, and of Amsterdam's stronghold in the Baltic trade and its leading role in the overseas

22 L. Ferrão, 'Lisboa Barroca. Da Restauração ao terramoto de 1755. Desenvolvimento urbanístico: os palácios e conventos', I. Moita (coord.), *O Livro de Lisboa* (Lisbon 1994), 251.

23 Lady Franshawe, wife of Sir Richard Fanshawe, English ambassador in Lisbon, describes their arrival in Lisbon and all the formalities and receipts provided by the king to welcome the future ambassador. See Lady Fanshawe, *Memoirs of Lady Fanshawe wife of Sir Richard Fanshawe, Bart., ambassador from Charles the Second to the Courts of Portugal and Madrid. Written by herself. With extracts from the correspondence of Sir Richard Fanshawe* (London 1830), 142-156. Catarina of Braganza, daughter of John IV, married Charles II and became the queen of England. F. A. B. Pereira, 'Lisboa Barroca', 349 & 352.

24 Ferrão, 'Lisboa Barroca', 239.

25 Ib. 248.

26 Ib. 249.

expansion of the Republic.

Lisbon showed a slow pace of growth since the end of the sixteenth century. Due to growing European competition overseas, the city had suffered a severe blow on maintaining her grip on international trade. However, the capital of the Portuguese empire was far from declining, although its growth was, by the second half of the seventeenth century, put under pressure as a result of the wars of Restoration against Spain and the overseas wars against the European powers that had been preying on the Portuguese controlled areas in Africa, South America, and Asia.

In general, Amsterdam and Lisbon were growing throughout the Early Modern period. However, the nature of this growth was different. The former had moments of explosive growth while the latter was able to sustain a gradual growth. From this difference, two separate plans for the development of the urban structure ensued: Amsterdam was carefully planned, not only because it grew amazingly fast, but also because it was a city of recent formation. On the other hand, Lisbon depended heavily on royal support and it grew more or less spontaneously. This had two main reasons: first, Lisbon knew a sustained and not an explosive growth, and second, the whole infrastructure was centuries old.

### 3. Hinterlands

We have just seen how population growth influenced urban development in Amsterdam and Lisbon. We will now shift our focus to the reasons and consequences of this population growth. In order to do that, we will have to consider the different levels of the hinterland and their relationship with both cities.

The concept of 'hinterland' is that of a rural environment that immediately surrounds a city. There is some debate over this definition, though. The development of urban history and the increasing discussion centred on urban themes have forced historians to revive primary concepts such as 'hinterland'. Specialists on Medieval urban history state that hinterlands were the spaces surrounding the city, but they were also part of the urban structure because the city had jurisdictional rights over them. In practice, that meant that an urban system was composed both of an urban element – city – and of a rural element – the hinterland.<sup>27</sup>

Early Modern urban historians have gone even further. They agree with the medievalists that hinterlands were often within the jurisdiction of the city, as was the case of the *termos* in Iberia, but they stress the idea of the growth of the informal hinterlands during the Early Modern period. By informal hinterlands they mean not only the clearly jurisdictional definition given by Medievalists, but also the extent to which cities influenced their surrounding space and the extent to which that space influenced the cities.

For the Early Modern period one has to look at the immediate rural hinterland (jurisdictionally dependent on the city), but also at a larger space, that one could call

<sup>27</sup> Schulze calls this area the *Umland*. Schulze argues that this area was demographically and economically connected to the city. For further insight on this 'umbilical cord' concept see H. K. Schulze, *Städtisches Um- und Hinterland in vorindustrieller Zeit* (Stuttgart 1985).

region, which may include areas of migration and long-distance trade.<sup>28</sup> Some argue, going even further, that hinterlands can also have a trans-continental character, especially during a time in which European cities were venturing into overseas enterprises.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of informal hinterlands (trans-regional and trans-continental) poses a contradiction with the arguments presented by medievalists. According to the latter, hinterlands are, by definition, rural. What Early Modernists propose is an inclusion of all the spaces surrounding the cities that may be in contact with the urban centre, therefore, including surrounding spaces such as other (usually smaller) cities and towns.

The balance between one hinterland system and the cities and hinterlands in that system was precarious during the Early Modern period. Jurisdictional conflicts, socio-economic unrest, and political turmoil occurred, but usually large cities were able to co-exist peacefully with all the members of their hinterland system. That is not to say, however, that uncomfortable competitive situations between the smaller cities and the larger city or between the smaller cities themselves did not exist.

