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## **Lobbying in Company: Mechanisms of political decision-making and economic interests in the history of Dutch Brazil, 1621-1656**

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### 3. TRADING REGULATIONS OR FREE TRADE

Several individuals in this chapter at one point or another expressed their concerns about the rising and intense disagreements between the free trade lobby and the monopoly lobby. The different parties continued for several years to dispute what was better for the colony, the Company, and the common wealth. Even though the debates started off with legalistic or moral arguments, eventually economic arguments decided the political faith of the issue. This chapter investigates the intense (predominantly) metropolitan lobbying campaign on the issue of free trade or monopoly for trade to and from Brazil.

On 15 February 1630, a WIC fleet under the command of Hendrick Lonck attacked the Portuguese in Olinda, a settlement in the captaincy of Pernambuco just north of Recife. Meeting only feeble resistance from the Portuguese commander Mathias de Albuquerque, the WIC army quickly established a base from which to conquer the rest of Northeastern Brazil. Notwithstanding the difficulties in completely expelling the hostile Portuguese for most of the years 1630 and 1631, the *Heeren XIX* started making plans for trade with and settlement of the colony.<sup>364</sup>

Thus, the directors printed the new regulations for the trade to Brazil, confirmed by the charter of the States General in the fall of 1630. Two identical editions were printed: one in Middelburg, and one in Amsterdam.<sup>365</sup> These publications stated that ‘inhabitants of the United Provinces, subjects of the States General, and all Portuguese, Brazilians, and other inhabitants of Brazil obedient to the High Mightinesses and the West India Company’ would be allowed to trade on the Brazilian coast in all goods except brazilwood.<sup>366</sup> Merchants would have to pay a recognition fee though; 50 guilders per ton (*vat* or *tonelada*) of cargo going to Brazil, and 120 guilders per ton of cargo coming from Brazil. One ton equaled 54

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<sup>364</sup> Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 36-50.

<sup>365</sup> Knuttel 3998: Anonymous, *West-Indische Compagnie. Articvlen, met approbatie vande [...] Staten Generael [...] beraemt by bewinthebberen vande generale geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie [...] over het open ende vry stellen vanden handel ende negotie op de stad Olinda de Parnambuco* (Amsterdam: P.A. van Ravesteyn, 1630); Knuttel 3999: Anonymous, *West-Indische Compagnie, articvlen met approbatie vande [...] Staten Generael [...] provisionelijck beraemt by bewint-hebberen vande [...] West-Indische Compagnie [...] over het open ende vry stellen vanden handel ende negotie op de stad Olinda de Parnambuco* (Middelburg: Symon Moulert, 1630)..

<sup>366</sup> Kn. 3999: West-Indische Compagnie, articvlen, article I.

*arrobas* of sugar.<sup>367</sup> In addition to this, article 9 stipulated that only the WIC was allowed to insure the freight, but that it was a voluntary fee of ten per cent *ad valorem* of the cargo. This had to be paid in cash or in sugar. Any individual interested in moving to the colony could get free transport from the Company, provided they brought ‘proof of virtuous conduct’ and were willing to stay for at least three years.<sup>368</sup> Soldiers were also encouraged to settle in the colony at the end of their service, and the company further promised that all the inhabitants would be considered for public offices – ‘in accordance to their [professional] capacity’.<sup>369</sup> Last but not least, the settlers were promised liberty of conscience, as long as they would keep their beliefs quiet and would not ‘create public scandals with words or actions, but kept their civil peace’.<sup>370</sup> These articles show that from the early beginning the colony in Brazil had a relative tolerant attitude towards both settlers and trade. However, this was not considered an unalienable right, but rather a political concession to maximize profit for the Company.

This chapter shows the details of the decision-making process and lobbying practices in the Brazilian free trade debate thus clarifying the process that has been a mystery in the existing literature.<sup>371</sup> This chapter argues that the decisions were controlled by a small but powerful group in the Republic and that the decisions eventually were based on arguments of economic consequences rather than humanist ideology.<sup>372</sup> At the same time, the decision-making process touched upon issues of authority within the Republic.

### 3.1. THE OPENING MOVES

Despite the advertised advantages for individuals in Brazil and pamphlets celebrating the victorious efforts of the WIC, it would take until 1634 before the colony was peaceful enough

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<sup>367</sup> Ibid., article VI and VII.

<sup>368</sup> ‘goede getuygenis van haren deughdelijcken handel en wandel’, *ibid.*, article XI.

<sup>369</sup> ‘de Compagnie sal mede deselve vorderen, na yders capaciteyt, tot publicque ampten’, *ibid.*, article XII and XIII.

<sup>370</sup> ‘dat niemant van de inwoonders daer te lande in sijn conscientie werde beswaert, mits dat sijn hem stil drage ende geen publijck schandael met woorden of wercken en geve, maer versorgen dat alle, ende een yder in borgerlijke ruste worde onderhouden’, *ibid.*, article XV.

<sup>371</sup> See the unexplained turn of events in Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 75-82.

<sup>372</sup> A. Weststeijn, “Dutch Brazil and the Making of Free Trade Ideology,” in *The Legacy of Dutch Brazil*, ed. M. van Groesen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

to consider serious settlement and profitable plantations.<sup>373</sup> This meant on 12 December 1634 that during the meeting of the *Heeren XIX* a special committee reported their advice on how to regulate trade within the charter area. The committee was formed by Reynier Reael, Willem Bruyn, Pieter van der Velde, Jean Ray, Adriaen van der Dussen, and Edzard Clant. The committee did not formulate any advice for Brazil specifically, but specified that trade to New Netherland, Africa, 'and other places where the Company is trading' should be kept for the Company, while trade to all islands within the charter area and the lands west of the Orinoco river up until the coast of Florida, was allowed to other merchants. The company requested the States General to confirm this decision. The High-Mightinesses decided to entrust the decision to its members Arnhem, Pauw, Vosbergen, Weeda, Swartenberch, Marienburch, en Schatter who made small changes before it was printed and spread on 6 January 1635.<sup>374</sup> This meant that effectively the company monopoly on trade to an from Brazil was reinstated through the initiative of the Board of Directors that felt that the Company should start profiting from increased settlement and stabilized territorial claims.

This did not mean that the issue of Brazilian trade was now resolved as it was point four on the agenda for the next meeting for the *Heeren XIX* on 19 March 1635. What put the item on the agenda was the province of Holland that refused to consent to the new regulations in the meeting of the States General.<sup>375</sup> The objection from Holland also caused other chambers in the Board of Directors to change their mind as they knew very well that opposition from Holland would be tough to counter. The chamber of Zeeland was the only chamber that supported a complete monopoly for the Company, the other chambers favored opening up the trade to other merchants.

The main argument by Zeeland was that free trade conflicted with the original charter. The chamber insisted furthermore that investors had put in their money anticipating a monopoly and were now confronted with different conditions, which it deemed unfair. If all

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<sup>373</sup> Knuttel 3995: D. van Waerdenburgh, *Copie vande missive, gheschreven byden generael Weerdenburch, aende [...] Staten Generael, noopende de veroveringhe vande stadt Olinda de Fernabuco* ('s-Gravenhage: Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw, 1630); Knuttel 3996: Anonymous, *Veroveringh van de stadt Olinda, gelegen in de capitania van Phernambuco, door [...] Heyndrick C. Lonck, generael te water ende te lande* (Amsterdam: Hessel Gerrits, 1630); Knuttel 3997: Johannes Baers, *Olinda, ghelegen int landt van Brasil [...] veroverd op den 16. februarij a°. 1630. Onder het beleydt van [...] Henrick Lonck.* (Amsterdam: Hendrick Laurensz, 1630).

<sup>374</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 3-Jan-1635, Extract of the resolutions of the Board of Directors from 12 December 1634.

<sup>375</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 07-Mar-1635, "Poincten van beschrijvinge".

the chambers really favored a free trade company, they should have chartered a free trade company in the first place, argued Zealand. Moreover, if the decision to implement free trade was taken and included the intended clause that one needed WIC shares to trade, the price of shares would rise sharply. This would benefit the shareholders in Amsterdam more, as there were more free traders there to buy the shares than in the other chamber cities, the Zealand chamber argued. After all, at this point the price of WIC shares was already twenty per cent higher in Amsterdam than in Zealand, and the Zealand chamber anticipated that the difference would only increase. The other chambers, advocating free trade, argued that free trade to and from Brazil had been the Company's policy from the start, so that it was not new at all, and Zealand had always approved until now. The other chambers, principally Amsterdam, decided to give in to some of Zealand's objections by agreeing to equally divide the income from recognition fees. Zealand tried to influence the decision by sending a considerable number of additional delegates to the meeting of the *Heeren XIX*. This did not increase their vote, but it did increase their voice. The additional Zealand delegates tried to sway the delegates from the other chambers by informally conferring with them outside the meeting room.<sup>376</sup>

The matter came to a vote and it was only Zealand that voted against free Brazilian trade. Consequently, they refused to sign the minutes of the meeting. Zealand furthermore argued that important decisions could not be made by the meeting of the Board of Directors without a unanimous vote. The 23<sup>rd</sup> article of the WIC charter stipulated that if a chamber had qualms about outvoting any of the other chambers on an important topic the issue should be given to the States General for consideration. The other chambers responded that they did not have any scruples about outvoting Zealand. The delegates from Zealand left angrily, saying that it would be the States of Zealand who would continue to fight this decision.<sup>377</sup>

Part of the problem for the WIC chamber of Zealand was also that the WIC was excluded from paying custom duties to the Admiralties, but that the latter felt entitled to payments from individual merchants trading in the charter area of the Company. Otherwise

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<sup>376</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 02-Oct-1635 Report by Arnhem and Pauw from the meeting of the Heeren XIX.

<sup>377</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 02-Oct-1635 Report by Arnhem and Pauw from the meeting of the Heeren XIX.

all merchants would claim to trade to Brazil when they left ports in the Republic as it meant that they would be excluded from outgoing duties. As a result, this effectively halved the recognition fee income for the Company as it only received dues from incoming ships when the Admiralty claimed fees on outgoing ships. With half of the potential income gone, the Zeeland chamber felt that the income no longer outweighed giving up the monopoly privilege. By trying to sway the States General to order the Admiralties to give up their claim to custom duties, the main WIC investors from Amsterdam succeeded in removing this particular objection from the Zeeland chamber because the WIC could now also receive recognition on outgoing ships.<sup>378</sup> After successfully doing so on 1 August the proponents of free trade achieved another success on 1 September 1635 when the States General wrote a letter to all WIC chambers announcing free trade.<sup>379</sup> Even though the WIC now received a recognition fee from ships trading to and from their charter area, this did not mean that the chamber Zeeland stopped its attempts to convince the States General to restore the Company's monopoly. The Amsterdam delegation in the States of Holland made their contribution in the 1634 financial support for the WIC of 700,000 guilders dependent of free trade, effectively creating a veto on a company monopoly in the Holland provincial assembly.<sup>380</sup>

The directors from the WIC chamber Zeeland turned to their provincial states, complaining that the WIC's Board of Directors had decided to allow free trade despite Zeeland's objections. If they could convince this provincial assembly they would have a good starting point for further deliberations in the States General and at least one ally who could offer them audience at the States General.<sup>381</sup> The States of Zeeland were apparently susceptible to the argument that free trade would deprive the WIC from income needed for the conquest of more Portuguese territory in Brazil or to resist counter attacks, and decided to send some of the States' delegates to Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, whose recommendation would provide the Zeeland chamber with a significant amount of extra

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<sup>378</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 01-Sep-1635 request from the main investors from the WIC chamber of Amsterdam.

<sup>379</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 01-Aug-1635 letter to the Admiralties; 01-Sep-1635 letter to the WIC chambers.

<sup>380</sup> A. Langeveld-Kleijn, J.C. Stok, and J.W. Veenendaal-Barth, eds., *Particuliere notulen van de vergaderingen der Staten van Holland 1620-1640 door N. Stellingwerff en S. Schot*, Vol. VII, RGP Grote Serie 252 (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2005), 475.

<sup>381</sup> See also Paragraph 6.5.

status and socio-political capital.<sup>382</sup> The delegates requested that he would recommend them to the States General in order to have their arguments heard by the States General. In his recommendation letter the Stadtholder admitted that he 'had no actual knowledge of this affair', but that he felt nonetheless that the States General should hear Zealand's arguments, consider them with the usual precaution, and to reach a decision that was most favorable for the country.<sup>383</sup> This example shows how the directors of the WIC chamber could use the provincial states to contact the Stadtholder, anticipating that the informal influence of the prince would give them enough clout to change the decision of the States General. The States of Zealand fulfilled its role as broker between subjects and the Stadtholder with flying colors in anticipating that an argument on the (potentially) devastating effect of company's war capacity would ring especially loud with the Stadtholder in his capacity as army leader.

The letter from the Stadtholder was read by the States General on 29 September 1635, and the issue of free trade was debated in the general assembly on 5 October. The States General furthermore received a report from Gerard van Arnhem tot Harsseloe and Jan Gijsbertsz Pauw<sup>384</sup>, their delegates at the meeting of the *Heeren XIX*, summarizing the different arguments. Their report ended with the message that Arnhem and Pauw, as representatives of the States General, had joined the majority vote, and that they now needed a confirmation on this resolution from the States General. The delegates explained that they came to this decision primarily because of the great need of supplies in Brazil, and asked the States General to take that into account. They argued that 'it should be feared that these lavish conquests that have been won with so much effort, honor, and reputation shall be

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<sup>382</sup> See also Chapter 5.

