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Suriname and the Atlantic World, 1650-1800

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2. Consolidating connections, 1684-1713

This chapter covers the period in which the Atlantic trade routes became more dependable and investigates the transformation of networks, relationships and institutions of the colony. It argues that besides the formal SC-led aspect of the expansion of plantation production in the Atlantic, the transition of Suriname depended heavily on informal and unofficial initiatives by colonists who had been part of colonial societies for decades. The adaptations of rules and regulations, and the importance of informal contacts are a recurring theme in the history of the expansion of plantation production, intercolonial relationships, homeward shipping of tropical products and the organization of the slave trade.

Despite major naval conflicts in the period between 1684 and 1713, Paramaribo was increasingly successful as a nodal point tying together plantation production and slave trade. Between those years the export of tropical products grew from roughly 4.2 million pounds to 15.9 million pounds a year. The average load of tropical products per ship destined to the Republic shot up from two hundred thousand pounds to seven hundred thousand pounds per ship.[123] Ships arriving in Paramaribo from regional ports increased from four non-Dutch ships in 1684 to 35 in 1713.[124] The number of enslaved workers in the country grew from four thousand to eleven thousand. This increase of roughly seven thousand came about at a tremendous cost: in that period 29,901 captives were embarked in Africa to be sent to Suriname, 26,104 of them were disembarked alive.[125] The size of the plantations also increased. The number of colonists who owned more than 30 enslaved labourers grew from 47 to 148 between 1684 and 1713. While there had only been two slave owners who had more than 100 slaves in 1684, there were 12 of them in 1713.[126]

How was this increase in the productive capacity of the colony coming about? An understanding of the organisation of the connections between Paramaribo and the rest of the Atlantic world is crucial to formulation of an answer. In the regional trade the persistence of colonists in trading and lobbying for their regional supply-line was instrumental in getting their connection legalized and stable. One might assume that sugar was the main commodity traded in Paramaribo. However, given the nature of the relationship between planters and the Republic, cargo space was actually

[123] See Appendix 1 Shipping data, 1683-1795.

[124] Idem.

[125] *Slavevoyages.org: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (Atlanta, Georgia 2008) http://www.slavevoyages.org/ (seen September 2010).

[126] SvS, entry 1.05.03, inv.nr. 213, 227, 232, 241.

the crucial service traded in the port. And the change of the cargo market from a buyers' to a sellers' market increased the quality of sugar and ensured the continuation of the connection. As regards the slave trade, the WIC was at times eager to give up the trade, but contracts between the WIC and planters were important to ensure the continuation of the trade were instrumental in carrying the colony from a phase of irregular trade, to one in which deliveries of captive Africans to the colony became dependable.

To realise this transition colonists mobilised a mixture of both formal and informal networks, and both imperial and cross-imperial connections. Bailyn argued about the transition to a period in which production was central that the "growth of stability and development was aided by the fact that nowhere was imperial governance […] absolute."[127] Colonists changed overseas rulings to fit their needs, while at the same time their new society demanded more intense connections to the metropolis. In Suriname expansion of plantation production meant that colonists needed larger amounts of capital, more labour, a standardization of units of measure, stricter executive hierarchies and more dependable defences. Through trial and error colonists were finding out how to make their operation profitable, and for the time being, succeeded.

In his role as freighter, notary public and lobbyist, as well as merchant and planter Samuel Cohen Nassy was at the centre of a process that changed Suriname from a contested settlement into a stable plantation colony. He was the son of Brazilian born David Nassy, and was part of a network that stretched far into the Atlantic World.[128] Through these connections he pioneered the regional trade between Suriname, Barbados and New York.[129] As notary public (the first Jew to hold that position in the Americas) he was an important link between business interest in the colony and the Dutch Republic.[130] Nassy had an interventionist approach. He did not shy away from personally chasing after escaped workers to retrieve them. When there were not enough captives being brought to the colony from Africa, he offered to go against the WIC monopoly and use his own ship for a voyage. When, in the 1690s, the WIC directors considered stopping the shipping of enslaved Africans to Suriname entirely, Nassy contracted to buy 500 slaves to force the continuation of the trade. Despite his heroism as Captain of the Jewish militia in defeating the 1688 soldier

[127] Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 84.

[128] Klooster, "Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs," 33–49.

[129] Schnurmann, *Atlantische Welten*.