So, we may argue that Early Modern hinterlands had both a jurisdictional and an extra-judicial nature. They included smaller cities with their own hinterlands. Moreover competition between the elements of the system and the main city were not uncommon. However, socio-economic dynamics (trade, capital transactions, migration, immigration, and so on) were able to keep these complex relationships running at a reasonably peaceful level.

In general, we can say that the Dutch and Portuguese hinterlands provided Amsterdam and Lisbon with daily supplies of foodstuffs. The first difference we find in the way in which the Dutch and the Portuguese hinterlands related to their ports is the kind of foodstuffs they sent to the urban markets. In the Dutch Republic, the levels of specialisation in the agricultural sector meant that only some foodstuffs could be found in the urban hinterlands.<sup>30</sup> That was the case of some vegetables, meat and dairy products. Fish was provided by the Dutch fishing fleets stationed in the different ports and grain, wine, fruit and salt were imported from the Baltic, the Mediterranean and the Iberian ports.<sup>31</sup>

Contrary to the Dutch case, the Portuguese rural hinterlands were the main providers of all kinds of foodstuffs. In Portugal, the hinterlands produced plenty of fruit,

28 P. Clark, 'Metropolitan cities and their hinterlands in Early Modern Europe - Introduction', E. Aerts & P. Clark (eds.), *Metropolitan cities and their hinterlands in Early Modern Europe. Session B-6. Proceedings Tenth International Economic History Congress, Leuven, August 1990* (Leuven 1990), 4.

29 For the idea of trans-regional hinterland see: R. Gillespie, 'A colonial capital and its hinterland: Dublin (1600-1700)', E. Aerts & P. Clark (eds.), *Metropolitan cities and their hinterlands in Early Modern Europe*, 58-66. For the concept of trans-continental hinterlands see: D. R. Ringrose, 'Metropolitan cities as parasites', E. Aerts & P. Clark (eds.), *Metropolitan cities and their hinterlands in Early Modern Europe*, 21-38.

30 J. de Vries, *The Dutch rural economy in the Golden Age, 1500-1700* (New Haven 1974). J. de Vries & A. van der Woude, *The first modern economy: success, failure, and perseverance of the Dutch economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge 1997).

31 C. Lesger, 'Hiërarchie en spreading van regionale verzorgingscentra. Het centrale plaatsensysteem in Holland benoorden het IJ omstreeks 1800', in *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, 16-2, 1990, 128-153. C. Lesger, 'Intraregional trade and the port system in Holland, 1400-1700', K. Davids & L. Noordegraaf (eds.), *The Dutch economy in the Golden Age. Nine Studies* (Amsterdam 1992), 185-217. C. Lesger, 'Clusters of achievement: the economy of Amsterdam in its golden age', P. O'Brien & D. Keene & M. 't Hart & H. van der Wee (eds.), *Urban achievement in Early Modern Europe. Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge 2001), 63-80.



vegetables, meat, dairy products, wine and salt. The grain was obtained, as we will see next, from the trans-regional hinterlands surrounding Lisbon. The fact that the Portuguese agriculture was still organised on a traditional subsistence level, meant that long-distance imports of foodstuffs were not needed. The only exception was the import of cereals, which will be discussed when we mention the contribution of the trans-regional hinterlands to the survival of both Amsterdam and Lisbon.<sup>32</sup>

Ports provided the rural hinterlands with different products coming from their pre-industrial urban activities. Textiles, ceramics and beer were common urban products exported by ports to the rural hinterlands. Amsterdam also had to provide the rural hinterland with grain. The specialisation of the Dutch agricultural system and the adverse natural conditions for producing grain in the Northern Netherlands forced the rural, urban and trans-regional hinterlands to acquire imported grain via the Dutch main port system. Therefore, the rural hinterlands functioned as consumption markets for urban pre-industrial products and agricultural imports from the European networks.<sup>33</sup>

In Portugal, the rural hinterlands were also used as consumption markets for pre-industrial products and grain produced and imported by the main ports. The difference between Amsterdam and Lisbon is that the demographic pressure in the rural hinterland was higher in the Dutch case than in the Portuguese, which means that the amount of goods required by the Dutch rural hinterlands was far higher than the one required by the Portuguese rural hinterlands.<sup>34</sup>