<sup>383</sup> 'Nu en hebben wij van de gelegentheijt deser saecken geene eigentlijcke kennis, hebben des niettemin de vrijheijt genomen van aen u Ho:Mo: desen aff te veerdigen met versoeck dat haer believe op dese saecke nae hare gewonelijcke voorsichticheijt ende moderatie te lesen, nae dat se bevinden sullen voor den meesten dienst van de lande te behoiren', NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 29-Sep-1635 letter from Frederik Hendrik.

<sup>384</sup> It does not specify which Pauw is meant here. Jan Gijsbertsz Pauw (?-1638) was delegate for Holland in the States General between 1634 and 1637, and Adriaan Pauw (1585-1653) was as well from 1631 to 1636 in his function as Grand Pensionary of Holland. However, Adriaan was with Johan de Knuyt at the French court negotiating as extraordinary ambassadors on behalf of the Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik from June 1634 to at least until September 1634. It thus seems unlikely that he drafted this report. A treaty was signed in February 1635. See: J.A. Worp, *De Briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens, Vol I (1608-1634)* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1911), 466-467; H.J.M. Nellen, *Hugo Grotius: A Lifelong Struggle for Peace in Church and State, 1583 – 1645* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015), 563-564.



utterly lost' if not supplied with basic needs.<sup>385</sup> The delegates appealed to the fear of losing honor and reputation (through a loss of the colony), rather than to delve into the technical discussion on what was, or was not, allowed according to the WIC charter. The problem was the possibility of losing honor and reputation, the solution was to bring sufficient supplies to Brazil. Since the WIC had difficulties arranging swift and efficient transportation to not only Brazil but also North America, allowing other merchants to trade to and from Brazil seemed the best solution. It meant that the States General could save its reputation and honor, thus preventing a loss, without making any costs. There was no ideology dictating a laissez-faire policy, but it was a pragmatic solution. Interestingly enough the rationale of the report thus highlights the trade to, rather than the trade from, Brazil as a decisive factor to support free trade. On Walcheren around forty per cent of the slave trade expenditure was used for purchasing locally produced goods, which made local suppliers the primary beneficiaries of this trade. It is, therefore, understandable that the seventeenth-century trade to Brazil was at least as important as the trade from the South-American colony.<sup>386</sup> Consequently, the interests of the local suppliers were important to city governments.

It was primarily this report by Arnhem and Pauw that made the States General decide on 5 October 1635 that the Board of Directors of the WIC should convene again and make a decision on the free trade issue. Whatever the directors decided would be affirmed by the States General for the rest of 1635, and for 1636.<sup>387</sup> If the Board of Directors would not be able to do so, all the parties would be requested to write down their arguments which would be presented to the States General and the Stadtholder. Awaiting this decision, the chamber Zeeland would need to allow free traders to use its ships to trade to Brazil.<sup>388</sup> In other words, the States General refused to be dragged into the fight between the WIC chambers and did not take a side in the meeting of the Board of Directors. On the other hand, the High-

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<sup>385</sup> 'is seer te bevresen dat soo royale conqueste met soo veel moeijten eer ende reputatie gewonnen teffens ende te enemael sullen verlooren gaen', NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 02-Oct-1635 Report by Arnhem and Pauw from the meeting of the Heeren XIX.

<sup>386</sup> G. de Kok, "Cursed Capital: the Economic Impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on Walcheren around 1770," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 13, no. 3 (2016): 16.

<sup>387</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 05-Oct-1635 Letter to the presiding WIC chamber of Amsterdam.

<sup>388</sup> NL-HaNA, 3.01.04.01, inv. nr. 1358c, 05-Oct-1635 Extract from the Resolutions of the States General; NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 05-Oct-1635 Letter to the WIC chamber of Zeeland.

Mightinesses established their power by enforcing that they did need to confirm the decision.

The fact that the argument presented in the delegates' report made sense from the perspective of the States General does not mean, however, that the decision in the general assembly was made on a purely rational basis. This becomes clear from a memorandum for a representative of Zeeland in that meeting, Johan de Moor. His instructions stated that if a majority of the States General voted against the 'lawful request' of the Zeeland chamber, he should emphasize the impending doom for the company, argue that this was a Company affair and not a Generality affair, and to make sure that this was all in the minutes of the meeting.<sup>389</sup>

Johan de Moor (1576-1644) is an interesting figure in this respect. He not only represented Zeeland in the meeting of the States General (since 1629), but he also represented Flushing in the meetings of the States of Zeeland (since 1633), indicating he was a member of the city council of Flushing. From 1633 to 1644 he was also on the Admiralty board of Zeeland. Moreover, he was a director for the WIC in Zeeland and one of the first and largest investors there, as well as a director of the Northern Company.<sup>390</sup> The Zeeland chamber allowed him to establish a patroonship<sup>391</sup> on Tobago in 1628, but that failed.<sup>392</sup> He had been involved in the establishment of a fort called *Kijkoveral* and a small settlement in Essequibo on the Wild Coast in 1616 together with the wealthy London-based merchant Peter Courteen.<sup>393</sup> However, when De Moor himself, as a Zeeland WIC director, had requested to supply some provisions to this settlement in November 1623 during the second meeting of the Board of Directors, the other directors deemed it not 'tolerable' to breach the WIC monopoly to allow him to trade.<sup>394</sup> In other words, the issue of free trade had a very

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<sup>389</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 05-Oct-1635 Memo for De Moor. These points all feature in the resolution of the States General, so he was successful.

<sup>390</sup> Nijenhuis et al., *Resolutiën der Staten-Generaal 1626-1630*, [Johan de Moor]; Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, 150-151.

<sup>391</sup> A proprietary colony.

<sup>392</sup> J. Venema, *Kiliaen van Rensselaer (1586-1643): designing a New World* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2010), 217-220.

<sup>393</sup> E. Mijers, "A natural partnership? Scotland and Zeeland in the early seventeenth century," in *Shaping the Stuart world, 1603-1714: the Atlantic connection*, ed. A.I Macinnes and A.H. Williamson (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Joosse, *Geloof in de Nieuwe Wereld*, 381-382.

<sup>394</sup> K. Ratelband, *De Westafrikaanse reis van Piet Heyn: 1624-1625*, Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten-Vereeniging (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2006), ciii-civ.

personal undertone for Johan de Moor and he most likely held a grudge towards some of the other directors. The WIC chamber Zeeland had, through its director Johan de Moor, a direct voice in both the States of Zeeland and the States General, which helps explain the clout the WIC chamber in Zeeland apparently had with its respective provincial political body. Moreover, his personal experience of a strictly enforced monopoly that contributed to the decline of his proprietary colony can help to explain the stubborn position of Zeeland to maintain the monopoly.

It was also Johan de Moor, in his function as chair of the meeting of the States General that same week in October, who had accepted the discussion points and the invitation for the next meeting of the *Heeren XIX* in Amsterdam starting on 8 October 1635. De Moor had replied that the date was problematic for the Zeeland chamber as its directors had to travel home first and consult their principals. It was thus decided to postpone the meeting by one week. However, when that day arrived no delegates from the States General appeared. The Amsterdam directors enquired about this and learned that the general assembly had been unaware of a meeting of the *Heeren XIX*, and had thus not nominated any delegates yet. The Amsterdam directors quickly sent an envoy asking for delegates from the States General to urgently nominate their delegates, especially considering that the delegates from Groningen had been waiting in Amsterdam since the 8<sup>th</sup> for the meeting to start.<sup>395</sup> This incident shows clearly how one individual in a particular position could largely influence the run of affairs. De Moor, being both a WIC director and the chair of that week's meeting of the States General, used his power as chair to keep certain information from reaching the meeting of the States General. What exactly motivated him remains unclear. Perhaps he anticipated that he could influence the selection procedure for the High-Mightinesses' delegates, or perhaps he wanted to increase the pressure on the decision-making process of the Board of Directors. In any case, he succeeded in delaying the meeting of the *Heeren XIX* by several days. As such, de Moor tried to serve his own interests, and those of the WIC chamber of Zeeland, first.

From the fact that the issue of free trade to Brazil was on the agenda for every following meeting of the *Heeren XIX*, it becomes apparent that the directors did not reach an agreement in October 1636. However, because every chamber other than Zeeland supported free trade,

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<sup>395</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 15-Oct-1635 Letter from the WIC chamber of Amsterdam.

and because the States General had ordered Zeeland to allow free traders to use its ships, that meant that effectively free trade was allowed during 1636. This all changed on 27 December 1636 when the States General decided that it would reinstate the Company's monopoly completely. They did so because 'they had realized with great sorrow the terrible effects free trade had had on the empty warehouses in Brazil'.<sup>396</sup> They did not even care to investigate whether this had happened because of malign practices or because of contingencies, but it had to be taken care of immediately. All ships leaving for Brazil after the 27<sup>th</sup> would be impounded and the WIC was responsible to cover possible damages to the private traders. Furthermore, the States General ordered the Company to swiftly resupply the warehouses in Brazil.<sup>397</sup>

The reason the States General reached this decision is because of a very lengthy and detailed anonymous argument why a monopoly was better. In the archive of the States of Holland moreover, there is a seventeen-page abridged version of this same report from November or December 1636. It includes a collection of letters from Brazil to the WIC on several issues, including the free trade or monopoly debate. All the letters came from members of the High Council in Brazil (*Hoge Raad van Brazilië*: Balthasar Wijntgens, Willem Schotte, Ippo Eijssens, Elias Herckmans), the Political Council in Brazil (*Politieke Raad van Brazilië*: P. Serooskercke, Jacob Stachouwer, Jan Robbertsz.), and the Admirals Jan Lichthart and Cornelis Jongeneel. They either wrote letters as members of the ruling council or on their personal title. The letters are unanimous in their advice: the trade should be kept to the Company to prevent the ruin of the colony and the extremely empty warehouses. Robbertsz: 'free traders are no friends of the Company'. Serooskercke: 'the Company is being eaten by the free traders'. Schotte: 'The Hollanders cannot stop their subprime trading (*kladden*) (...) these Amsterdam merchants are one problem, agents from directors another'.<sup>398</sup> The original unabridged report for the States General further asks: 'What are the arguments of the free traders, that have succeeded in obtaining a majority vote in the Board of Directors?'. The

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<sup>396</sup> 'met droefheijt ende groot leetwesen bespeurt de quade effecten die het openstellen van de vrijen handel op Brasil heeft gebaert ten regarde van het ontblooten van de magasijnen van de compagnie' NL-HaNA, 3.01.04.01 Staten van Holland, 1358c, 27-Dec-1636 *Extract from the Resolutions of the States General*.

<sup>397</sup> NL-HaNA, 3.01.04.01, inv. nr. 1358c, 27-Dec-1636 *Extract from the Resolutions of the States General*.

<sup>398</sup> NL-HaNA, 3.01.04.01, inv. nr. 1358c, xx/xx/1636 *Anonymous report concerning the affairs of Brazil, 1636*.

author then presents three ‘well-known’ arguments: [1] Free trade had been offered to the Portuguese in 1630; [2] The free traders and their families would not want to stay in Brazil and no new individuals would want to live there; [3] The task is too large for the WIC to complete by itself. The anonymous author of the report provided a very structured, but mostly lengthy counterargument to these three points, concluding in favor of a Company monopoly because he considered himself ‘not wiser than those living in Brazil, and the impartial merchants, skippers, and honest officers’ who had presented the arguments for a monopoly so clearly already. The States General had been persuaded by this report on what was best for the state, not necessarily what was best for the Company.

### 3.2. *SELECTING THE PLAYING FIELD*

Upon arrival of the news of the decision of the States General to reinstate the Company monopoly at the meeting of the Amsterdam directors, the Amsterdam chamber agreed that it was important they needed to lobby for reopening of the trade. In order to do so, they sent Albert Coenraats Burgh, Pieter Jansz Blauwenhaen, and Eduard Man to the Burgomasters of Amsterdam to point their attention to this issue. Ferdinand Schulenborch and Henrick Hamel were sent to the Board of Directors to prevent the Directors from changing their opinion.<sup>399</sup> Schulenborch and Hamel were very effective at the meeting of the *Heeren XIX* as they resolved on 1 January 1637 to send six delegates to the High-Mightinesses asking for an exception for the monopoly for at least a short period.<sup>400</sup> The gentlemen Albert Coenraats Burgh, Pieter Jansz Blauwenhaen (Amsterdam), Abraham Bisschop (Zealand), Johan de Voocht (Maze), Allart de Groot and Jacob Volckertsz (Norther Quarter) arrived in The Hague on 3 January. At the States General, they presented a letter arguing that there were seventeen ships ready to leave for Brazil that had already paid the recognition fee, and ships that were already loaded with a combination of Company goods and private traders’ goods. The WIC thus asked for a permission for the four ships from Amsterdam, four from Zealand, five from Maze, and four from Norther Quarter to be allowed to leave under the previous free trade conditions. The directors argued that allowing these ships to trade was a more efficient way

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<sup>399</sup> NL-HaNA. 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 14, 31-Dec-1636, [scan 442-443].