[130] J. A. Schiltkamp, *De geschiedenis van het notariaat in het octrooigebied van de West-Indische Compagnie: voor Suriname en de Nederlandse Antillen tot het jaar 1964* (Amsterdam, 1964).

mutiny and his role in the founding of Jodensavanne, as a Jew he was unable to become Governor. Despite the many freedoms granted to the Jews in the colony, this remained impossible and the position of Governor went to the other major planter of the colony Johan van Scharpenhuijsen.[131] Defeated and angered, Nassy went to the Republic in 1694 where he continued to manage his business in the colony, and successfully fuelled a corruption scandal against Van Scharpenhuijsen. The direct result of the scandal was a tighter control on the private interests of Governors in Suriname. These and many other activities made Nassy directly and indirectly part of the transition of the colony from tentative beginnings to a stable dependency with a growing plantation sector. His many exploits form a theme running through this chapter, although as an overview of his activities it is far from complete.

2.1. Persistent regional networks

The protectionist approach to shipping taken by the directors of the Suriname Company had been laid down in the charter regulating the governance of the colony in 1682. Article twelve of the charter reads:

> "That the trade and navigation on the aforementioned colony [Surinam] shall only take place directly from this country [the Republic]. Fruits, wares and produce are not allowed to go anywhere else than to this country. The same goes for the provisions needed by said colony. They can only come from this country, and from nowhere else."

This policy of the SC was successfully restricting the sale of Surinamese produce to the home markets of the other (competing) powers. However, given the nature of expansion into the Atlantic, the Suriname Company was unable to stop the Surinamese from creating connections with non-Dutch colonies. It is surprising that the SC attempted to restrict regional shipping. It could be considered 'out of character' if compared to the policies of the WIC. They generally allowed interimperial intercolonial shipping from their other Caribbean domains, especially from Curaçao. The intended restriction on this trade by the Suriname Company was very likely caused by the different function that the Company had in mind for the colony. Instead of a trading post, or staple market, the colony of Suriname was set up to be a plantation colony. In 1704 the situation on the ground forced the Company to change their policy by allowing the regional and non-Dutch connections to Suriname. The SC reasoned like mercantilists, stressing the exclusive right to *dese Landen* (literally "these lands"). However, to survive as a plantation colony they had to rely in part on regional imports and thus needed to allow for regional exports as well.

[131] Wolbers, *Geschiedenis van Suriname*, 82.

Samuel Nassy in Suriname and Louis Dias in Barbados had organised intercolonial shipments in 1677 when the colony was in bad shape, and desperately needed supplies. Dias provided Suriname with limestone in exchange for wood.[132] Besides the Barbadian connection, Nassy also connected Suriname to Curaçao and New England, a connection already proposed to the Zeelanders by Surinamese Jews in the early days of their rule. Nassy picked up this thread in 1680 with a ship such as *The Trent* sailing the triangle New York – Suriname – Barbados. After the takeover of the colony by the SC, Nassy continued this trade and outfitted *The Betty* with captain Marshall Cobie who sailed for Nassy from New York to Paramaribo and from there onward to Barbados in 1686.[133] Based on the precedent of his role in other intercolonial shipments, Nassy made a bolder move. In February 1683 he requested to be allowed to bring horses from New England to Suriname and to continue the voyage onwards with that same ship to bring "sugar to Holland or Zeeland." According to Nassy the ship would bring about 100 to 150 horses, which could only be transported "in English ships." The sugar to be shipped to Holland or Zeeland was the payment for those horses. The Suriname Company agreed on the condition that those loaded sugars would be brought directly to Holland or Zeeland.[134]

Samuel Nassy continued to argue for the opening up of trade. He managed to convince the local council to allow individual shipments. When Aerssen van Sommelsdyck assumed the post of Governor, the English ships kept arriving, and Sommelsdyck commented that "he did not find it reasonable, desirable, nor in agreement with the interest of the colony to send the ship away."[135] But van Sommelsdyck realised that the laws of the Company needed to be upheld, and an English ship that arrived from Barbados was told "not to come here anymore",[136] and to warn the others "that this trade and shipping was forbidden and closed to them."[137] After Sommelsdyck assured the directors of the SC that he was doing his part in closing off the English trade, he went on to stress how important it would be to import horses, because "more than ten mills are standing still because of

[132] Schnurmann, "Atlantic Commerce."

[133] PSNADC.

[134] SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, 16-Nov-1683 – 20-Nov-1684*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[135] "*niet hebbende redelijck, billijck, nogh met de interesse van de colonie geoordeelt over een te komen het selvige terugge te senden.*" SvS, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[136] *"hier niet meer te coome."* SvS, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[137] *"dat haer dese negotie ende vaert verboden ende gelsoten was."* SvS, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

the lack of horses."[138] This was "to the noticeable detriment of both the private and company trade of the freighters", which were indeed sailing back with less sugar than they could load. [139]

The ships in the horse trade came from a smaller range of places than the horses themselves. In 1683 12 ships brought in horses: 51 on English ships, 226 on Dutch ships. None of these horses came directly from the Dutch Republic, but their origins were Norway, Scotland, Ireland, New England, Curaçao, St. Jago and Northern Brazil. For the next year there were some Dutch horses, and the others were Irish, New English and some from St. Jago. 87 horses had come with English captains, the other 187 with Dutch captains.[140]