Contrary to what happened with Amsterdam, the Portuguese hinterlands were deprived of urban elements in their hinterlands. There are no studies that explain this, but one may argue that there are four main reasons why that was the case. In the first place, there was the jurisdictional status of most of the Portuguese cities. The urban jurisdictions were officially recognised by the Portuguese kings during the Middle Ages (*Carta de Foral*), and reconfirmed in the sixteenth century with few alterations to the original texts. The rights and obligations of most cities were then written and they remained the basis for urban administration, on the one hand, and the guideline for the relationship between each city and other cities, and between the city and higher authorities (Nobility, Church and the King). The *Carta de Foral* often mentioned the jurisdictional boundaries of the city by determining the *termo*, that is to say, the physical extension of the rural hinterland. In practice that meant that the boundaries to the rural hinterlands had been clearly set by law and informal relations occurred, but in case of disagreement or conflict, the statements of the *Carta de Foral* were still the norm. There-

32 A. F. da Silva, 'Lisbon and its hinterland in the eighteenth century' (unpublished paper at the session on Metropolitan cities and their hinterlands at the International Economic History Congress, Leuven 1990), quoted by P. Clark, 'Introduction', E. Aerts & P. Clark, *Metropolitan cities and their hinterlands in Early Modern Europe*, 11.

33 M. van Tielhof, *De Hollandse graanhandel, 1470-1570. Koren op de Amsterdamse molen* (Leiden 1995).

34 On the general demographic trends of The Netherlands and Portugal see: J. de Vries, *European urbanization, 1500-1800* (Cambridge 1984). P. Bairoch & J. Batou & P. Chèvre, *La population des villes européennes. Banque de données et analyse sommaire des résultats, 800-1850. The population of European cities. Data bank and short summary of results* (Geneve 1988). On the demographic growth of Amsterdam and Lisbon see: T. Rodrigues, 'Um espaço urbano em expansão. Da Lisboa de Quinhentos à Lisboa do século XX', in *Penélope: fazer e desfazer a história*, 13 (1994), 96. About the demographic growth of Amsterdam see: H. Nusteling, 'The population of Amsterdam and the Golden Age', P. van Kessel & E. Schulte et al (eds.), *Rome and Amsterdam. Two growing cities in the seventeenth-century Europe*, (Amsterdam 1997), 74.

fore, we may argue that clear jurisdictional boundaries acted as an obstacle against the integration of different urban units in a major hinterland system surrounding Lisbon.<sup>35</sup>

The second reason for the lack of urbanisation of the Lisbon direct hinterland was the general system of communication. Dutch cities invested large amounts of public income in the construction of communication systems. That was the case in the development of a network of canals, the surveillance of the main international and regional waterways and for the maintenance of roads.<sup>36</sup> This example was not followed by the Portuguese cities. The Tagus river was not navigable for long distances, which hindered a direct connection between the capital and the cities located along the river. There is little work on the road system, but historians agree that few were constructed during the Early Modern period, nor were maintained or expanded. That left a large Portuguese port such as Lisbon and its rural hinterland largely separated from the rest of the urban system. We will not argue that separation meant isolation, but it certainly meant significant difficulties in ascertaining the economic or political relationship between smaller Portuguese cities and towns and the capital.<sup>37</sup>

Thirdly, there were taxes placed upon the communication infrastructure. Since the Middle Ages, Portuguese kings heavily taxed the use of roads, bridges and river-crossings in the kingdom. The difficulties the royal bureaucracy encountered in enforcing these taxation laws forced the king to delegate his rights to the local lords (nobility and Church) and urban authorities. Conflicts over the jurisdiction and tax collection of certain roads, river-crossings and bridges were frequent.<sup>38</sup>

Last, but not least, there is the problem of defining certain Portuguese urban settlements as cities. Generally, Portuguese historians define as cities coastal and inland cities, whose size and historical importance in the Portuguese context cannot be denied. However, when compared to other European cities, the so-called cities in Portugal have to be classified as small towns or villages. Therefore, an awareness of demographic and urban sizes is paramount in order to keep the Portuguese urban world in perspective.<sup>39</sup>

There is perhaps one exception we should mention. Some cities bordering the rural hinterlands of Lisbon were able to place some textiles in the urban market. These textiles were not particularly cheap or of good quality, but they were an alternative to the import of foreign textiles, which were usually more expensive, but of better quality.

35 *Carta de Foral* was a letter given by the Portuguese kings to the cities. In this letter all the rights, obligations and privileges of the cities were settled. These rules were used as guidelines for the relationship between the cities and their citizens, on the one hand, and between the cities and higher authorities (king, nobles and Church).