<sup>400</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 01/02-Jan-1637 Extract from the Resolutions of the Heeren XIX.

of doing business, but the fact that the Company did not have the financial means to compensate the free traders also played an important role.<sup>401</sup> It is also striking that even the Zeeland chamber had ships from private traders ready to leave for Brazil. This indicates that even though the chamber advocated a monopoly and had considerable clout within the province, there were multiple free traders happy to start trading in the WIC charter area on their own accounts. This indicates that the decision to completely reinstate the WIC monopoly on 27 December 1636 was not anticipated by several traders who had ships in the Atlantic or ready for departure in Dutch harbors. The fact that the Zeeland chamber of the WIC was now the beneficiary of a resolution by the States General, while private merchants in that province had enjoyed the prospect and practice of free trade, changed the dynamic and the character of the debate and lobbying process. Firstly, it changed the playing field, moving the attention to other provincial states than Holland and Zeeland. And secondly, as will become apparent in what follows, it increased the number of lobbyists.

The *Heeren XIX* might have been united on the temporary permission of free trade, but when the chambers of Amsterdam, Mase, and Norther Quarter suggested sending a delegation to lobby for a permanent free trade, this was vetoed by Zeeland and Groningen.<sup>402</sup> The fact that Groningen changed sides can be explained through the low amount of recognition fees paid by free traders to the chamber Groningen, making it clear that at least for that chamber; free trade did not generate enough income to allow the company to operate and that local producers in Groningen were not benefiting as much as other regions. Without a mandate from the *XIX*, both the directors and the meeting of the main investors of Amsterdam sent a joint delegation of no less than nine Amsterdam directors and eight main investors. It is important to spend a little more time exploring who these individuals were in order to show the importance of the composition.

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<sup>401</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 03-Jan-1637 Letter from the Heeren XIX.

<sup>402</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 27-Jan-1637 Remonstrance from the WIC chamber of Amsterdam.

Table 3-1: Representatives of the WIC chamber of Amsterdam to the States General in January 1637

Name	Role	Representing/Background
Albert Coenraats Burgh	Director	Amsterdam; City Council; New Netherland
Reijnier Reael	Director	Amsterdam
Johannes de Laet	Director	Leiden
Henrick Hamel	Director	Amsterdam
Jean Raye	Director	Amsterdam; Investor director
Pieter Jansz. Blauwenhaen	Director	Deventer
Ferdinand van Schulenborch	Director	Amsterdam
Eduard Man	Director	Amsterdam
Simon van der Does	Main Investor	Amsterdam; Alderman
Henrick Broen	Main Investor	Amsterdam
Frederick de Bercq	Main Investor	Amsterdam
Kiliaen van Rensselaer	Main Investor	Amsterdam; New Netherland; Investor director
Marcus van Valkenburgh	Main Investor	Amsterdam
Jacques de la Mijne	Main Investor	Amsterdam
Jacques van Hooren	Main Investor	Amsterdam, roots in Zealand and Flanders
Elias de Raet	Main Investor	Amsterdam

Source: NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 27-Jan-1637 *Remonstrance from the WIC chamber of Amsterdam*

The most prominent members on this list are probably Burgh, van der Does, and van Rensselaer. The first two held public offices in Amsterdam, while van Rensselaer and Burgh both had shares in the *patroonships* of New Netherland. Kiliaen van Rensselaer was one of the main proponents of the ‘Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions’, granted in 1629, allowing any shareholder in the Company to establish a colony in North America in the name of the Company.<sup>403</sup> That charter also allowed free trade from North America to the Low Countries for these settlers, with the exception of beaver fur, in exchange for a 5 per cent recognition fee. It has been argued that it was in fact van Rensselaer who authored the charter allowing *patroonships* and limited free trade in the WIC charter area. His advice to the company was to ‘open up the country with agriculture, that must be our first step’, because settlement was

<sup>403</sup> Knuttel 4000: Anonymous, *Vryheden by de vergaderinghe van de negenthiene vande geotroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie vergunt aen allen den ghenen, die eenighe colonien in Nieu-Nederlandt sullen planten* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz. Brand, 1630).

an essential tool for a profitable colony.<sup>404</sup> The argument that settlers were of decisive importance for a flourishing colony and could only be attracted by free trade was mirrored by the proponents of free trade in Brazil. The supporters of this 'colonial argument' deserve a little more attention.

Van Rensselaer has been called the leader of the 'colonial faction' within the WIC by historian Willem Frijhoff. The colonial faction was inspired by the ideals of Usselincx and advocated free trade to proprietary colonies in the Americas. Other members of this faction were Willem van Wely, Samuel Blommaert, Samuel Godijn, Johannes de Laet, Michiel Pauw, Albert Coenraats Burgh, Henrick Hamel, Jonas Witsen, and Pieter Evertsz Hulft from Amsterdam and Gerrit van Arnhem from Guelders. The colonial faction was the primary force behind the *patroonships* in New Netherland, while an opposing faction, the 'trade faction', advocated a strict monopoly in beaver and other pelts without the burden of costly colonies in the North America. They had less interest in other goods coming from North America. Members of the trade faction included Marcus de Vogelaer, Marcus van Valckenburg, Cornelis Bicker, Guillelmo Bartolotti, Henrick Broen, Simon van der Does, Daniel van Liebergen and Abraham Oyens.<sup>405</sup> These two factions heavily debated the privileges of the *patroonships* in New Netherland resulting in the trade faction gaining the upper hand after van Rensselaer was forbidden to combine his positions as director and *patroon* in 1631 and was consequently forced to step down as a director. After the trade faction gained control over the WIC they purged the colonial government in New Amsterdam in 1632.<sup>406</sup> Tensions between van Rensselaer and De Vogelaer ran so high that when they met each other by chance on the Dam in Amsterdam in 1633 it nearly escalated into a fist fight. Van Rensselaer reportedly 'went at De Vogelaer in such a way (...) that he will not soon forget it'.<sup>407</sup> It is thus all the more interesting that these two factions jointly operated on the issue of free trade to Brazil: Burgh, De Laet, Hamel, van Rensselaer, van Valkenburgh, Broen, van der Does represented both factions. There seems no other

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<sup>404</sup> M.W. Goodwin, *Chronicles of America, Vol. VII: Dutch and English on the Hudson: a chronicle of colonial New York* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), 32-33, quote on page 33.

<sup>405</sup> W.Th.M. Frijhoff, *Fulfilling God's Mission: The Two Worlds of Dominie Everardus Bogardus, 1607-1647* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 418-420.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

<sup>407</sup> O.A. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson: an economic and social history of Dutch New York* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 110.



explanation than that van Valkenburgh and van der Does supported free trade to Brazil because they benefited more through their private trade in sugar and slaves. van der Does was in business with Hans Bultel, whose uncle, Antoine l'Empereur had a son, Theodosius who was the second largest private sugar trader from Brazil in 1637.<sup>408</sup> In other words, even though some opposed free trade to North America, they forged alliances based on interests that propagated free trade to South America.

Other groups were missing in the delegation to the States General, however. Closer examination reveals the absence of several directors from the Amsterdam chamber. As explained earlier, any group that had invested 100,000 guilders in a particular WIC chamber was entitled to its own director. For the Amsterdam chamber those groups were the cities of Leiden, Haarlem, Deventer, and the provinces of Guelders and Utrecht. Who was the representative of Haarlem at this time is unclear. There are two known Haarlem directors; Jacob de Key and Matheus Joyen. The latter is completely unknown, and De Key can be placed in New Netherland in the 1640s, and neither of them appeared in the minutes of the Amsterdam chamber in 1636.<sup>409</sup> The delegate from Guelders, Johan Wentholt, had just been appointed for six years, starting May 1636 – a decision that had already been made by that province on 9 December 1634.<sup>410</sup> The representative of Deventer, Blauwenhaen, was present in the delegation to the States General arguing in favor of free trade, but the representatives of Utrecht, Cornelis van Wijckersloot and Pieter Varlet, were absent from this list as well. This is probably because part of the debate on free trade took place in the Provincial States of Utrecht at the same time.

WIC investors residing in Utrecht petitioned the Provincial States of Utrecht in early February 1637. They wrote that they had 'noticed that some directors paid more attention to their own interest than to that of the Company when they made every effort to keep the trade to Brazil open' for themselves.<sup>411</sup> As has become clear from the example of van der Does above, the personal trading interests of Amsterdam directors regarding trade could

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<sup>408</sup> See Appendix A and Elias, *De vroedschap*, 324-325.

<sup>409</sup> Baptism witness. Need a clear reference here. Now Internet link via google.

<sup>410</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 17-May-1636 Letter from Guelders to the States General.

<sup>411</sup> 'Gemerckt eenige Bewinthebbers, meer lettende op haer particulier, als op het voordeel van de Compagnie, gelaboreert hebben den handel op Brasil open ende aen haer ende den haren te krijgen', W.G. Brill, J.A. Grothe, and J.I.D. Nepveu, eds., *Kroniek van het Historisch genootschap Utrecht*, Vol. XXV (Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon, 1869), 198.

definitely interfere with the interest of the Company. This was against the WIC charter according to the suppliants, as the directors had sworn to maintain the interest of the company. It was now the directors who had made large profits in the free trade to Brazil, alleged the Utrecht investors, which were trying to make the States General revise its position to ban free trade. The suppliants requested that the States of Utrecht instructed their delegates at the States General that the High-Mightinesses maintain the original charter of the WIC. In the margin of the petition the States of Utrecht wrote on 10 February 1637 that they resolved to indeed instruct their delegates according to this request.<sup>412</sup>

Upon hearing this, the directors of the WIC chamber Amsterdam quickly responded. They adduced that the suppliants in the aforementioned petition 'used untruths to smirch the good name and reputation' of the directors. Thus, the Amsterdam directors felt it was necessary to justify their actions to the States of Utrecht. They did not deny that they themselves had profited from the trade to Brazil, they had simply done something that was allowed by the States General and all the necessary fees had always been paid to the Company. In reality, they argued, they had done so in the interest of the Company. The allegations by the Utrecht investors were, in other words, unjust. Moreover, they should have addressed their issues with the Utrecht directors in the Amsterdam chamber rather than with the provincial states.<sup>413</sup> In addition, the WIC chamber of Amsterdam commissioned the two Utrecht directors and the Deventer director (van Wijckersloot, Varlet, and Blauwenhaen) to the meeting of Utrecht's provincial assembly to support their argument.<sup>414</sup>

That this issue surfaced in Utrecht is important for three reasons. Firstly, it shows that the Amsterdam chamber was not undivided on the issue of free trade. Or at least that the Amsterdam investors, who presented themselves unified at the States General, were not settled on the issue. All the Amsterdam directors advocated for free trade and some of the (larger) investors did too, but there was a considerable share of investors with no means of trading to Brazil themselves, that considered themselves disadvantaged by this decision. The Utrecht investors had a different interest than the Amsterdam investors. The representatives at the WIC chamber where they had invested their money, Cornelis van Wijckersloot and

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<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 197-199 Petition by the WIC shareholders residing in Utrecht.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., 200-202, Letter WIC chamber of Amsterdam to States of Utrecht. .

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 202-203, Letter of credence by WIC chamber.

Pieter Varlet, sided with the free trade faction. In an attempt to still get their way, the Utrecht investors turned to the States of Utrecht. This brings us to the second reason why this is relevant. The Amsterdam chamber did not want to fight this issue in another arena than the WIC, the States General, and the Stadtholder. In order to do so it declared it was an illegitimate action to turn to the States of Utrecht. This is the third relevant point and shows how issue of sovereignty and legitimacy that originally played on a general level trickled down to debates regarding the WIC. The WIC directors argued that every decision by the *Heeren XIX* had been made 'in concordance, with consent, and in presence of delegates from the High-Mightinesses' and with the highest authority already in agreement, it was unnecessary harmful to the Company to 'disclose the state of affairs to everyone'.<sup>415</sup> Thus, because representatives of the States General had been present, the Board of Directors could appropriate some of the Generality's authority, the directors argued. Effectively, as it advocated to shunt the provincial assembly off on this issue, this was an argument against the particular ambition of the provinces and in favor of more sovereignty for the States General.

It was a new standpoint from the Amsterdam directors to claim that the States of Utrecht were not the place to discuss WIC policy, considering that it had not hindered the directors to petition to the States of Utrecht before. In an undated document that was probably submitted in early 1637, the Amsterdam directors requested that Utrecht delegates would exert themselves in the States General to allow free trade until further advice would arrive from Brazil. Obtaining advice from the colonists in Brazil had been beneficial for the free trade lobby in 1636, so it seemed likely that this would again be the case. However, in that same document the WIC directors also clearly stated that 'this affair, politically, should be a known maxim of state for the Company'.<sup>416</sup> Even though they requested a favorable action from the States of Utrecht, the WIC chamber Amsterdam at the same time stressed that the decision should always be their (political) domain. This was of course a matter of power for

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<sup>415</sup> 'de Compagnie nadeelich soude wesen, aen ydereen int particulier opening van alles te doen, sonderlinge soo alles is geschiet met goetvinden, advoy, ende in presence van de gecommiteerden van hare Hoge Mog.', *ibid.*, 201-202, Letter WIC chamber of Amsterdam to States of Utrecht.