After the mutiny of 1688 in which Governor Van Sommelsdyck was killed by rebellious soldiers who were disgruntled over low rations, the governing council became strongly in favour of regional supplies. The mutiny mainly took place due to the lack of rations provided to the soldiers. One of the officers wrote to the directors of the Suriname Company in Amsterdam that the troops would have rebelled again if goods were not imported from the New England colonies to Suriname.[141] When Nassy made another request to the Council in August 1689, they granted him the right to bring goods from English ships to shore. This, according to the council, should prevent them sailing away to other destinations. It was of great importance because the members of the council thought that the future of the colony depended on the goods brought from New England.[142]

Table 4 Routes of non-Dutch ships, 1682-1692

Origin	Voyages	Destination	Voyages
Barbados	11	**Barbados**	28
Boston	11	**unknown**	13
unknown	6	**Boston**	3

[138] "*dat hier meer dan tien meulens bij gebrek van paerden ende beesten gants stil saen.*" SvS, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[139] "*tot merckelijcke schade van de particuliere als van de Societeyt en de commercie wegens de retourschepen*." SvS, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Postma, "Breaching the Mercantile Barriers," 114.

[142] NL-HaNA, Oud Archief Suriname: Raad van Politie, *Minuut-notulen van de ordinaris en extra-ordinaris vergaderingen van het Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie, 1689 march 12 - 1692 January 10* meeting of the 4-August-1689, entry 1.05.10.02 inv.nr. 1.

New York	5	**Amsterdam**	2
Rhode Island	4	**New York**	1
New England	3		
Brazil	1		
Curaçao	1		
Dublin	1		
London	1		
New London	1		

Source: PSNADC. For the comparison with the Dutch shipping in the period see Graph 1 on page 233.

2.2. Uneasy and ad-hoc policing

The non-Dutch trade in the period was in content comparable to coastal trade: mostly provisions, foodstuffs, building material and no luxuries. It connected North America and Barbados with Suriname and formed a web of connections between different regions on the Atlantic's western coast (seeTable 4). Many skippers sailing to Paramaribo came there more than once, and often from the ports of Boston and New York. Especially on the import side the English North American colonies were important. They supplied the goods as requested by Nassy: food, provisions and horses.[143] Because Suriname had not yet become a fully-fledged sugar plantation colony, the ships that arrived from North America with provisions had hardly anything they could legally load to take back. In 1678 no molasses of Dutch origins entered the Boston harbour.[144] However, the lack of wood on Barbados and the abundance of it upstream the Suriname River made the triangle New England > Suriname > Barbados viable. The destination for the non-Dutch ships was Barbados. Returning to New England was another option, but not a route that was often taken. For example, ships did arrive from Rhode Island, but none of the ships that left Paramaribo in the early period declared it as their destination.[145]

[143] Ibid.

[144] Gilman M. Ostrander, "The Colonial Molasses Trade," *Agricultural History* 30, no. 2 (April 1956): 77–84, doi:10.2307/3739927.

[145] PSNADC

Sometimes the directors of the SC would allow sales to be made. While generally lenient when it came to horses, they would be stricter in cases that involved sugar. When an Englishman arrived in the colony of Suriname in 1701 to ship sugar he was refused his shipment. According to the Governor he was using an old permit which was not even in his name. The captain was looking to transport sugar, a "high good" according to the Governor and forbade the captain to load the hold.[146] The board of the Suriname Company agreed. The decision was primarily based on the goods that the Englishman was trying to trade. In 1701 the company directors allowed horses to be brought on shore. If anything else was unloaded, however, all goods and the ship that brought them had to be confiscated.[147]

The most common route in the first decade of the Suriname Company rule was between Barbados and Paramaribo. An example of this is John Rule. He sailed with his ships the *Margaret* and the *Maria* between Paramaribo and Barbados. From Suriname's mother colony Barbados he brought speck, tobacco, fat, flour, meat, cheese, tar and mackerel. The mate brought with him several hammocks and lime stone.[148] There were some Jews and their children as passengers and some slaves. None of the goods on board were likely to have been produced on Barbados. They had come from the North American colonies or the British Isles and could therefore also be regarded as originating from there. There is a clear pattern of export to Barbados, and the import of North American and British goods, either from North America directly or through Barbados.