36 H. A. M. C. Dibbits, *Nederland-waterland. Een historisch-technisch overzicht* (Utrecht 1950). W. A. Ligterdag, *Van IJzer tot Jade. Een reconstructie van de zuidelijke Noordzeekust in de jaren 1600 en 1750* (The Hague 1990).

37 H. Baquero Moreno, *A acção dos almocreves no desenvolvimento das comunicações inter-regionais portuguesas nos fins da Idade Média* (Porto 1979). J. MARQUES, 'Viajar em Portugal nos séculos XV e XVI', in *Revista da Faculdade de Letras do Porto. História*, 2nd série, 14 (1997), 95.

38 V. Rau, *Feiras Medievais portuguesas. Subsídios para o seu estudo* (Lisbon 1981). I. Gonçalves, 'Relação entre os concelhos e o espaço, segundo o *Corpus* legislativo de produção local na Idade Média', R. Araújo & W. Rossa & H. Carita (coord.), *Actas do Colóquio Internacional Universo Urbanístico Português 1415-1822* (Lisbon 2001), 51-56. L. Krus, 'Produzir e mercanciar', R. Carneiro & A. T. de Matos (coord.), *Memória de Portugal. O milénio português*, (Lisbon 2001), 141.

39 For a good conceptual assessment and comparison of levels and rates of urbanisation in different European regions see: J. de Vries, *European urbanization*. See also: P. Bairoch et al, *La population des villes européennes*.

However, it seems improbable that this one product could provide the same amount of interdependency that was the term between the urban settings of the Republic and Amsterdam. The same can be said about some wood and rope that was sent to Lisbon (where the royal shipyards were located) during the sixteenth century, though by mid-seventeenth century the quantity, quality and competitive price of foreign supplies finished off these regional contacts.<sup>40</sup>

The medieval taxing system prevailed well into the nineteenth century and, with it, the local tolls on regional imports and exports (*alfândegas* and *portos secos*).<sup>41</sup> In fact, and contrary to what happened with Amsterdam and other Dutch ports, Lisbon could not rely on any kind of regional integration due to the obstacles raised by jurisdictional disputes, the bad state of the infrastructures, an overall system of taxes and tolls to be paid by the use of the infrastructures and the regional imports and exports, and a comparatively small urbanised world.

If the rural hinterlands functioned as a consumption market for cheap urban pre-industrial products and rural imports, the urban hinterlands were far more demanding. They did not need the manufactured products because they could produce similar products in their own right.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, they were as dependent on grain imports as the rural or the trans-regional hinterlands. However, the urban hinterlands were of vital importance to Amsterdam and Lisbon. They were the privileged environment for the consumption of luxury and exotic products imported from other continents. Smaller cities and towns had a political, judicial and intellectual elite, who possessed enough disposable income to buy exotic foodstuffs (spices, sugar, tea, coffee, cacao), rare raw materials (exotic woods, silk) or expensive objects (porcelain, books, paintings) almost all of them imported from overseas.<sup>43</sup>

At this point, it seems that urban and hinterland elites, as well as grain markets and distribution were two essential elements in the relationship between a growing city and its rural and urban hinterland.

The high wage levels and the reasonable living standards of the Dutch urban population after the Revolt allowed large groups of citizens to acquire all sorts of luxury goods that, in earlier centuries, had been the privilege of a small elite. That is to say, that more important than ports serving the hinterland's urban elites, Amsterdam was supplying different social groups in numerous small cities and towns in its hinterland sys-

40 A. M. P. Ferreira, *A importação e o comércio textil em Portugal no século XV (1385-1481)* (Lisbon 1983). The price of the imported grain in Lisbon was cheaper than the output of the hinterland. See: C. Antunes, *Globalisation in the Early Modern period. The economic relationship between Amsterdam and Lisbon, 1640-1705* (Amsterdam 2004), 100.

41 About the Portuguese taxation system for the sixteenth century see: J. C. Pereira, *A receita do estado português no ano de 1526: um orçamento desconhecido* (Lisbon 1983). J. C. Pereira, *O orçamento do estado português no ano de 1527* (Lisbon 1987). L. F. Costa, *Naus e galeões na Ribeira de Lisboa. A construção naval no século XVI para a Rota do Cabo* (Cascais 1997), 307-360.