<sup>416</sup> 'Dat de saecke, polityckelijck geconsidereert, een notoir maxime van staet voor de Compagnie moet sijn', *ibid.*, 191-197, Deduction for the States of Utrecht by the WIC directors Amsterdam, quote on 193.

the Amsterdam chamber, but it was also an attempt to limit the playing field for lobbying to the WIC, the States General, and the Stadtholder.<sup>417</sup>

### 3.3. *MAKING IT COUNT*

The seventeen directors and main investors from Amsterdam both delivered their own arguments in favor of free trade to the States General on 30 January 1637. The directors started off with the reasons why originally free trade was decided back when the Company had captured Recife and Olinda in 1630, and complemented this with a numbered list of twelve additional arguments. The 1630 arguments were the same as the arguments delivered to the States of Utrecht, with even some of the sentences directly matching. They repeated the well-known arguments that free trade had already been promised to the Portuguese inhabitants, and that it was not fair to change the rules now.<sup>418</sup> It also included argumentation similar to the ‘colonial faction’ argument used for New Netherland: without settlers to cultivate the land, the colony would never be profitable and free trade (and passage) was the way to attract settlers, and to prevent current settlers from leaving. The settlers would of course also create a market for goods shipped from the Republic. Moreover, the free trade lobby argued, to force the (Portuguese) plantation owners to only sell to and buy from the Company was nothing else than true slavery. And everyone knew that ‘a monopoly is the most odious thing in the world and the most harmful practice of all’.<sup>419</sup> This is a moral argument against free trade, instead of a strictly economic argument. Thus, while claiming a moral high ground, the free trade lobby knew that from an economic standpoint their arguments were most likely not more convincing than the monopolist lobby. The majority of the additional twelve points elaborated on the 1630-arguments, but there was also new reasoning, including the one that the Company should behave like ‘a mother and a

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<sup>417</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02 inv. nr. 5754, 02-Jan-1637 Extract Resolutions Heeren XIX.

<sup>418</sup> This had indeed been promised, in fact already in 1625 this regulation was established after the conquest of Bahia. The inhabitants of Brazil were required to pay the same duties as they had during the Portuguese reign and use Company ships for ‘a reasonable freight price’, see the copy from the resolution book of the WIC in the petition of Joseph Israel da Costa, NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 12564.5.6.

<sup>419</sup> ‘Wel wetende dat een Monopolium het odieuste dingh is van de werelt ende het schadelijkste bedrijf van alle staten’, NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 30-Jan-1637 Reasons WIC directors Amsterdam.

wet nurse'. Once again, the free trade lobby appealed to the natural relation, and the moral obligation, for the Republic to nurture its dependent colony. Free trade would provide the solution, while increasing prices through a monopoly for already scanty goods was considered the opposite of mother- or wet-nurse-like behavior. Another important argument was that it would be costlier to maintain a monopoly because not only would the Company have to hire more servants, becoming subject to their disloyalty – 'as they had seen but too often in other places'.

The investors from Amsterdam joined forces with the investors from Norther Quarter for their petition supporting free trade. They submitted their request in person, orally presented their considerations, and enclosed a resolution from the *Heeren XIX* from 18 July 1636 specifying how much of the recognition fees would be paid to the investors.<sup>420</sup>

The Zealand chamber meanwhile employed a lobbying tactic that relied on their political connections and their support in numbers. After the Zealanders had learned that the WIC chamber Amsterdam had no intention of accepting the decision of the States General and that the latter were lobbying for free trade in The Hague, the WIC chamber of Zealand did three things. Firstly, they summoned the main investors in their chamber for a special meeting. Secondly, the Zealanders wrote to the city council of Middelburg that they were worried because the Amsterdam chamber came with the authority of the city council of Amsterdam to The Hague since some of their lobbyists had a double role. They thus requested a recommendation letter from their city in Zealand too, to which the Middelburg city council was happy to oblige.<sup>421</sup> This recommendation provided the Zealand lobbyists with extra authority that could help to counter the weight of the Amsterdam city council. Along the same lines the States of Zealand wrote a letter advising the States General to stay with its decision of 27 December, despite Amsterdam 'employing all their means and techniques to destroy and alter' that decision.<sup>422</sup> The third tactic was to also show their strength in numbers. The summoned meeting by the main investors resolved two things.

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<sup>420</sup> 'Ende dat van dese verhooginge apparte reeckening gehouden sal werden om daer van uijtdeelinghe aen de participanten te doen', NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 30-Jan-1637 Reasons WIC investors Amsterdam and Norther Quarter.

<sup>421</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 03-Feb-1637 Letter from the City Council of Middelburg to the States General.

<sup>422</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 03-Feb-1637 Letter from the States of Zealand to the States General.

They delegated three amongst themselves, Lucas Schoorer, Heindrick Soomer, and Johan le Gouche, to go to The Hague to lobby for the monopoly shoulder to shoulder with the regular delegate directors and investors that were in The Hague.<sup>423</sup> Additionally, the meeting crafted a letter of credence (*geloofsbrief*) for these three individuals. In order to increase their weight and to show support for the Zealand trio, fifty-six other investors put their signature on this letter of credence. This meant that the fifty-six individuals that had signed the letter of credence transferred their ‘voice’ to the three lobbyists in The Hague. Furthermore, this letter stated, without providing details, that free trade would ruin the company. Prominent members on the signature list included Guillaume de Zoete van Houthain, Lieutenant-Admiral of Zeeland, Pieter Boudaen Courten, director of the VOC, Northern Company, and New Netherland Company, and multiple other individuals who would in the future become WIC directors or WIC employees in Brazil such as David Baute and Jean Louijs.

What becomes clear from what is described above is that when the chamber Amsterdam employed a certain lobbying technique the chamber Zeeland tried to cancel that advantage by doing the same thing. The Amsterdam chamber tried to bring political weight to the meeting of the States General by sending Amsterdam council members. The Zeeland chamber tried to cancel out this weight by requesting a letter from the city council of Middelburg siding with them. The Middelburg city council explicitly wrote that ‘that is why they requested a letter of recommendation from us, which we cannot refuse’.<sup>424</sup> The Zeeland chamber, worried by the number of delegates the Amsterdam chamber had sent, tried to cancel out that factor by showing an even larger number of supporters amongst Zeeland investors. With these factors more or less balanced out, it came to the power of the argumentation before the States General to reach a decision.

The Zeeland chamber tried a rhetorical trick by arguing that it had presented its arguments which had clearly convinced the States General to reinstate the monopoly, so that it was not necessary – for time saving reasons – to argue that again. When the Zeeland chamber learned that this was insufficient to convince the High-Mightinesses, it presented its argument again in a forty-two-page exposé totaling twenty-two arguments. Again, the

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<sup>423</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 04-Feb-1637 Letter by the Zeeland main investors to the States General.

<sup>424</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 03-Feb-1637 Letter from the City Council of Middelburg to the States General.

chamber of Zeeland copied a technique from the Amsterdam chamber by numbering their argument and trying to exceed Amsterdam's twelve arguments. The numbering of arguments was something that had not happened in the previous years, but it was again something that once more tried to show the support in numbers. This exposé was presented in the name of Zeeland, its main investors, Maze, and Groningen. After Groningen, it was now also the Maze chamber, which had previously supported free trade, that sided with the monopolists.<sup>425</sup> The majority of the arguments in this petition were not new; the monopolists admitted that it was indeed against right of peoples (*recht van alle volkeren*) to limit trade, but it would be wrong to the investors to change the charter. If free trade would be allowed, the WIC would no longer be a trading company, the monopolists argued, and the WIC was never created 'to dispute sovereignty of the King of Spain through war'.<sup>426</sup> A new argument, however, was that the monopolists considered the Portuguese in Brazil lucky as they were allowed to trade at all by their victor.<sup>427</sup> Clearly, in the mind of the monopolists, the WIC still resembled some of the ideals of Usselincx, who had propagated peaceful settlement. If the WIC would secede its monopoly, it had fully become a Company of War comparable to the Admiralties, while the Zealanders envisioned a Company of Trade.

The heart of the matter was that the monopolists wanted to hold on to what was stated in the charter, while the free traders wanted to maintain what was promised by the Board of Directors to the Portuguese when they were conquered. But it was not only about what was right. From the documents, it seems like the Zealanders genuinely did not appreciate that free traders reaped profits while the Company was reduced to warfare financed through recognition fees. On the other hand, the proponents of free trade did not only seek their own interest. It really seems like they too were sincere when they argued that free trade was necessary to attract hard-needed colonists to make the plantations and sugar mills flourish. These opinions were not mutually exclusive; if the Amsterdam chamber had seen a solution to attract colonists while maintaining the Company monopoly, they might have done so. But when it came down to it, they felt that a flourishing colony in the long run outweighed

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<sup>425</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 07-Feb-1637 Reasons Zeeland, Maze, and Groningen chambers for a monopoly.

<sup>426</sup> 'dat de voors: compagnie niet en is geformeert omme door den oorloch met de koning van Spanje te disputeren over de souvereiniteit van de voors: landen'.

<sup>427</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 07-Feb-1637 Reasons Zeeland, Maze, and Groningen chambers for a monopoly, argument 7.

maximizing profits for the company in the short run. That these issues were not mutually exclusive probably explains why the decision-making process by the States General was so far from straight-forward and why they were so susceptible to arguments by both lobbying parties. The end result was that the debate was not about a *laissez-faire* policy versus a mercantilist policy and it neither became a moral question. Instead, with both factions stating that their respective solution was better, the basic question boiled down to: which policy is more profitable for the Company and the common wealth?

### 3.4. *MAKING IT COUNT EVEN MORE*

The monopolists, who apart from the directors from Zealand, Maze, and Groningen now also included the investors from these chambers, provided the first account. It was not the account they had made themselves, but that provided by a special committee on 1 January 1637 after a request by the *Heeren XIX*. The calculations started off with a fictitious amount of 1,350,000 guilders, which would buy a free trader certain goods that were in demand in Brazil. This included wine, oil, barley, tobacco pipes, shirts and various other provisions. According to the calculations, these could be sold for a little over 2,933,271 guilders in Brazil. Not all of this was profit though, as the free traders paid 590,795 guilders in recognition fees and ship rental to the WIC. The almost three million guilders would of course not be paid in cash, but in sugar. This equaled 20,952 chests of sugar of 560 pounds which could be sold for 12 stivers per pound, or 336 guilders per chest.<sup>428</sup> In other words, free traders would buy goods in the Republic for 1,350,000 guilders, which could be sold for just shy of 3,000,000 in Brazil. Those nearly 3 million guilders worth of sugar in Brazil, equaled 7,039,872 guilders resale value in the Republic. Excluding all the purchase costs, insurance costs, leakage, and recognition fees, this accumulated to a net profit of 5,164,128 guilders for the free traders, almost nine times the 590,795 guilders the Company made for this transaction.<sup>429</sup> To make a

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<sup>428</sup> 1 arroba is 28 pounds of sugar; each chest is 70 arrobas so 560 pound. 2,933,271 guilders could buy one 419,040 arrobas of sugar in Brazil according to these calculations.

<sup>429</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 09-Feb-1637 Calculations in favor of a monopoly presented to the States General.



comparison, for the years 1635 and 1636 the WIC received a total of 496,243 guilders in recognition, 83.9 per cent of which was paid in Amsterdam.<sup>430</sup>

It is very well possible that previous versions of this calculation influenced the States General in their decision to reinstate the monopoly on 27 December 1636. The way the documents are arranged in the archive definitely suggests such a theory, as they follow a copy of the outgoing letter announcing the decision of the States General. The fact that the document was presented and confirmed at the meeting of the *Heeren XIX* on 1 January definitely leaves open the option for the circulation of a preliminary draft of the calculation a few days earlier in The Hague.

The Amsterdam chamber and its main investors however had some objections to the calculations presented by the special WIC committee and presented their criticism to the States General three days after the monopolists had provided their accounts. The first objection was that the Company would suffer from 'fraud', just like they were experiencing on a daily basis on the Guinea coast and for which they had almost no remedy.<sup>431</sup> Moreover, the monopolists had overestimated the price for which the sugar could be sold in the Republic. They had added 2 stivers per pound, making realistic pricing 10 stivers per pound instead of 12. This created a difference of 1,173,312 guilders to the net profit. Another mistake made by the monopolists was that they first deducted a twenty per cent leakage, and then calculated insurance costs. This was not correct according to the Amsterdam chamber; it was normal practice to calculate insurance costs first, and then discount for leakage. The twenty per cent was highly optimistic, too, according to free traders. This claim was substantiated with an example of the merchant who tried to ship twelve vats of whale oil (*traan*) and only succeeded in bringing less than two full vats to Brazil. All of this in combination with a fifty per cent profit margin led to completely unrealistic prices for products in Brazil; a pound of cheese would come to 6 stivers in Brazil instead of 3 in the Republic, a jug of wine would be 20 stivers instead of eleven, oil 24 versus 15 stivers, and a six-pound rye bread would be no less than 13 stivers compared to 5 in the Republic. The WIC chamber Amsterdam did not

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<sup>430</sup> Fl. 57.659 for the chamber of Zeeland; Fl. 22.258 for Groningen; Fl. 416.326 for the chamber of Amsterdam. See: NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 07-Feb-1637 received recognition in Zeeland, Maze, and Groningen; NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 04-Feb-1637 received recognition in Amsterdam.