The regional connection was efficient in supplying food and provisions. Captains had the option to sell their goods elsewhere and move on to other ports when there were problems on the Paramaribo market. The ships were also notably smaller than the large ocean-going vessels of the Dutch. This resulted in a very quick turnaround of English ships in Suriname, as illustrated by the comparative waiting times (see Graph 2 on page 234). The War of the Spanish Succession had no negative influence on the regional shipping, which increased even tremendously during the final war years when the total number of ships well exceeded that of Amsterdam's ships. Despite the increase in ships (and therefore the availability of tonnage) the regional ships achieved waiting times of less than two months in port, which was rather short by comparison with transoceanic ships. While vessels

[146] SvS, Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, *Report of ships in Paramaribo*, 5-Dec-1701, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 229.

[147] "*bij oogluijckingen*" NA, *Minutes board meeting of the Suriname Company,* 19-Aug-1701, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 21.

[148] SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren,* 15-April-1688 to 11-Sep-1688, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 218.

were indeed much smaller in the regional trade, their average waiting time in the colony also suggests that they were able to deal with local market conditions efficiently.

2.3. Legalizing the trade

The increase of non-Dutch regional shipping triggered a response from the directors of the Suriname Company. From their perspective it was undercutting their business, while on the other hand they understood that the connection was fundamental to the survival of their colony. The issue of the regional trade had first come up during the drafting of the colony's charter in the 1680s. From time to time requests regarding the freeing of the regional trade were sent to the directors, and the Governor pleaded for permission to allow English ships to sell their goods. The Suriname Company continued to discuss the issue of the regional trade in their meetings. In 1702 the company directors wrote an ordinance based on the advice of a commission they had instated. The plan was to only allow horse sales, and confiscate the entire ship and its cargo of any one who tried to trade other goods. Such a strict order would probably have killed off the trade entirely if it had been implemented. Governor Van Der Veen wrote that he was disappointed by the fact that the Suriname Company had only allowed the import of horses, but had disallowed the buying of general provisions and food. He was disappointed because this trade was "one of the two legs that the colony has to walk on." He also made clear to the board-members that it was causing many political conflicts between himself and the local governing council.[149]

The laws governing non-Dutch shipping in Suriname were not formulated by the board of the SC or the Surinamese Governor alone; they also consulted the governing council in Suriname before making a decision. The governing council strongly rejected the order of the Company to levy a tax on imported English horses, and to confiscate all other goods they brought to the colony. Confiscation was deemed to be especially unreasonable by the councillors. In their letters to the board of the SC the councillors used an exclusive focus on the import of horses to argue their case. All and any arguments were mustered against the director's decision. The council argued that since provisions and flour were transported together with the horses, they would be spoiled and worthless. Therefore the board "did not have to worry" about the competition from New England.[150] The

[149] SvS, *Response to the order of the Suriname Company to ban English imports*, 28-Jan-1702, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 229.

[150] Many years later Nepveu argued the opposite, namely that the flour from the Netherlands arrived in a bad state due to the Atlantic crossing, which is why he preferred the

horses, their hay and water were said to take so much space on board the "small and hellish" ships that there was no space to carry any other merchandise.[151] It is very likely that the SC directors knew that those arguments did not make much sense. However, they must have realized that if the colonists would not co-operate they could just let the ships enter Suriname illicitly and the Company would be powerless to resist.

The issue of liberalizing the regional trade continued to be investigated by special commissions and remained a point of discussion in the boardroom of the Suriname Company. When planters asked that they be allowed to organise coastal trade along the coast of Spanish America the idea was completely buried by the company directors, and blocked until 1783.[152] In 1703 it was decided that there could be imports from North America, provided that they kept to strict regulations.[153] The metropolis was not strong enough to enforce its monopoly. In a similar case between the WIC and the colonists in New Netherland half a century earlier, the metropolis had completely dominated the colonists. The New Netherlanders had wanted to trade with New England, but the WIC and their local Governor were strong enough to block such contacts.[154] The directors of the SC were unhappy with the situation in Suriname, but they were realistic enough to make a rule allowing the trade. The compromise between the colonists and the SC that came out of this remained in place for about eighty years. At the same time a similar issue arose in Essequibo, a colony directly under the Zeeland chamber of the WIC. The Chamber strictly ordered the colony not to trade with New York and Barbados, except in case of great need. They added that this pretext was being used far too lightly.[155] The size of the plantation production, the history of the regional connections, and

North American imports. SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren uit Suriname*, 1774, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 353 fo 236.

[151] SvS, *Response to the order of the Suriname Company to ban English imports*, 19-Jul-1702, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 229.

[152] SvS, *Minutes board meeting of the Suriname Company,* 25-Sep-1700, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 21

[153] SvS, entry, *Minutes of the meeting of the board of the Surinam Company,* Jan-1703, entry 1.05.03 inv. nr. 22.

[154] Morton Wagman, "Civil Law and Colonial Liberty in New Netherland," in *Local Government in Overseas Empires, 1450-1800. II*, ed. A.J.R. Russel-Wood, vol. 23, An Expanding World. The European Impact on World History, 1450-1800 (Alderschot: Variorum, 1999), 495–500.