42 About Leiden see: J. K. S. Moes & B. M. A. de Vries (red.), *Stof uit het Leidse verleden: zeven eeuwen textiel nijverheid* (Utrecht 1991). S. Groenveld (coord.), *Leiden: de geschiedenis van een Hollandse stad*, vol. 2 (1574-1795), (Leiden 2003). About Delft see: T. Wijsenbeek-Olthuis, *Achter de gevels van Delft: bezit en bestaan van rijk en arm in een periode van achteruitgang (1700-1800)* (Hilversum 1987). About Haarlem see: G. Dorren, *Eenheid en verscheidenheid: de burgers van Haarlem in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam 2001).

43 J. G. van Dillen, *Van rijkdom en regenten: handboek tot de economische en sociale geschiedenis van Nederland tijdens de Republiek* (The Hague 1970). P. Knevel, *Burgers in het geweer. De schutterijen in Holland, 1550-1750* (Hilversum 1994).

tem. This growing demand drove prices of luxury and high-value products down, which in turn helped to spread these products further down the social ladder. The larger the demand from the urban hinterlands, the higher the willingness of ports to increase imports.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the good relationship between Amsterdam and its Dutch urban hinterlands was only possible because there was an urban elite able to pay for what was offered, on the one hand, and, on the other hand because a large and well-kept transportation network was in place.

The same situation cannot be accounted for in Portugal. The urban elites were basically the same as in the Middle Ages. The higher ranks of the clergy, the higher ranks of the nobility and a few merchants were able to gather enough disposable income to buy high value or luxury goods. The problem is that this elite was concentrated in the larger urban centres, usually the largest ports.<sup>45</sup> That is not to say that cities in the interior like Coimbra, Évora, Lamego or Braga were not important. The problem was that citizens did not have the same amount of disposable income as the patrician, mercantile or pre-industrial elites of the Dutch cities. A significant portion of Portuguese citizens belonged to the elite not so much because they had an economic activity that improved their social status, but because they had been born into such a status. Often, that status had little economic meaning. On the other hand, the presence of the higher ranks of the elite in the cities in the interior was reduced to the number of clergy and nobles.<sup>46</sup>

The number of the local and regional elites in Portugal was far lower than in the Republic. However, the highest concentration of elites was in Lisbon. Nobility, clergy and merchants lived in the city in the hope that their presence in the capital, where the king also lived, would further their social and economic position.<sup>47</sup>

As we have seen, the largest concentration of urban elites (lower nobility), merchants, bureaucrats, nobles and clergymen was in the largest ports. However, we cannot state that even the urban elites living in Lisbon could afford to buy what their disposable income allowed. The impoverishment of certain groups inside the traditional elite was obvious but the largest problem was posed by the king. In an attempt to keep up appearances and only allow the ones born with status to show this status, different

44 The discussion about consumption revolution has been very well highlighted by A. Schuurman & J. de Vries & A. van der Woude, *Aards geluk. De Nederlanders en hun spullen van 1550 tot 1850* (Amsterdam 1997).

45 L. F. Costa, *Império e grupos mercantis entre o Oriente e o Atlântico (século XVII)* (Lisbon 2002).

46 About elites in Portuguese ports see: M. A. F. Moreira, *Os mercadores de Viana e o comércio do açúcar Brasileiro no século XVII* (Viana do Castelo 1990). H. M. M. Cerejo, *O comércio e os mercadores portugueses (1383-1475)* (Porto 1995). J. J. B. Ferreira-Alves, *A casa nobre no Porto nos séculos XVII e XVIII. Introdução ao seu estudo* (Porto 1995). F. R. G. dos R. T. da Rocha, *O Porto e o poder central na segunda metade do século XV. (Estudo e publicação dos capítulos especiais da cidade)* (Porto 1996). A. S. A. de O. Nunes, *História Social da Administração do Porto (1700-1750)* (Porto 1999). L. F. Costa, *Império e grupos mercantis*.