<sup>431</sup> 'de frauden die de compagnie als selffs soude handelen bij haare ministers heeft te lijden gelijk se dagelijcx in Guinea ende elders bevinden ende echter qualijck connen remedieren', NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 12-Feb-1637 Counter calculations by the WIC chamber of Amsterdam and its investors.

know the prices in Brazil either, but according to the prices following from the profit margins that the monopolists presented, an average soldier or sailor would have to pay twenty-one guilders a month for provisions from their ten-and-a-half-guilder payment for provisions (*mondgelt*). In other words, there would be no market to sell goods this expensively. The company would be forced to sell goods at a loss, and would only be able to make money on the return cargo. The same would be true for the free traders too, continued the Amsterdam chamber, as they would be competing on a free market and thus would not be able to set a price to sell their products for. But that would lead to lower prices for the company and its servants in Brazil.<sup>432</sup>

The next step for the free trade lobby was to prove that it was possible to cover the costs of maintaining a colony in Brazil from the revenue from free trade. They also calculated with the fictitious 1,350,000 guilders. In recognition fees the WIC would receive 651,090 guilders, indeed higher than the monopolists had argued, because the Amsterdam chamber also included a fee on the return freight. Their calculations totaled 14,464 chests of sugar because of lower selling price of commodities in Brazil. The WIC was entitled to twenty per cent of those chests valued at 809.760 guilders. On the other eighty per cent of the sugar chests the free traders would have to pay a recognition fee, convoy, a 'sugar percent', a ten percent fee for the chests, and a three percent fee for the captaincy totaling almost two million guilders. The WIC would maintain its monopoly on brazilwood and 'blacks', and further add revenue from regalia, privateering and some minor small incomes. All in all, this came to 4,250,397 guilders and five stivers. The costs for Brazil on the other hand were 2,676,000 guilders. This paid for 6.000 soldiers, 2.000 sailors, their provisions, 18 large ships, 20 yachts, 27 extra rented ships, ammunition, and maintenance of forts. In other words, the company could make a profit of 1,574,397 guilders under a free trade policy. This amount could increase an additional 532,000 when the lands were brought under complete control of the Company, which henceforth would need only half of the soldiers and sailors.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 12-Feb-1637 Counter argument by the WIC chamber of Amsterdam and its investors.

<sup>433</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 21-Feb-1637 Counter calculations by the WIC chamber of Amsterdam and its investors.

Table 3-2: Competing calculations for economic policy in 1637

	Monopoly lobby	Free trade lobby
Goods in Republic	€ 1,350,000.00	€ 1,350,000.00
Goods value in Brazil	€ 2,933,271.00	
Sugar value in Republic	€ 7,039,872.00	
Expenditure	€ 2,000,744.00	
Profit for WIC	€ 5,039,128.00	€ 408,822.00
Recognition REP-BRA		€ 651,090.25
<i>Private trade</i>		€ 4,048,800.00
Sugar fee 20%		€ 809,760.00
Recognition BRA-REP		€ 451,460.00
Convoy		€ 30,316.00
Sugar percent		€ 162,008.00
Chest owner 10%		€ 404,880.00
Captaincy owner 3%		€ 112,000.00
Brasilwood estimate		€ 250,000.00
Regalia		€ 150,000.00
Enslaved Africans (4,000)		€ 400,000.00
Other		€ 400,000.00
Income for WIC	€ 5,039,128.00	€ 4,250,397.25

Source: NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754.

To what extent were the prices mentioned by both parties correct? Was Amsterdam right in claiming that the monopolists overestimated the price of sugar by two stivers? That is actually difficult to say. Both of them were right because they did not specify whether they talked about white sugar or moscovados. Both types of sugar came from Brazil. The average price for white sugar in the years 1631-1636 was a little bit over thirteen stivers, while moscovados was just over ten stivers. White sugar (or *blancos*) and moscovados were two types of sugar that were held in the highest regard and thus the most in demand at the refineries in the Republic. The third type, *panella*, was brownish and considered inferior.<sup>434</sup> The WIC chamber Zeeland would in their defense to the recalculations by Amsterdam touch upon the issue of white sugar or moscovados, but only to mention that their price of twelve stivers was not unrealistic considering the fact that moscovados were sold for twelve to

<sup>434</sup> K. Glamann, *Dutch Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 162.

thirteen stivers, and *blancos* for sixteen stivers and up.<sup>435</sup> For the year 1637 this statement was actually true, as can be seen in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3: Sugar prices in the Dutch Republic with East Indian sugar as a comparison

Sugar prices in the Republic in stivers per pound				
Year	Brazilian white sugar	Moscovados	East India <i>kandij</i>	East India <i>poeder</i>
1631	13,40	11,80	-	10,80
1632	14,00	10,80	14,20	10,80
1633	13,40	10,80	9,80	9,20
1634	13,20	10,00	9,80	9,80
1635	13,20	10,20	11,00	9,80
1636	12,00	10,40	11,60	-
1637	17,00	13,40	16,60	-
1638	13,60	10,80	-	10,00
1639	-	-	9,80	6,60
1640	11,00	9,80	12,80	9,40
1641	10,20	7,60	-	7,00
1642	9,20	6,80		
1643	8,80	6,20		
1645	9,20	7,80		
1646	13,00	11,40		
1648	12,00	8,60		
1649	13,20	10,40		
1650	13,40	9,80		
1651	14,60	10,60		
1652	13,80	10,00		
1653	13,20	10,20		
1654	13,80	10,20		

Source: Glamann, *Dutch Asiatic Trade*, 154-157; Posthumus, *Prijsgeschiedenis*, 122-131.

Amsterdam had pointed out that sugar was a difficult commodity to maintain a stable price for. Unlike brazilwood, sugar was grown in other places under Dutch control, such as Formosa and Java, or could be brought to the Republic via Portuguese ports.<sup>436</sup> Even though this is technically true, the sugar prices in Table 3-3 are very consistent. Another argument put forward by the Amsterdam chamber was that there were at most 9.000 chests of sugar being produced in Brazil because the guerilla warfare had destroyed so many plantations

<sup>435</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 21-Feb-1637 Argument Zeeland, Groningen and Maze with calculation.

<sup>436</sup> T. Andrade, *Lost Colony: The untold story of China's first great victory over the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 52.

and sugar mills. Thus, both the roughly 21,000 chests listed by the special WIC committee and the 14,000 chests listed by Amsterdam were rather optimistic. In the next set of calculations brought to the States General, both the monopolists and the free traders scaled down their sugar revenue to 7,000 chests of sugar. On the same day that Amsterdam had presented their calculations to the States General, it was first Zealand, Groningen, and Maze who handed in their criticism.<sup>437</sup> Two days later, it was now the 23 February 1637, they were followed by Amsterdam.<sup>438</sup> The Amsterdam chamber alleged that the Zealand chamber should have made apologies for all the mistakes they had provided to the States General, and returned to the argument that settlers were necessary in order to increase the so dearly needed production. Settlers were only to be attracted through free trade. Therefore, they now provided a calculation without new settlers and a constant revenue of 7,000 chests of sugar. The cost of maintaining Brazil for two years amounted to 6,058,800. The income for the WIC in the case of free trade would be 127,998 guilders higher than through a monopoly, according to the Amsterdam chamber. This small difference effectively meant a loss of 4.6 or 4.8 million guilders every two years in the case of free trade and monopoly respectively. So both scenarios caused a loss for the Company for the foreseeable future, but the petitioners did not provide further explanations on how to solve that.

Both parties provided very detailed calculations of their preferred proposed policy. Statements regarding the economic effects of proposed policy is something commonly associated with present-day governmental planning agencies, and less with the seventeenth century. Though, there is some historical scholarship on the importance of what William Petty coined 'political arithmetic' in the 1670s. It is argued that there was at least since the medieval period an increased importance to quantitative sources to substantiate government policy. In England, by 1660, calculation increased in popularity for political rhetoric.<sup>439</sup> Concomitantly, 'a new political culture with a deeper interest in political economy and accounting was emerging', according to Jacob Soll. Not only Britain, but also France and Brandenburg-Prussia had started giving political primacy to financial managers.<sup>440</sup> In its

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<sup>437</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 21-Feb-1637 Argument Zealand, Groningen and Maze with calculation.

<sup>438</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 23-Feb-1637 Argument Amsterdam with calculation.

<sup>439</sup> Bick, "Governing the Free Sea," 223-230.

<sup>440</sup> J. Soll, "Accounting for Government: Holland and the Rise of Political Economy in Seventeenth-Century Europe," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 40, no. 2 (2009): 216.

emphasis on the economic consequences of proposed policy as early as the 1630s, the Dutch Republic was ahead of other European countries. Proponents and opponents of Company monopoly discussed on the details of the price of rye or cheese to dispute each other's calculations and its consequences for the political economy. More importantly, it brought the decision on the free trade issue back to an economic level. This might seem an obvious conclusion, but it contradicts the view that this decision was so firmly rooted in judicial contemplation based on Hugo Grotius' *Mare Liberum* or *jure gentium* arguing that 'free and open trade should be refused to nobody'.<sup>441</sup> There are indeed traces of this type of argument in the different petitions, and it is more prominent in pamphlets, but the lengthy, incredibly detailed, and debated calculations by both parties show that people tried to argue what was best for the Company – or even for the common wealth. It is thus questionable whether Weststeijn's conclusion that 'clearly, the ideological origins of Dutch colonialism in the seventeenth century were deeply rooted in the late humanist culture' stands up to scrutiny when it comes to issue of free trade.<sup>442</sup>

### 3.5. *THE ROLE OF THE AMSTERDAM CITY COUNCIL*

Before making a decision, the States General requested a new report to make sense of the different arguments. Hendrick van der Capellen toe Rijssel and the other delegates of the States General that held a meeting with the different WIC representatives drafted a summary of letters, the arguments by Amsterdam and the other chambers, and included short interviews with other individuals they deemed relevant in their capacity as impartial merchants. This document was handed to the States General on 25 February.<sup>443</sup> The political and military councils in Brazil wrote clearly that they favored a monopoly in order to fill the warehouses of the Company again.<sup>444</sup> The next one they approached were the Amsterdam representatives. They listed eight arguments: 1. The company did not have enough credit to trade; 2. Free traders could better supply the captaincies because they do have credit; 3. Free

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<sup>441</sup> Weststeijn, "Making of Free Trade Ideology," 191-192.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>443</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 25-Feb-1637 Report by mr van der Capellen toe Rijssel and others.

<sup>444</sup> These '13 letters from 9 individuals' must be the same letters as found in the States of Holland archive: NL-HaNA, 3.01.04.01, inv. nr. 1358c, xx/xx/1636 Anonymous report concerning the affairs of Brazil, 1636.

trade would attract more settlers; 4. Free individuals would be better to erect *engenhos* or sugar villages; 5. The WIC had promised free trade to the Portuguese; 6. The WIC needed to treat the Portuguese better than the Spanish did to make them into allies; 7. The Company already earned five to six tons of gold<sup>445</sup> through recognition fees, which could be increased to 2,5 million guilders; 8. Free trade would not only result in break-even, but would lead to profit.

Up next were the representatives of the Zeeland chamber. They provided six reasons: 1. Amsterdam's request was contrary to the WIC charter; 2. Zeeland represented the general interest, not a particular interest of free traders; 3. Brazil would be better cultivated and populated through public order of the WIC than through private traders seeking profit; 4. It would be unlawful to make the WIC pay for war, while the private traders reaped the profits; 5. So far recognition fees had only supplied one tenth of the costs of the colony; 6. If the other chambers did not have enough credit to send goods to the colony, the Zeeland chamber could provide trading credit for the other chambers. There was one condition though, and that was that the provisions would have to be bought in Zeeland.<sup>446</sup> Especially this last point demonstrates how the issue of Brazilian trade was not just about the sugar coming from the colony, but equally about the supply of the goods for the colony. City governments were interested in supporting and protecting the local merchants and craftsmen that provided the Company with goods on the outbound voyage.<sup>447</sup> Considering that 83.9 per cent of the private traders' recognition fees in the previous years had been collected in Amsterdam, it is to be expected that the majority of supplies for the outbound voyage would be purchased in and around Amsterdam.<sup>448</sup> The result of this, (especially) Zeeland feared, was that even though the impact of free trade regulations on the entire economic pie of the Republic would not differ dramatically from monopoly regulations, the regional impact could very well be dramatic. In other words, a fair risk would be *internal*

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<sup>445</sup> 500,000-600,000 guilders

<sup>446</sup> 'mits dat sij strecken aen haer bronnen', NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 25-Feb-1637 Report by mr van der Capellen toe Rijssel and others.

<sup>447</sup> Kok, "Cursed Capital."

<sup>448</sup> Fl. 57.659 for the chamber of Zeeland; Fl. 22.258 for Groningen; Fl. 416.326 for the chamber of Amsterdam. See: NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 07-Feb-1637 received recognition in Zeeland, Maze, and Groningen; NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 04-Feb-1637 received recognition in Amsterdam.

*contraction or regional asymmetry* where a larger share of the economic wealth and power base in the Republic could gravitate towards Holland and Amsterdam in particular.<sup>449</sup>

The committee had requested the States General to appoint 'some impartial merchants' and 'investors who were not attached to the free trade'.<sup>450</sup> The committee interviewed the suggested Kiliaen van Rensselaer and George Everhart Klenck, both merchants from Amsterdam. Van Rensselaer has been discussed above. Klenck (1580-1646) was a merchant primarily trading to Russia with a good relationship with the Tsar. He hosted Albert Coenraats Burgh in his Russian residence when Burgh was on his way as ambassador to the Russian court in 1630.<sup>451</sup> Furthermore, in November 1636, Klenck was involved in buying all the VOC's pepper in collaboration with Daniel Godijn and Davind Fransz & Co.<sup>452</sup> All of Klenck's sons later entered into the service of the VOC.<sup>453</sup>

The committee asked the two merchants if they had been involved in private trading to Brazil. They responded that they both were investors in the Amsterdam chamber, but that they had not been trading to Brazil. The committee also asked what they deemed better for the Company: a monopoly or free trade. Van Rensselaer and Klenck responded that the magistracy of Amsterdam was very involved in this case, and that they felt conscience-stricken about speaking without the magistracy's consent. Although, if the States General could free them from the retribution by the Amsterdam magistracy after their statements, they were willing to openly share their opinion based on their experience. Considering this answer, the committee told them that they did not want to get them into trouble for their opinion, so they would not proceed further questioning.<sup>454</sup>

The lobbying activities took an interesting turn with this statement by the two Amsterdam merchants. Firstly, it shows that certain groups, in this case the Amsterdam leadership, with a strong position of power could employ that power for their own interest well beyond the 'official channels'. In this case the fear of retribution from the Amsterdam

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<sup>449</sup> Joh. de Vries, "De economische achteruitgang der Republiek in de achttiende eeuw" (PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 1959), 36-39.