[155] NL-HaNA, Tweede West-Indische Compagnie, *Letter from the WIC chamber Zeeland to Commander Beekman of Essequibo*, Middelburg 12-Mar-1704, entry 1.05.01.02 inv.nr. 812.

maybe also the inclination of directors from Amsterdam towards unhampered trade broke the initial mercantilism of the charter of 1682.

In the final published version of the law on English shipping to Suriname in 1704, the concern with maintaining control over who shipped what is clearly shown in the level of detail with which the directors described what could and could not be shipped. It stated that the inhabitants of Suriname were allowed to trade with skippers from New England, New Netherland (sic) as well as neighbouring islands. The final order read that "The alien ships shall not be allowed to bring European manufactures of gold, silver, copper, steel, wool, silk or linen, nor wheat, rye, barley and oats nor meat, or East Indian goods or spices" or "slaves." Ships sailing from the colony for North America could not carry any sugar, but they were allowed to have "molasses, dram [rum], timber and any and all wares shipped to Suriname from the Republic." With this regulation the directors sought to prevent European and East Indian wares from being shipped to the colony via non-Dutch intermediaries and to bar them from taking on direct shipping between Europe and Surinam. As further discouragement, the Company levied a 5 per cent tax on both imports and exports—double the amount of tax on goods shipped to the Republic. For cattle, horses and sheep an extra fee was levied.[156]

Even though the main problem seemed to be resolved, there was still the issue of having Surinamese ships trade regionally. Around 1716 a pamphlet was published by a "group of interested parties", led by former principal accountant of the colony Jan van der Marsche. The petitioners were concerned about the supply of captive Africans, military defence, and free trade from the colony. In their pamphlet they complained that all the other Caribbean colonies (they used Barbados as example) prospered thanks to the freedom granted to them by their motherland. They claimed that the Surinamese planters and traders had to watch how their *syroop* (molasses) was rotting away because they were restricted in their trade within the Caribbean and with North America.[157] These protests turned out to be in vain. The regulation that had been issued in 1703 and adopted in Suriname in 1704 proved to be the balance between the interests of the colonists and the extent to which the Company was willing to compromise. In the years after the trade had been legalized in 1704, on average 15 non-Dutch ships sailed to Suriname every year. Although the years 1706 to 1709 saw a decline in non-Dutch shipping, but in the last years of the War of the Spanish

[156]Bylaw 221, 25-Apr-1704, *Plakaatboek*, 253-255.

[157]SvS, *Request of J. van der Marsche and other interested parties to regulate the supply of slaves to, the defence of, and the free trade on the colony of Suriname*, 1-Apr-1716, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 125.

Succession the numbers of non-Dutch ships visiting Paramaribo increased to as much as 35 ships in 1713 (see Graph 1 on page 233).

2.4. From competing for goods to competing for space

To get a ship fully loaded, and not lose valuable time waiting for cargo, there had to be good transatlantic co-ordination. The shipping of sugar was a problem in the early years of SC rule. This changed in the period between 1683 and 1713. Suriname changed from a shipping market where there was too little cargo for too much cargo space, to one where the planters were getting desperate to find free space on board ship to such an extent that captains were forming cartels and artificially driving up prices. Throughout the 1680s and 1690s Zeeland was completely pushed out of the colony's shipping. In contrast, Samuel Cohen Nassy in his role as freighter was successfully filling the hold of his ships both to and from the colony. The graphs below use pounds per ship on outward voyages, and waiting time in Paramaribo as a measure of the nodal point's success. The reduced waiting time indicates that a situation of excess cargo space was turning into a situation with a lack of cargo space. Loading time and cargo load can only be used as measures of the success of a nodal point when they are combined. A full ship that took a long time to load would incur considerable labour costs, as well as damages to the ship due to its stay in tropical waters. Since ships would sometimes sail back with either a token cargo or no cargo, speedy turnarounds did not necessarily mean that the nodal point was efficiently facilitating the connection between the plantations and the European markets (see Graph 2 on page 234 and Graph 3 on page 234).