47 About Portuguese elites see: N. G. Monteiro, *A corte, as províncias e as conquistas: centros de poder e trajectórias sociais no Portugal restaurado (1668-1750)* (Lisbon 1998). N. G. Monteiro, *Elites e poder: entre o Antigo Regime e o Liberalismo* (Lisbon 2003). D. G. Smith, *The Portuguese mercantile class of Portugal and Brazil in the seventeenth century: a socioeconomic study of the merchants of Lisbon and Bahia, 1620-1690* (Austin 1975). C. A. Hanson, *Economy and society in baroque Portugal: 1668-1703* (London 1981). J. C. Boyajian, *Portuguese bankers in the court of Spain, 1626-1685* (New Jersey 1983). P. Molas, *La burguesía mercantil en la España del Antiguo Régimen* (Madrid 1985). M. A. Ebben, *Zilver, broed en kogels voor de Koning. Kredietverlening voor Portugese bankiers aan de Spaanse kroon, 1621-1665* (Leiden 1996). L. F. Costa, *Império e grupos mercantis*.

Portuguese kings at the time issued sets of pragmatic laws (*leis pragmáticas*). This legislation forbade the use of external signs of wealth or the consumption of luxury or high value products, which might be unfit to someone's social status.<sup>48</sup>

The pragmatic laws had three goals and several consequences. The first goal was to stimulate the consumption of goods produced locally. The second goal was to protect the social position of nobles and clergymen born into a certain social status from being compared to the merchant elite that was able to buy that status with money. Exterior signs that the traditional social hierarchies were changing were not welcome. The third goal was to keep the high value and luxury goods, often of colonial origin, away from the Portuguese consumption markets. Portugal was heavily dependent on imports of grain, warfare and shipbuilding materials, and the only way to balance these needs in the international market was by holding on to luxury colonial goods for a fair exchange.

The consequences of the pragmatic laws were very serious. On the one hand, illegal trade flourished. And illegal trade meant that the royal treasury lost large amounts of income because it did not collect taxes. On the other hand, the laws are perceived to have been a serious obstacle to the formation of urban consumption markets in Portugal. That means that the lack of consumption of luxury and high value goods hindered the generalisation of patterns of consumption and postponed a possible consumption revolution in Portuguese cities *sine die*.

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons to approve the pragmatic laws was to keep the royal control over valuable products that could be easily used in the foreign markets in order to stabilise the balance of payments.

One of the products in high demand in Lisbon besides warfare and shipbuilding materials was grain. All Portuguese ports needed grain, but not all of them had equal access to the grain producing areas. Beira, in the centre of the kingdom, and Alentejo, in the south, were the two provinces that produced most of the grain in Portugal. The ports of Porto, Aveiro, Lisbon, Setubal and Algarve were the ones closest to the grain producing areas, but that never stopped the Portuguese ports, in general, from being dependent on the importation of grain. This dependency on imported grain had three causes. The first cause was the first juridical claim on the Beira and Alentejo grain came from the local urban counsels, who tried to exercise the rights recognised by the *Cartas de Foral* to get as much grain as possible to their local markets.

The second cause was that Portugal, like the rest of Europe, suffered the consequence of the periods of drought in the Sicilian and North African grain producing areas, which damaged the balance between grain production and consumption in Southern and Atlantic Europe. As happened with other Portuguese ports, Lisbon was highly dependant on grain imports dating way back to the Middle Ages.

The third cause for Portugal's dependency on grain imports can be illustrated by the specific case of the capital. Lisbon had no other option but to rely on foreign imports. The foreign imports arrived from the North, mainly from or via Amsterdam. But even with foreign imports, Lisbon had a difficult task in controlling grain supplies, as there were several demand markets in the city, all of them relying on what came from Alentejo, on the one hand, and from abroad, on the other hand. The first was the urban mar-

ket. The urban market had to provide for three different groups: the population of the city, the royal house and the court, and the rural hinterland. The second set of demands came from the overseas markets, especially during the second half of the seventeenth century. The overseas markets had two sources of demand. The first was the need to supply the fleets. The Asian, Brazilian and European war fleets needed enough bread for their crews and captains. Moreover, the number of the crews on board and the fighting personnel on those ships had increased during the seventeenth century and, therefore, demands for bread were also higher. The Asian and Brazilian fleets represented another consumer group as they were often loaded with grain as cargo. The third drain of Lisbon's grain supplies was the army. During the periods of war between 1640-68 and 1702-13, both the Portuguese and foreign armies had to be fed. The problem was not only the amount of grain required by the different regiments, but also the transport and distribution logistics of the supplies between the port and the front line. If we add to this the fact that both Beira and Alentejo were border provinces and, therefore, victims of the war that devastated their fields, we understand that the supplies of grain to and from the trans-regional hinterland to Lisbon were difficult to sustain and imports were the only answer. Similar situations happened in other Portuguese ports to a smaller or larger extent.