<sup>450</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr 12564.5.6, entry for 21-Feb-1637.

<sup>451</sup> J.H. de Stoppelaer, *Balthasar de Moucheron: een bladzijde uit de Nederlandsche handelsgeschiedenis tijdens den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1901), 69-71.

<sup>452</sup> Glamann, *Dutch Asiatic Trade*, 33.

<sup>453</sup> W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie op hare Buiten-Comptoiren in Azië* (Amsterdam: Liebaert, 1944), 133-134; Elias, *De vroedschap*, Vol. II, 565.

<sup>454</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 25-Feb-1637 Report by mr van der Capellen toe Rijssel and others.



leadership was enough for van Rensselaer and Klenck to align with the city's official policy. Considering that van Rensselaer was amongst the eight Amsterdam investors who had openly advocated free trade less than a month earlier it seems likely that that position aligned with the view point of the Amsterdam leadership. This shows the extent of the effect of the city of Amsterdam's informal coercion within the Dutch Republic. It seems like van Rensselaer was little more than a prominent messenger for the Amsterdam leadership's interests. It should be noted that van Rensselaer was not the only one giving ambiguous advice at this time though. Adriaan van der Dussen reportedly signed a general letter together with the rest of the political council advocating free trade, but in a private letter to the WIC chamber Rotterdam he showed to be a supporter of a Company monopoly.<sup>455</sup> Who made up the Amsterdam leadership that influenced van Rensselaer's and Klenck's statements in these years and what can explain their position?

The leadership (*magistraat*) is a bit of an ambiguous term that can either mean the Burgomasters or the city council as a whole. There were five Burgomasters in Amsterdam in 1637: Dirk Bas (1569-1637), Jacob Dircksz de Graeff (1571-1638), Jan Cornelisz Geelvinck (1579-1651), Pieter Pietersz Hasselaer (1583-1651), and Gerard Schaep (1598-1666). Normally there were four Burgomasters, but Dirck Bas died on 17 August 1637 and Elias does not specify which of the four others was the one who replaced him as a Burgomaster.<sup>456</sup> None of the five Burgomasters had personal ties to the WIC. At the same time, two of them, Bas and Hasselaer, were directors for the VOC while being members of the city council. Bas had seven children, two of them were WIC or VOC directors and two of them were married to a VOC or WIC director. De Graeff had five children, one of whom was a VOC director and none were WIC directors. Geelvinck had six children, one of whom was married to a VOC director, and Geelvinck himself had privately traded to the Guinea coast with Jacob Poppen. Hasselaer had a brother who was a VOC director, just like himself, and his father had also been a VOC director until his death in 1616. His father, moreover, had been involved in the Brazil trade before the chartering of the WIC together with Reynier Pauw. Schaep had no brothers or children, but his wife had two sisters. One of the sisters married a WIC director,

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<sup>455</sup> Brill, Grothe, and Nepveu, *Kron. Hist. Gen. Utr.*, XXV, 232 Missive of Artichofsky.

<sup>456</sup> My guess is Gerard Schaep though as he only entered the City Council in 1638. On the other hand, Jacob Backer was a Burgomaster several times without ever being in the Council. So there is no certainty.

the other a VOC director. That WIC director was Michiel Pauw, a son of the aforementioned Reynier Pauw.<sup>457</sup> Michiel Pauw was the *patroon* of an island called Fernando de Noronha off the coast of Brazil and he had traded privately to Brazil in 1618.<sup>458</sup> When considering all the familial ties to the VOC and WIC for the years 1636 and 1637, it becomes clear that the VOC was much better connected to the Amsterdam political elite: 14 connections to the VOC and only 5 to the WIC (see Table 3-4).

Table 3-4: Familial connections to the two main chartered companies for Amsterdam Burgomasters (1636-1637).<sup>459</sup>

First name	Last name	Years		Self		Brother		Child		Father		Son in Law		Father in Law		Brother in Law	
				VOC	WIC	VOC	WIC	VOC	WIC	VOC	WIC	VOC	WIC	VOC	WIC	VOC	WIC
Dirck	Bas	'36	'37	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1,5	1	0	0	0,5	0
Andries	Bicker	'36		1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abraham	Boom	'36		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Jacob	de Graeff		'37	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan	Geelvinck	'36	'37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Pieter	Hasselaer		'37	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gerard	Schaep		'37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	TOTAL			3	0	2	1	2	1	2	0	2,5	1	0	0	2,5	2

Source: Elias, *De vroedschap van Amsterdam*, and De Laet, *Jaerlijcks Verhael*.

It is not manageable to comprehensibly track the familial ties for all the 35 members of the city council for 1637. However, if we just consider the personal connections to the WIC and VOC of the council members for 1636 and 1637 (totaling 37) a similar pattern emerges: twelve were VOC directors and only three were WIC directors. Those three were Jacob Pietersz Hooghkamer, Simon van der Does, and Albert Coenraats Burgh.<sup>460</sup> In conclusion, the WIC was poorly connected to the magistracy of Amsterdam. This can explain why the magistracy was strongly supporting free trade to Brazil. Both the council and the Burgomasters in 1636-1637 had little natural 'inclination' to support the WIC. This facilitated an easier possibility for the free trade lobby in the city to have their arguments heard.

<sup>457</sup> All these statements come from the personal pages of the mentioned individuals in Elias, *De vroedschap*.

<sup>458</sup> Venema, *Kiliaen van Rensselaer*, 219. Stadsarchief Amsterdam (NL-AsdSAA), 5075 Notaries in Amsterdam, inv. nr. 381 Notaris Jacob and Nicolaes Jacobs, deeds 300 and 360.

<sup>459</sup> 1 point means a director; 0,5 points means an employee of that company.

<sup>460</sup> Elias, *De vroedschap*. passim.

Moreover, while WIC exports would be limited to 4/9<sup>th</sup> of the export to Brazil<sup>461</sup>, the export of free traders benefited Amsterdam and the immediate region for 83.9 per cent. The minutes of both the council and the Burgomasters in these years show not much debate on the issue of trade to Brazil. Issues related to Brazil were limited to the appointment of the new minister Kesselerus<sup>462</sup>, whether the recognition fee on wood should be 25 or 15 per cent<sup>463</sup>, and payment for extraordinary subsidies for the WIC.<sup>464</sup> This indicates that also the WIC investors, or other Amsterdam citizens, who preferred a monopoly did not succeed in obtaining audience with the Amsterdam magistracy and putting this issue on the agenda.

There are of course a few issues with quantifying familial ties to the Companies in this way because they say nothing about the quality or the extent of that tie. For example, Andries Bicker's brother, Cornelis Bicker (1592-1652), is counted as WIC director in Table 3-4, while Elias writes he sold his WIC shares in the late 1620 or early 1630s and consequently started advocating free trade.<sup>465</sup> The Bickers formed the political elite of the Republic in the first half of the seventeenth century. In 1650, a pamphlet characterized their position as follows: 'If you ask, who is director of the East and West India Company; who are the representatives in The Hague at the meetings of the States General? Who are the Burgomasters? Who are the sheriffs? Who lead the civil militia? Who are the dike wardens? Or even if you ask ten other public offices – without a lie, I would always answer the same thing: Bickers. Because the Bickers are all the things.'<sup>466</sup> Another pamphlet alleged that Cornelis traded himself to Brazil after learning about the details of its richness during his directorship. He did so 'in such a way that when there was hardly a chest of sugar to be

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<sup>461</sup> According to the *negen sleutel* the share of each chamber was divided. This was 4/9<sup>th</sup> for Amsterdam, 2/9<sup>th</sup> for Zeeland, and 1/9<sup>th</sup> each for Maze, Norther Quarter, and Groningen.

<sup>462</sup> NL-AsdSAA, 5024 Archive of the Burgomasters, inv. nr 1, 8-Oct-1636.

<sup>463</sup> NL-AsdSAA, 5025 Archive of the Vroedschap, inv. nr 16, fol. 66r-v.

<sup>464</sup> NL-AsdSAA, 5025, inv. nr 16, fol. 108v-109r, 144v.

<sup>465</sup> Elias, *De vroedschap*, xc.

<sup>466</sup> 'vraegt gy, wie is Bewinthebber van de Oost-ende West-Indische Compagnie; wie Afgesonden in den Hage ter Vergaderinge van de Staten? wie Borgermeester ? wie Schepen? wie Coronel van de Borgerije? wie Dijk-graef van het waterrecht? en vraegt noch so vry tienmael van andere Ampten, ende ik sal sonder leugen altijd mogen antwoorden Bickers: want de Bickers sijn alle ding ; waerom ic ooc wel verseekert ben datse by de Amsterdamse Borgerie noit sijn gelieft, maer altijd sijn verdagt en gehaet geweest', Knuttel 6851: [Jacobus Stermont], *Lauweren-krans gevlochten voor syn hoocheyt, Wilhelm [...]. Over sijne eeuwig roembaere handelinghe, gepleegt tot ruste deser Vereenigde Lantschappen, in't jaer 1650.* (np: np, 1650), [D3].

found, his warehouse would be stacked full', allowing him to earn hundreds of thousands of guilders.<sup>467</sup>

Another example is Michiel Pauw (1590-1640), brother in law of Gerard Schaeep. Pauw was indeed a WIC director, but at the same time, according to a testimony of Simon Govartsen in 1623, he had equipped his own ship to trade within both the VOC and WIC charter area. His ship had left Texel to go via Le Havre to the African Gold Coast and the Guinea Coast. From there it rounded the Cape of Good Hope and sailed to Mauritius where it stayed for six months and the crew laboured to acquire ebony. The ships consequently sailed to the West Indian island of Grenada and afterwards returned to Le Havre where the crew was dismissed and paid in Amsterdam. Michiel Pauw had visited the ship with his wife after it had returned to Texel.<sup>468</sup> Apart from the fact that this is a fascinating journey into two charter areas by a director of one of the two Companies, the example of Pauw shows, like Bicker's, that even when a link to a WIC or VOC director quantitatively can be established, this link does not have to be of good quality. That being said, the fact that the number of links to the WIC contrast sharply to the number of links to the VOC is still indicative of the relative poor connection between the WIC and the Amsterdam magistracy.

### 3.6. *DELAYING A DECISION*

Let us return to the report by the committee led by van der Capellen toe Rijssel. The next person they interviewed was Sebastiaan Franck, director in the Maze chamber of Dordrecht. He was willing to explain what had made his chamber decide in favor of the monopoly. He gave three reasons: 1. The WIC was so poor that no-one was willing to make new investments in this chamber; 2. The investors did not invest to pay for war with recognition fees, but to reap profits after the investment of war; 3. The private traders also traded with our enemies providing them with the means to continue war against us. When Franck was asked what his chamber's position was regarding the population issue in Brazil, the director

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<sup>467</sup> 'wyl hy nu wist waar de meeste winsten op de Kust van Brasil waren te doen, in t byzonder begon te handelen; invoegen dat hy, als er qualik een kist Zuikers by iemand was te vinden, zijn Pakhuis opgestapelt vol had, en zich daar by, in een jaar over de honderd duizend guldens verrijkte', Knuttel 6782: Jan Zoet?, 't *Hollandts rommelzootje, vertoonende de gantsche gelegtheyd van het benaaudt, ontzet, en gewapent Amsterdam* (np: np, 1650), A3v.

<sup>468</sup> NL-AsdSAA, 5075, inv. nr. 747 *Hendrick Bruyningh*, 605.

responded that if that was indeed an issue the WIC should take care of it, and not the private traders.<sup>469</sup>

When the committee asked lieutenant-colonel (*overste luitenant*) Balthasar Bijma, who had served in Brazil, about his opinion, the military man, originally from Groningen, responded that he too favored a company monopoly. When the Spanish still ruled the colony, he continued, they produced 40,000 chests of sugar. Now there were only 5,000 to 6,000 chests of sugar being produced. The Spanish only stationed 500 to 600 soldiers there, while the WIC employed tenfold that number of soldiers. In other words, the soldier-sugar ratio was a lot more profitable for the Spanish than for the WIC. Since the WIC was conducting the war, it should keep all the trade to itself to pay for that. His solution to populate the lands came from his own soldiers. He stated that if the Company allowed soldiers to cultivate the lands, to peddle their wares or to become artisans, while providing fresh recruits to replenish the army, the land could quickly be populated. Bijma further strongly recommended 'the trade in negroes from Angola' who were necessary to rebuild the *engenhos*, and 'that could be expected to be very profitable' for the Company.<sup>470</sup>

Lastly, the directors from the Northern Quarter chamber delivered their report to the committee. They stated that they would prefer a monopoly for the WIC, but that it was not a possible option at that moment since the Company did not have enough credit to equip sufficient ships. Therefore, they considered it useful to get advice from the newly appointed Governor General, Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, and the political council. The WIC chamber from northern Holland concluded that it would accept whatever the States General would decide, and furthermore referred to the arguments presented by both Amsterdam and Zeeland as both held truths.