When Van Sommelsdyck arrived as Governor in Suriname in 1684, captains were desperately looking for cargo to ship to the Republic. Governor van Sommelsdyck blamed captains themselves for not being able to find return shipments. In the months after his arrival acquiring a return shipment was done through the help of the *Suijckerboer* (an unnamed broker), without whom some ships would have "stayed in the river to rot away." The general lack of sugar (or the surplus of cargo space) created problems for the shipping companies because of low quality sugar that they loaded, as well as problems with payment that were the result of this. Van Sommelsdyck wrote that "due to their hurry to acquire a shipment and to cut each other off"[158] the captains did not give the planters time to cure the sugar. Curing sugar was a procedure that took several weeks, and came

[158] *"metter haest haere ladinge te becomen ende malcander de loeff willende affsteken."* SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, 16-Nov-1683 – 20-Nov-1684*, Letter by Governor Aerssen van Sommelsdijck from Suriname to the directors of the SC, 24-Aug-1684, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

down to letting excess fluids leak out of the barrels before they were loaded on board. Van Sommelsdyck complained that the captains would take any hogshead to be 710 pounds without weighing it. Whatever the difference at the end of the voyage, it would be blamed on "*leckagie"*, leakage of the barrels. The better cured sugar that they had on board would be shipped by the captains on their private accounts.[159] The pounds per ship in the year of his arrival were extremely low, but nevertheless apparently overstated since the data is based on hogsheads registered by the tax office which were likely to have carried less sugar than the common 710 pounds. Over the course of the period under examination, the average amount of cargo loaded on board returning ships more than doubled. Van Sommelsdyck blamed the so-called *Suijckerboer* for the malpractices in the organization of the return shipments, and instituted several ways to organize and regulate sugar shipping.[160]

In the years between 1684 and 1687 a number of laws were passed by Van Sommelsdyck to raise the quality of shipments. Standards were introduced to calibrate the weights used by planters. Under Van Sommelsdyck the official time sugar needed to be cured for was set at six weeks. This was double the time that was ordered as the official curing time in 1669. This curing was done to raise the quality of the sugar that would arrive in the Republic. The standardization of barrel sizes, and the branding of the barrel's tare weight[161] were part of this attempt to raise the standards in shipping. While barrel sizes fluctuated throughout the eighteenth century, the initial steps ensured that the barrels were strong enough to be rolled and transported.[162]

Amsterdam was the foremost location for sugar trade in the Dutch Republic. During the transition from a Zeelandic colony to one run mainly by Amsterdam, the colony's shipping not only became more efficient. It also became completely focussed on Amsterdam. In the period between 1682 and 1713 there were eleven ships that came from Zeeland and left for Amsterdam, but there were none that had arrived from Amsterdam and

[159]SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, 16-Nov-1683 – 20-Nov-1684*, Letter by Governor Aerssen van Sommelsdijck from Suriname to the directors of the SC, 24-Aug-1684, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[160]SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, 16-Nov-1683 - 20-Nov-1684*, Letter by Governor Aerssen van Sommelsdijck from Suriname to the directors of the SC, 24-Aug-1684, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[161]Here *tara* means the weight of the packaging material, in this case the hogshead. The *tarra* had to be put on the barrel before the sugar was loaded.

[162] Gert Oostindie, *Roosenburg en Mon Bijou: twee Surinaamse plantages, 1720-1870*, Caribbean series / Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde , 11 (Dordrecht, 1989), 434.

decided to sail back to Zeeland. The defeat of Zeeland during this period is made painfully clear by the phenomenon of ships sailing to the Republic with ballast. Ships continued to be outfitted in Zeeland with supplies and cargoes for the colony. To return with nothing in the hold except for salt water barrels, old iron or rocks was a bitter defeat for any captain leaving Suriname, except maybe for slave ship captains who were simply interested in getting their ship back to Europe for another voyage on the African coast. The listed ships leaving the colony in ballast are mostly Zeelandic ships. The phenomenon stops in the mid-1690s, but as we will see in coming chapters, returns in later decades of the eighteenth century.

Table 5 Ships sailing to the Dutch Republic in ballast, 1683-1713

Ship's name	Captain's name	Started voyage in	Departed from Surinam
Nicolaas Johan	Adriaansen, Simon	Zeeland	16-Jan-1684
Sara	Tijd, Daniel van der	Zeeland	30-May-1684
Klocke	Hatten, Pieter van	Zeeland	11-Sep-1684
Den Harder	Tack, Jan	Zeeland	21-Oct-1684
Vogel Phoenix	Booms, Jan	Zeeland	26-Oct-1685
Keurvorst Brandenburg (slaver)	Smidt, Hendrik	Amsterdam	24-Dec-1685
Gouden Tijger (slaver)	Turner, Ephraim	Zeeland	10-Jan-1686
Geelvink		Amsterdam	Arrived 1686
Marya	Boogaart, Gilles	Zeeland	Arrived 1691
Wilde Swijn	Wilde, Anthony de	Zeeland	Arrived 1691
Levina	Marckse, Daniel	Zeeland	Arrived 1692
Sara	Boogaart, Gilles	Zeeland	01-Jul-1694
Abigael	Claver, Pieter	Amsterdam	22-Sep-1695
Willem Frederick		Rotterdam	Arrived 1695
Postillion	Veldens, Daniel	Zeeland	Arrived 1695
Meerman	Evertse, Claes	Amsterdam	Arrived 1695

Source: PSDTD and TASTD. After 1695 no more ships were leaving in ballast. When departure date was unknown year of arrival in Surinam is given.