We can argue, then that Lisbon's trans-regional hinterland was of less importance than its rural and urban hinterlands. If the link between Lisbon and the urban hinterland was hindered by the poor navigability of the Tagus river, the same can be said of the trans-regional hinterland. The physical connection between the Portuguese Atlantic coast and the rest of the country was difficult enough, as we have seen in the case of the imports, transportation and distribution of grain. This difficulty was compounded beyond the political borders of the kingdom. Communication was made difficult not only by the natural situation of the international rivers, but also by the lack of a comprehensive road network that would connect the capital with the distant Spanish provinces, as well as a complex system of local and national taxation. All of these greatly hindered the access, transport and distribution of goods to the consumption markets.

In the case of Amsterdam, the natural trans-regional hinterland followed the course of the international rivers deep into the German states, northwards, via the North Sea, to Scandinavia, and towards the South of the Republic, to the Spanish Netherlands. Both the German states and Scandinavia provided Amsterdam with its work force. This work force, mainly responsible for the explosive demographic growth of the city, was driven away from their homes by war or the expectation of earning a better living.

The migration flows from Amsterdam's trans-regional hinterland can be characterised as follows. The Thirty Years War drove large numbers of German youngsters to the coast. Hamburg, as a free city, profited as much from this movement as did the Dutch maritime cities. The German migrants were clearly divided in groups. The first group included urban migrants, who left towns and cities throughout the German states to escape war and look for better opportunities in the north. These urban migrants were mainly craftsmen and their work experience was much appreciated in places like Amsterdam. The second group included rural migrants, who driven by the fortunes of war, fled first to the German towns and cities, and, afterwards, to the Republic. This second group formed a massive unschooled work force, willing to work, but unable to offer

special skills or knowledge. These were the ones destined to become low-ranking sailors for the large Dutch commercial companies or in the private fleets. This presence can be seen through the information provided by the Amsterdam's marriage registers. These registers show that in the years 1661-1665, 18,5% of the seamen married in the city were German.<sup>49</sup>

The Scandinavian trans-regional hinterland provided a skilled labour force. Scandinavian migrants were specialists in different commercial activities. That was the case of ships' captains, ships' pilots, and war engineers. They left Sweden, Norway and Denmark during times of war or else were attracted by the high salaries in cities like Amsterdam or Middleburg. Some were even hired to work on the Dutch war and commercial fleets.<sup>50</sup>

The main difference between the German and the Scandinavian hinterlands is that they provided different segments of the Dutch labour market. The German migration originated from an endemic state of warfare that pushed different groups of German society into the Netherlands. Those groups included skilled urban labourers, but also a large number of unskilled workers. In the Scandinavian case, migration was a result of economic longing for a higher standard of living, and, therefore, the migrant groups were mainly skilled workers looking for better wages in the large Dutch ports.

The Southern Netherlands provided a whole different kind of migrants. Movement of groups between the Southern and the Northern Netherlands dates back to the Middle Ages, and the political border instituted after the Dutch Revolt at the end of the sixteenth century was hardly a physical barrier for the movement of people, goods and capital. In fact, large numbers of migrants left the Southern cities heading North, after the closing of the Schelde by the insurgents in the North. Protestant and Jewish merchants and craftsmen left cities like Antwerp and Bruges and moved northwards, first to the neighbouring cities of Zeeland, and, later on, to Amsterdam.<sup>51</sup> Again, this trans-regional migration flow was radically different from the German or Scandinavian flows. The migration from the Southern Netherlands was neither mixed (as the German), nor individual (as the Scandinavian), but clearly devised as an entrepreneurial choice by certain individuals, all of them linked with the same activity (commerce), who decided to

49 P. C. van Royen, *Zeevarenden op de koopvaardijvloot omstreeks 1700* (Amsterdam 1987), 129. M. North, 'German sailors, 1650-1900', P. C. van Royen & J. R. Bruijn & J. Lucassen (eds.), *Those emblems of hell? European sailors and the maritime labour market, 1570-1870* (Newfoundland 1997), 253-266.