The States General postponed its decision, following the stance of the WIC chamber from the Northern Quarter, but confirmed that at least for now they were not yet revising their decision of 27 December to maintain a monopoly, but allowed the ships that were in transit or ready for departure to operate under free trade regulations. This decision was

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<sup>469</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 25-Feb-1637 Report by mr van der Capellen toe Rijssel and others.

<sup>470</sup> 'Recommandeert seer den handel der Negros op Angola dat die tot oprichtinge der Ingenios nodich is en dat daer grote voordelen tot te verwachten sijn', NL- HaNA 1.01.02, 5754, 25-Feb-1637 Report by mr van der Capellen toe Rijssel and others.

made on 27 February based on the report delivered by the Committee van der Capellen.<sup>471</sup> Delaying a decision was a popular tactic for lobbyists. The proverb 'one of these days is none of these days'<sup>472</sup> opened the possibility for new information to arrive to facilitate making the decision. That the States General allowed the ships in transit to arrive in Brazil had been a foregone conclusion since the States of Holland in the meantime had ruled that ships already loaded and ready for Brazil, at least those in Holland that had paid their recognition fee to the WIC, were allowed to sail to Brazil. They thus claimed authority and jurisdiction to decide this matter in their province without depending on the States General.<sup>473</sup> Again, just like had happened in the Utrecht provincial assembly, the issue of free trade to and from Brazil became intertwined with the issue of particularism of the provinces that claimed the maneuverability to decide this independently, versus the States General claiming decision-making power for issues on a supraregional level.

Despite two requests by the Zeeland chamber in March, the States General still did not rule out that they would allow free trade. This postponement of a final decision meant a small victory for the proponents of a monopoly. Either incapable or unwilling to make a decision, the States General looked to the States of Holland for a final advice; the High-Mightinesses wanted their advice before turning their decision into an order.<sup>474</sup> The States General urged the States of Holland that the matter was urgent, but after a week and a half in which nothing happened, the WIC chamber of Zeeland requested that the High-Mightinesses would send a reminder to the States of Holland by 30 March. The States of Holland started their deliberations and asked all the WIC chambers to come before them. They asked them to come a second time, now in the presence of the Stadtholder, but it did not lead to a conclusion. This was because 'the other parties have no other interest than to delay a decision and to gain time', complained the WIC directors of Zeeland to the States General.<sup>475</sup> The States of Holland wanted to await an updated advice from Brazil. The

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<sup>471</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr 12564.5.6, 21-Feb-1637.

<sup>472</sup> Van uitstel komt afstel.

<sup>473</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 07-Feb-1637 Extract from the Resolutions from the States of Holland.

<sup>474</sup> 'geen depeche laten uitgaan'.

<sup>475</sup> 'noch geen resolutie ofte conclusie connen werden genomen, door het hart ende sterck aen houden van parthijen die nergens anders op aen en leggen noch geen ander oogmerck hebben als te dilajieren ende tijt te winnen, gelijck sij dat in hal haer doen genouchsaem hebben bethoont', NL- HaNA 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 14-Apr-1637 Petition by the WIC chamber of Zeeland.

Zealanders had no doubt what those letters would argue as they were of the opinion that the proponents of free trade had sent individuals to the colony and promised them great rewards if they were to convince the political council to support free trade too. There is no strong evidence that this actually happened, but it is certain that Samuel Blommaert had been made responsible for the administration of this issue's correspondence to and from the colony.<sup>476</sup> Thus, the free trade lobby certainly called suspicion on itself by selecting a prominent director from the Amsterdam chamber of the WIC which left open the possibility that the free trade lobby had plans of controlling information and redacting some of the monopolists' points in the correspondence to Brazil. Blommaert further had private trading interests in the Atlantic. Not only had he traded to the West African coast in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, but he was also professionally acquainted with Albert Coenraadsz Burgh and Kiliaen van Rensselaer through their joint patroonship in North America. Reflecting on the situation and the suspicions of Zealand, Blommaert noticed that 'it is sad that such disagreements exist and I cannot conclude otherwise than that [Zealand's] opinion is fueled by second hand information and sowing the seed of discord'.<sup>477</sup>

In any case, asking the colony to help reach a decision on metropolitan policy completely shifts perceptions on where the center of decision-making power was in the Dutch Atlantic. Brazil, in this respect, is not an isolated incident. For the WIC colony in North America the same issue had surfaced and debates too had focused on settlement versus Company monopoly. Director-General Wouter van Twiller wrote in 1636 to the directors in Amsterdam that if they 'wish[ed] to preserve the country, you must people it with free men', and not just Company personnel.<sup>478</sup> Here too, the initiative for this new policy originated from the colony and intended to influence. Incidentally, the issue on the North American trade had been pushed to the background due to the debates on the same issue for Brazil.<sup>479</sup> Van Rensselaer also complained that the Amsterdam directors were not

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<sup>476</sup> 'Ick helpe de saecke dirigeren, dat men alle bescheeden, die deen en dander dieswegen overlevert, copyelijck soude senden aen Sijn Genaede Graeff Maurits en de hooge secrete Raeden', Kernkamp, "Brieven van Samuel Blommaert," 112-113.

<sup>477</sup> 'Het is verdrietich datter sulcken decisie [dissensie] geraect en ick en can niet anders affmeten, off dat werck wordt door de tweede off dander hant gevoet en het saet van oneenicheyt gesaeyt', *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>478</sup> V.C. Bachman, *Peltries or plantations: the economic policies of the Dutch West India Company in New Netherland, 1623-1639* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1969), 142.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

available to discuss any other affairs: 'Brazil has caused much trouble since usually most of the directors are out of town and occupied'.<sup>480</sup>

It is true that the disagreement between the monopolists and free traders had risen to such a level that even the States General could not mediate, and that a more external perspective might be the only thing that could help. Moreover, requesting more information, would delay the decision-making process and could possibly help to sway the decision in a certain direction. Furthermore, it also served the purpose to frustrate the opposition. In the almost four months since 27 December that both parties had been lobbying in The Hague the lobbyists 'had been away from their homes and families'.<sup>481</sup> The third function of delaying a decision was that in this fashion everyone would continue as there was a fear, according to Blommaert, on both sides that the opposing party would stop contributing to the WIC if a decision that did not favor them would be reached. By winning some time, at least the colony would not be lost for now.<sup>482</sup>

The effect of the petition by the Zeeland directors was that almost a majority of the States General wanted to once and for all affirm the WIC monopoly in the sugar trade to Brazil. But it was the delegates of the States of Holland in the meeting of the States General that succeeded in convincing the meeting of the High-Mightinesses to wait just a little bit longer. The delegates realized that they had missed the deadline to deliver their advice to the meeting of the general assembly despite several reminders from the States General, but they just needed a little bit more time to deliver their advice.<sup>483</sup> Four days later, on 18 April, the States General wrote to the WIC chamber of Amsterdam that they should call a meeting of the *Heeren XIX* to resolve on how to handle the newly reinstated monopoly for the WIC.<sup>484</sup>

After months of lobbying, machinations by both parties, and delaying tactics by primarily the WIC chambers of Amsterdam and Northern Quarter it looked like a decision

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<sup>480</sup> A.J.F. van Laer, *Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts (VRBM)* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1908), 400-401.

<sup>481</sup> NL- HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 14-Apr-1637 Petition by the WIC chamber of Zeeland.

<sup>482</sup> 'het is te beduchten, indien der resolutie genomen mocht worden tegens de opinie van de Camer van Amsterdam, dat die naelaetich souden wesen te senden watter vereyst; en tegens d'opinie van Zeelant uutvallende, dat sy en de camers als Groeningen en Maes, diet met hun houden, naelatich souden wesen de noodige behoeften te senden; daerom ist best door desen middel tijt gewonnen, opdat door disputen de saecken niet verloren gaen', Kernkamp, "Brieven van Samuel Blommaert," 113.

<sup>483</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 14-Apr-1637 Letter to the WIC chamber of Amsterdam.

<sup>484</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 18-Apr-1637 Letter to the WIC chamber of Amsterdam.



was finally reached. The States General told the WIC what to decide and to confirm the decision by the High-Mightinesses in a meeting of the *Heeren XIX*. But lobbying was not only done within the confines of the *Binnenhof* in The Hague. As the Amsterdam directors had written to the States of Utrecht earlier, ‘infraction of the public belief’ was as important. Lobbying, outside lobbying to be precise, happened in pamphlets while the States General decided back and forth between free trade and Company monopoly.

### 3.7. LOBBYING TO AND FROM THE COLONY

The Board of Directors met on the days following 3 May 1637 to close the debate on the issue of free trade.<sup>485</sup> During this meeting, a ship from Brazil arrived that included a letter from Johan Maurits and the High Government. The letter was discussed at the meeting of the *Heeren XIX* on 6 June. The letter gives a detailed account of the ships that had arrived and what they brought, followed by a description of what was currently available in the warehouses. The warehouses did not contain certain goods, primarily basic foodstuffs such as flour. A prized ship from St. Malo that had tried to illegally buy brazilwood had replenished the stocks of wine, but other basic needs were dearly missed.

The next part of the letter dealt with responses to letters from the different chambers that they replied to. One of the letters had come from the chamber of Zeeland. Apparently, Zeeland had in this letter voiced its concern about Amsterdam sending individuals to Brazil to try and convince the political council to side with the free traders. The High Government and the Governor-General took this as an insult: ‘We know what [our] opinion needs to be’, they wrote, continuing that they had no indication of anyone coming with the aim of swaying them to the free trade party.<sup>486</sup> A few paragraphs down they dealt with the issue of free trade. From all the letters dealing with the issue the political council deducted that the debate back in the Republic had reached great heights. They greatly lamented that tensions had grown to such an extent, though they primarily were concerned with the influence the tensions had on the supplies in their warehouses. Furthermore, they understood that a

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<sup>485</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5754, 24-Apr-1637 Invitation for the meeting of the Heeren XIX.

<sup>486</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 52, Letter (copy) from Johan Maurits and councilors to the XIX [scan 260-262].

resolution on the issue was requested from them. They had consulted several unspecified 'others' and they had had a good debate about it, taking this matter very seriously. Their advice contained a great deal of understanding for the political sensitivities. They wrote that the trade should neither be completely for the Company, nor completely free. The Company should keep some of the important goods for itself. The council could not decide on which goods should be maintained as a monopoly, but they did advice that the needs of 'the population should be the main objective because the Company would cease to exist without it'.<sup>487</sup> In other words, the interests of individuals in the colony should trump the interests of the free traders. An advice for an incomplete monopoly was an advice that could potentially appease the monopolist lobby, but at the same time demonstrated that the High Government was not in favor of a monopoly. That the High Government in fact supported free trade becomes further apparent as they wrote that they deemed it important to enclose a translated remonstrance 'in the name of the general people' from the *câmara* of Olinda impugning closed trade, so that 'you can familiarize yourself with the opinion of the inhabitants' of the colony.<sup>488</sup>

The minutes of High Government in Brazil do not provide any evidence as to why it supported free trade, as their deliberations do not delve into the issue. For the year 1637, however, it is possible to reconstruct which individuals in Brazil benefited from the free trade regulations by sending sugar aboard WIC ships to the Republic. The most valuable shipment of sugar was sent by Jacques Hack, who sent 99 chests of *blancos* and 32 chests of *moscavados* aboard six different ships. Hack was also a member of the *câmara* of Olinda, that had sent the letter in support of free trade to the States General and the Board of Directors.<sup>489</sup> From the three other members of the *câmara*, one was Gaspar Dias Fereira, who sent 70 chests

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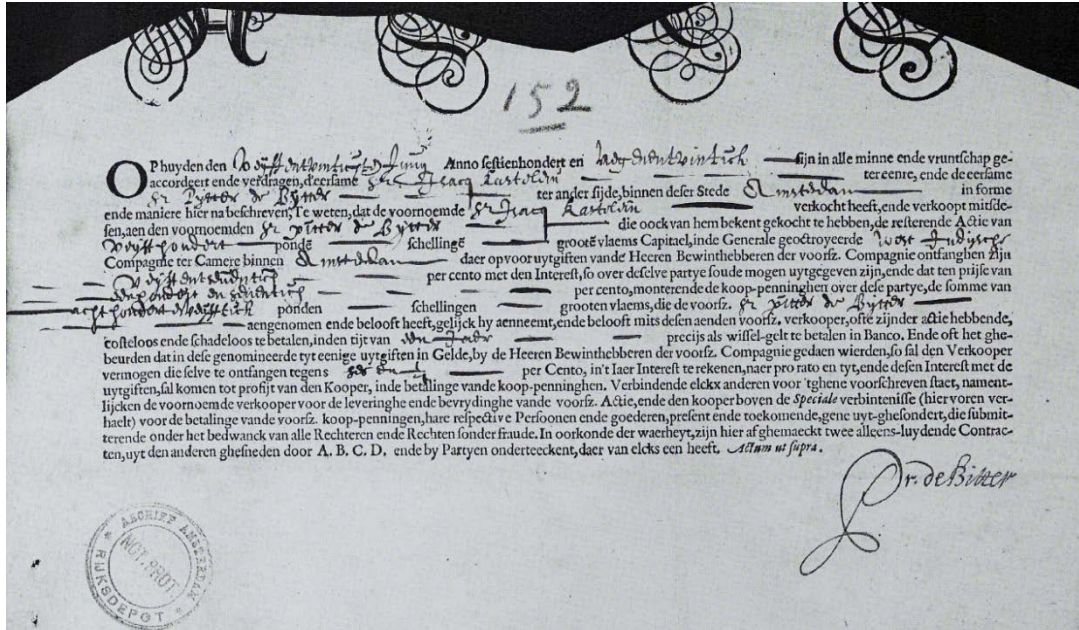
<sup>487</sup> 'de populaties die het principaelste oogmerck moet sijn ende de tegenwoordige advance van de compagnie sonder dewelcke deselve gesustineert wert niet te konnen bestaen betracht werden', NL-HaNA, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 52, Letter (copy) from Johan Maurits and councilors to the XIX [scan 260-262].