Zeeland and Rotterdam were completely phased out as destinations for Dutch ships sailing to and from the colony. While during the 1690s ships might still arrive from there, ever fewer numbers were stating Rotterdam, Vlissingen or Middelburg as their return destination. As illustrated by the table above, not all ships sailing back to the Republic in ballast were Zeelandic ships. The imbalance between available cargo and available cargo space also had an impact on Amsterdam's ships, but overall, the disappearance of the non-Amsterdam ships kept pace with the rising levels of pounds per shipment.

A way to circumvent the problems on the local shipping market in Suriname was to make deals beforehand. Captain Jan Pranger went to the meeting of the directors of the SC to personally offer "his services to transport the needed victuals and materials for the colony of *Zuriname*, and requesting from the directors to give a contract for transporting sugars for the account of the Suriname Company as they may have in stock."[163] The directors accepted the offer and wrote to Governor Van der Veen that as much as three to four hundred hogsheads could be loaded on board Pranger's ship, a tremendous amount, immediately solving any possible problems for Pranger regarding the loading of his ship for a return-voyage.[164] The position of the SC in Amsterdam benefited both Amsterdam's merchants and captains.

Part of the colony's produce was transported by ships owned by the West India Company. Under the charter they were banned from sailing directly to the colony, but they were allowed to load sugar on board returning slave ships. This was mostly sugar serving as payment for slaves, but also private sugar could be loaded when there was space left on board. Instead of local merchants the WIC used commissioners to safeguard its interests. The commissioners stationed in the colony by the WIC were ordered to speed the selling of captive Africans, as well as the sending of sugar to the Republic. The commissioners had to take care that they sent the sugar to the chamber who had delivered the human cargo for which the sugar was payment.[165] They had to stock up enough sugar so as to fill the arriving slavers. If they could not fill the ship, they could use the WIC as transporter for 'private' sugar that did not belong to the Company.[166] The WIC was fairly successful in organising return shipments, both with regards to waiting time as well as cargo, although they were forced to send some ships back in ballast.

Nassy took very firm control of shipping in and out of the colony in an early phase. He organized several voyages himself, and personally deposed captains who had failed on their voyage. Nassy's involvement in the handling of ships sailing between Suriname and Amsterdam (*De Profeet Samuel*, *Sara* and *Goede Hoop)* generally reduced the time the ship spent in

[163] "presenterende zijn dienst tot het overvoeren van de nodige behoeften en materiaalen voor de colonie van Zuriname, ende verzoekende met de heeren dezer Tafel te contracteren het te doene transport van daar herwaarts van zodanige partije zuikeren en andere waaren als voor reek. van de Sociëteit in voorraad zouden mogen zijn."

[164] SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1696-1701*, Meeting of 10-Jun-1698, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 21.

[165] NL-HaNA, Tweede West-Indische Compagnie, *Instructions for the commissioners of the WIC in Suriname, 23-Dec-1687*, entry 1.05.01.02 inv.nr. 68.

[166] Ibid.

the colony by two months compared to the other ships sailing to Amsterdam. In 1683 the *De Profeet Samuel*, of 96 last, loaded three hundred thousand pounds, while the average ship was loading less than two hundred thousand pounds. The following year the ship did even better compared to the competition, loading 368,842 pounds of sugar, 71,134 pounds of snakewood, and a lot of lemon juice. This meant it reached or exceeded its carrying capacity on its way back to the Republic.[167]

Nassy's ships were quicker than average, but they did not beat the waiting time of WIC slave ships.[168] On its 1683 voyage it had taken the ship *De Profeet Samuel* 134 days to load the cargo in Suriname, while the average was at about two hundred days. Their 1684 voyage was successful in terms of cargo, but not in terms of loading time. They had to stay 277 days in Suriname before they left with their hogsheads of sugar and a load of lemons. On the third voyage to Suriname the crew[169] of *De Profeet Samuel* faced pirates and the ship was taken. The crew continued their voyage on a ship that they baptised Good Hope (*De Goede Hoop*) for the remainder of the trip.[170] It was considerably smaller (only 47 last), and when they arrived Nassy deposed captain De Vos. The hold of the small ship was loaded in 105 days with 165.5 hogsheads of sugar and an impressive 365 *anker* of lemon(juice)[171], but was likely not at its full carrying capacity.[172]

The efficiency of *De Profeet Samuel* was not only on the Surinamese side, but the cargo shipped to the colony was also entirely planned. The ship was loaded with goods from many different Amsterdam suppliers for a range of people in the colony. When in 1684 the ship sailed out from Texel to Suriname it had on board 47 consignments from 26 suppliers for at least 37 people in Suriname. The ship did not load trade goods to sell overseas, but limited itself to shipping cargo for others. What

[167] PSDC.