50 About salaries and working conditions see: P. C. van Royen, 'The 'national' maritime labour market: looking for common characteristics', P. C. van Royen et al (eds.), *Those emblems of hell?*, 1-10. J. Lucassen, 'The international maritime labour market (sixteenth-nineteenth centuries)', P. C. van Royen et al (eds.), *Those emblems of hell?*, 11-24. F. GAASTRA, 'Labour conditions', P. C. van Royen et al (eds.), *Those emblems of hell?*, 35-40. K. Davids, 'Maritime labour in the Netherlands, 1570-1775', P. C. van Royen et al (eds.), *Those emblems of hell?*, 41-72. About Scandinavian migrants: G. Saetra, 'The international labour market for seamen, 1600-1900: Norway and Norwegian participation', P. C. van Royen et al (eds.), *Those emblems of hell?*, 173-210. H. C. Johansen, 'Danish sailors, 1570-1870', P. C. van Royen et al (eds.), *Those emblems of hell?*, 233-252.

51 There is currently a debat in Dutch historiography about the value of the Southern migrants to the economic growth of the Republic in general, and of Amsterdam in particular. About the arguments of this debate see: J. I. Israel, 'The economic contribution of Dutch Sephardi Jewry to Holland's Golden Age, 1595-1713', in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 96 (1983), 505-535. J. I. Israel, *European Jewry in the age of mercantilism, 1550-1740* (Oxford 1985). O. Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden en de opkomst van de Amsterdamse stapelmarkt (1578-1630)* (Hilversum 2000). C. Lesger, *Handel in Amsterdam ten tijde van de Opstand: kooplieden, commerciële expansie en verandering in de ruimtelijke economie van de Nederlanden, ca. 1550 - ca. 1630* (Hilversum 2001).

leave their place of origin because the traditional networks in which they operated were falling apart due to the blockade of the Scheldt. The actions of the rebels in the North had practically closed all the access to the Antwerp market, causing great and grave loss of life and income.

In the case of Lisbon, the difficulties encountered for the transportation and distribution of goods throughout all levels of the hinterland, constituted the same reason why migration flows may have been disrupted and not at all comprehensive. We have few information about migratory flows inside the Portuguese kingdom during the Early Modern period, but we believe that Lisbon and other major ports could not have survived as such if they would not be the receptacle of important migratory dynamics. However, we believe that these migrants did not come from the trans-regional hinterland, but from the urban and rural hinterland surrounding Lisbon. Those areas were the only ones close enough to be able to allow people to move with some efficiency from the hinterlands into the capital.

Migration flows appear to have dominated the relationship between Amsterdam and its trans-regional hinterlands, but there were other factors influencing this relationship. It was the case of the trans-regional elites and imports. Contrary to what happened with Lisbon, Amsterdam still profited from the consumption market formed by the Scandinavian and Baltic elites for luxury and manufactured goods produced in Amsterdam and throughout its urban hinterland, or otherwise imported from the colonies. The commercial balance between the Scandinavian and Baltic regions and Amsterdam was achieved by supplying the latter with grain and raw materials for the shipbuilding industry and warfare materials. These imports were stockpiled in the city's warehouses and later on sent to European partners, as was the case of Lisbon and other Portuguese ports.

#### 4. Conclusion

We were able to see that the transactions between Amsterdam and its hinterland system was far more integrated and based on an interdependent relationship than the one between Lisbon and its hinterland system. The main difference between the two was the situation of the transportation networks that could serve as an incentive or an obstacle to the integration of both ports and their hinterlands, the existence or absence of strong or weak consumption markets, and the level of balance in the trade exchange between both cities and their trans-regional hinterlands. In fact, Amsterdam could rely on the strength of its inter-regional markets to survive, while Lisbon had difficulties in balancing international trade and regional markets.

The strength of the hinterland system was, however, not enough to keep a port as centre of the European economy. Although Amsterdam was surrounded by an efficient and extensive hinterland system, when English competition reached the inter-European and continental routes, Amsterdam lost out. This decline was not to be expected if we look at the situation Amsterdam's hinterland system was in. Simultaneously, Lisbon had always had a deficient hinterland system, but the city's ability to keep partners and maintain its integration in the European urban system overruled the weaknesses of its hinterland.



It is therefore important to keep in mind that hinterland systems helped ports at two very important moments. The first moment was the take-off moment that took the economy of ports to another dimension. That was what happened with Amsterdam after the fall of Antwerp and with Lisbon after the beginning of the Portuguese expansion overseas. The second moment was the moment ports declined as international economic centres into regional economic centres. At both moments, hinterlands played a crucial role on the way different ports developed and declined. Nonetheless, hinterland systems could do little to fight external competition based on the overwhelming take-over of commercial relationships alien to the hinterland systems themselves.:::