[168] For the 23 slave ships between 1683 and 1690, the data of 19 of them was complete. Slave ships averaged 153.7 waiting days, Nassy did on bilateral voyages (excluding the small ship *De Goede Hoop* and the regional voyages) 156 days. The overall average was 204.2 days.

[169] Hendrick Jacobsz, from Vlissingen, ships's mate, 30 years of age; Gerrit Kulcken, from Bremen, chief mate, 53 years of age, Jan Rijssop, from Stralsund, cook, 24 years; Andries Jahn, from Hamburg, sailor 26 years of age; Mathiasz Cornelisen, van Haderslev, sailor, 23 years old.

[170] SAA, Notarieel Archief, 5497 akte 153, Notary C. van Wallendal, 19-09-1686.

[171] The lemon juice was 365 *anker*, at 38.8 liters per *anker* it took about 5 *last* of space.

[172] This cargo was destined for George Spinosa, a Portuguese merchant in Amsterdam. SAA, Notarieel Archief, 5497 akte 153, Notary C. van Wallendal, 19-09-1686. Other Amsterdam merchants, such as Abraham de Pina also used the ship to bring goods to their contacts in the colony. SAA, Notarieel Archief, 4110 akte 293, Notary D. v.d. Groe, 19-6-1684.

was to be shipped was organised between Suriname and the Dutch Republic directly. The two largest consignments on board the ship were sent to Nassy himself and Scharpenhuijsen, the two planters who also owned the largest number of enslaved Africans in the colony. Goods on board ranged from muskets to meat, fish, building materials, books, parts for sugar mills, distilling equipment, medical supplies and alcoholic drinks.[173] On its return voyage the *Propheet Samuel* was also loading for a range of planters, and both Nassy's private sugar, as well as sugar he shipped for others. This was a world away from the practice of traders sailing to the Guiana Coast to find good deals on their cargo and organise trade goods for a successful return. Nassy with his good connections in Amsterdam was a successful Surinamese freighter beating the competition from Zeelandic ships.

The market turned drastically around from one in which there was too much shipping space, to one in which planters fiercely competed to get their sugar to Europe. Indicative of the new situation on the market was a conflict between Nassy and Scharpenhuijsen around shipping space. In 1697 Nassy blamed Johan van Scharpenhuijsen for foul play on the shipping market. Scharpenhuijsen and Nassy were at that time the largest planters in the colony, but Scharpenhuijsen had the upper hand by being Governor. Scharpenhuijsen was accused of numerous instances where he blocked planters from loading sugar, so he could load his own.[174]

While the change in the shipping market was rather gradual; the change in the balance between supply and demand had its effect on the waterfront of Paramaribo. The high point of the increased confidence of freighters was undoubtedly the moment that they were able to fix shipping prices at outrageous levels. In 1710 the Governor and Councillors of Suriname publicly announced that there had been complaints about monopolies created by the Dutch skippers.[175]The captains had organised a meeting on board of one of the ships of a captain they called the "commandeur." During the meeting the price was set a "10 *duyten* per pound", (there are 160 *duyten* in one guilder). Captains claimed that much of their cargo space for the return voyage had been contracted in Holland. After

[173]SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, 16-Nov-1683 – 20-Nov-1684*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 212.

[174] SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1696-1701*, meeting of 4-Feb-1697, entry 1.05.03, inv.nr. 21.

[175] *"aen ons door verschydene notable persoonen en ingestenen swaare klagten zijn gedaen en dat wij self genoegsaem hebben ondervonden dat de Hollandsche schippers op dese colonie varende een geruyme tijd herwaarts door verschyde quade practyquen de vragten der suykeren soodanig hebben doen stijgeren, dat het selve sodanig continuerende niet anders kan strecken als tot een volcome ruine van deese colonie ende alle ingesetenen van deselve."*

investigation by the Governor and Council, it appeared that this was not true, but that less than a quarter of the cargo had been pre-contracted in Holland. The Governor and Council decided that such "*pernicieuse monopolien"* should be stopped, and that from then on, all shipping contracts should be closed before the colony's secretariat.[176] This turnaround in demand for cargo space was a result of increased production in the colony, and also of the elimination of competition from ships from Zeeland and Rotterdam. While under the reign of Sommelsdyck planters had been able to send unweighed hogsheads with bad sugar on board ships, it had now come to fierce competition between planters for access to any available cargo space.

[176]Bylaw 238, Order to only close shipping contracts before the colony's secretary, 31-Oct-1710, *Plakaatboek*, 274–276.