<sup>488</sup> 'Ondertusschen hebben de Senhores van de câmara uijt den nhaem van de generale inwoonders on seen remonstrantie ingegeven inpunderende den geslooten handel; welcke ons goet gedacht heeft te translateeren. Ende u Ed: toe te senden, op dat over u Ed: der inwoorderen meening bekend moeght sijn', NL-HaNA, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 52, Letter (copy) from Johan Maurits and councilors to the XIX [scan 345].

<sup>489</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 12564.5.6, Translated letter from the *câmara* in Olinda.

of *blancos* and 51 chests of *moscavados* to the Republic. This made him the fifth largest private exporter of sugar on board WIC ships in 1637.<sup>490</sup>

Figure 3-1: The call option for WIC shares in 1629



Source: NL-AsdSAA, 5075, inv. nr. 412a, [scan 215].

Jacques Hack was a relatively recent arrival in Brazil as he had bought options for WIC shares together with Pieter de Bikker in Amsterdam in the summer of 1629 (see Figure 3-1). For an interest of 6 and 6.25 per cent they bought the right to buy shares from Isaac Casteleijn for respectively 178.5 per cent and 170 per cent of its original value of 3,000 guilders. The share value decreased rapidly and Casteleijn died within a year, so Hack and De Bikker had avoided paying until the heirs of Casteleijn sued them at the Amsterdam court in 1635. As he had been in Brazil by then, Jacques was represented by his brother Severijn Hack (?-1636) at court.<sup>491</sup> Severijn was a merchant in Amsterdam and married to Catharina Varlet (1595-1652). Severijn's nephew, through Catharina's brother Caspar<sup>492</sup>, was Abraham Varlet, who was also in Brazil and in 1637 exported 25 chests of *blancos* and 8 chests of *moscavados* and who was married to Maria Hack. Jacques Hack further was a baptismal witness for the oldest son of Severijn, Joris Hack (1620-1665), who married his cousin Anna Varlet (1626-1685) before settling in Virginia. Another brother of Catharina

<sup>490</sup> For this and other mentions of sugar exporters from Brazil, see Appendix A.

<sup>491</sup> NL-AsdSAA, 5075, inv. nr. 412a Notaries Jacob and Nicolaes Jacobs July-September 1635, [scan 212-216].

<sup>492</sup> For Caspar Varlet, see also the petition in Chapter 4.

Varlet was Pieter Varlet (1598-1661) who had lobbied in Utrecht in favor of free trade.<sup>493</sup> Amongst other things, he was an Amsterdam WIC director in 1637 and firmly rooted in the Republic's elite as becomes apparent from his son Cornelis' baptism record in 1639 where Cornelis van Wijkersloot (a VOC and WIC director for Utrecht), Admiral Cornelis Cornelisz Jol, and Admiral Jan Lichthart were godfathers. Pieter Varlet was further a prominent member of the dyers' guild and a silk dyer himself.<sup>494</sup> Brazilwood could be used as a red dye for silk. It becomes evident that the intimately intertwined Varlet-Hack families were one of the principal beneficiaries of the free trade to and from Brazil. In order to chase their own interests, they lobbied on both sides of the Atlantic creating a trans-Atlantic lobbying network. Not only did it allow them to transport the large quantities of sugar from Brazil to the Republic, but furthermore offering them an opportunity to transport a variety of cloth to the colony that could be used to pay the Tupi allies and to barter for *farinha* and other provisions.<sup>495</sup>

Other individuals eagerly using the possibility to ship sugar on board Company ships were Jews such as Michiel Rodrigues Mendes (36 *blancos* – 48 *moscavados*) and Duarte Saraiva (41 *blancos* – 54 *moscavados*), or Company servants and soldiers shipping small quantities such as Elber Crispijns (3 *moscavados*) and Johan Maurits (3 *blancos*). The individuals with the larger quantities or value of sugar, such as Theodosius l'Empereur (91 *blancos* – 41 *moscavados*) and Pedro Lopes de Vera (37 *blancos* – 96 *moscavados*) would in the next few years become members of local *câmaras*, indicating their prominence within Brazilian society.<sup>496</sup> Thus, the individuals in Brazil who benefited from free trade from the colony, and thus most likely supported the measure, were prominent WIC officials, Jews, and the Varlet-Hack family. Moreover, just like in Portuguese Bahia, the sugar 'sector more than any other exerted considerable political pressure both in the colony and in the metropolis'.<sup>497</sup>

The letter by Johan Maurits and the High Government in combination with the unequivocal advice of the population of Brazil was what the chamber of Northern Quarter

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<sup>493</sup> See paragraph 3.2.

<sup>494</sup> See J.G. van Dillen, ed. *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van het bedrijfsleven en het gildewezen van Amsterdam*, RGP Grote Serie ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1929). Further see <http://varletfamily.pbworks.com/w/page/8500469/Introduction>

<sup>495</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.05, inv. nr. 68 *Minutes of the High Government in Brazil*, 11-May-1637.

<sup>496</sup> Gonsalves de Mello, *Nederlanders in Brazilië*, 113n110.

<sup>497</sup> Schwartz, *Sovereignty and society*, 185.

had been waiting for. That is not to say that without this letter they would have accepted a WIC monopoly, but with this advice the Northern Quarter definitely sided with the Amsterdam chamber. This gave the free traders a stronger position within the States of Holland. Together with the letter from the political council came a petition from the *câmara* from Pernambuco originally submitted to the political council and Johan Maurits but addressing the *XIX*, the States General and the Stadtholder. It had been written in Portuguese, but was provided in a translation by Samuel de Carpentier. This petition included the names of 21 Portuguese councilors of the *câmara* and plantation owners requesting to be allowed to trade freely, as they had been allowed previously.<sup>498</sup> This petition is not in the archive of the States General, but it is likely that it reached the High-Mightinesses as a copy is held in the personal archive of the Utrecht delegate Anthony van Hilten (1586-1670).<sup>499</sup>

In the second half of 1637 the lobbying was no longer as fierce as it had been in the first half. Free trade remained prohibited throughout 1637. There were no new arguments to be made, and the lobbying field moved from the center stage to the back stages. The Polish WIC colonel Christoffel Artichefsky arrived in the Republic in June 1637 too.<sup>500</sup> Artichefsky had served in Brazil in the years 1635-1636, and returned to the Republic after the arrival of Johan Maurits. Upon his arrival in the Republic, he felt so uncomfortable that his beloved Company was internally so divided on the issue of free trade that he decided to write a letter to Johan Maurits telling the Governor-General of his considerations in this matter. When the Board of Directors had learned about his arrival he was almost immediately visited by delegates from the WIC chambers Zeeland, Mase, and Groningen. Discovering that he was of a different opinion than they were, they requested him not to speak his mind. Artichefsky tried to appease the situation by not actively seeking audience with the Stadtholder or the States General, but they did not invite him either. He suspected that the latter was the result of some of the WIC directors pressuring the States General to not send an invitation.<sup>501</sup> Most shocked he was by the abusive language and the blasphemy used by both parties.

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<sup>498</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 52/75, Petition by the *câmara* of Pernambuco.

<sup>499</sup> Brill, Grothe, and Nepveu, *Kron. Hist. Gen. Utr*, XXV, 203-205.

<sup>500</sup> He can be placed in Brazil in March 1637 and in Amsterdam in July 1637.

<sup>501</sup> Brill, Grothe, and Nepveu, *Kron. Hist. Gen. Utr*, XXV, 223-225.

Artichefsky brought a little bit of a reality check to the debate. He argued that the 160 *engenhos* specified in the calculations were no longer erect, and that a maximum of maybe 2,000 chests of sugar could be produced in the colony at that moment.<sup>502</sup> He furthermore advised that the political leadership should keep a closer check on van Serooskercke and Jean Robbertsz as they only incited the Zeeland chamber with their wrongful information.<sup>503</sup> That did not mean that the Amsterdam chamber was completely correct in their arguments however, but all in all his advice was that 'it was better to keep the private trade open for now, or forever, or at least until the land would be in a better shape' (...) 'because all the welfare and wellbeing of Brazil rested with its population'.<sup>504</sup> The letter was dated 24 July 1637 in Amsterdam.

It is evident, as Boxer argues, that the letter reached Johan Maurits, as much of the argumentation he used in his letter to the Heeren XIX on 16 January 1638, mirrored that of Artichefsky's.<sup>505</sup> This letter arrived to the States General on 17 March.<sup>506</sup> The Governor-General wrote that if the trade would not be opened, the Portuguese would leave, as they had threatened to leave and 'to let their plants grow and wilder and to stop their *engenhos*, as for closed trade only made them labor for others, similar as the negroes did for them in the mills'.<sup>507</sup> But even these words did not, unlike Boxer's presumption, 'tip the balance in favor of the free-traders'.<sup>508</sup> It did however make the States General decide that the issue needed to be resolved, and that the High-Mightinesses had a role as mediator in the WIC conflict.

It was anonymous inhabitants from the province of Holland that came up with a solution. In a document titled 'proposition of accommodation of the differences regarding the trade to Brazil by good patriots from the Province of Holland' they proposed changes to

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>504</sup> 'Het beste was geweest dat men de particulieren handel nog liever hadde lateen open staen, off eeuwigh, off ten minsten totdat t lant in beter staet gebracht waere geweest. Reeden sijn deese: de partijen accorderen daerinne, dat aen de populatie van Brasil allen heyl ende welvaert van de Comp: hangt', *ibid.*, 232.

<sup>505</sup> Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 81.

<sup>506</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5755, 17-Mar-1638 Letter by Johan Maurits to States General.

<sup>507</sup> 'seggende liever alle hare planten te laeten blijven ende verwilderen, haer ingenios stil laeten staen, als onder den gesloten handel alleen hare arbeyt voor anderen te doen ende in gelijkjer slavernie voor die Compagnie te arbeyden als hare negros voor haer in molens arbeyden', B.J.L. de Geer, A.M.C. van Asch van Wyck, and H. Hooft Graafland, eds., *Kroniek van het Historisch genootschap Utrecht, Vol. XI* (Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon, 1855), 68.

<sup>508</sup> Boxer, *Dutch in Brazil*, 81.

the charter. This removed one of the main obstacles from the chamber of Zeeland, i.e. that free trade contradicted the original charter. Regarding the details of trade, they followed the original proposition made by Johan Maurits and the political council of May 1637: some goods should be reserved for a Company monopoly, while others were allowed to private traders. Trade in African slaves, brazilwood, and munitions were to be reserved to the Company. Free trade should be allowed for the next three years to inhabitants of the United Provinces provided they were shareholders in the Company. Shareholders that were incapable or unwilling to trade could lease this right to other merchants through licensing. This aimed to preventing a higher price for stocks in Amsterdam than in the other provinces. The inhabitants of Brazil, in this case the Portuguese, were allowed to trade freely to the Republic too without being shareholders in the Company. However, servants of the WIC in Brazil were not allowed to trade at all.<sup>509</sup>

The plan was discussed in a special meeting by the Board of Directors aimed at solving the differences between the chambers. It was called by the States General and only dealt with the Brazilian trade. It was Zeeland that pushed to only discuss Brazilian trade in this meeting in order to prevent other issues becoming entangled with the Brazilian trade debate. The WIC chamber of Zeeland enforced this by only mandating their delegates to resolve on the issue of Brazilian trade.<sup>510</sup> The meeting was held on neutral ground – neither in Zeeland, nor in Amsterdam, but in The Hague – and provided minor changes to the plan by the anonymous Hollanders. The revised resolution was not limited to three years, and every shareholder was allowed one return trip per year and to transport goods proportionate to the number of shares owned. Twelve days later, on 29 April 1638, the States General confirmed this plan.<sup>511</sup>

The issue was now resolved, but chagrin remained with the chamber of Zeeland. They felt they had lost the issue and refused to sign the agreement. Since they were the presiding chamber in 1638 they called a new meeting of the Board of Directors to further discuss the issue.<sup>512</sup> The States General were having none of this and on 19 June 1638 forbade anyone to travel to the meeting until Zeeland had signed the minutes of the previous meeting in The

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<sup>509</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5755, 17-Apr-1638, proposition of accommodation of the differences regarding the trade to Brazil by good patriots from the Province of Holland.

<sup>510</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5755, 14-Apr-1638, Letter States of Zeeland to the States General.

<sup>511</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5755, 29-Apr-1638, Letter from the States General to WIC chambers.

<sup>512</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 4845, 12-Jun-1638.

Hague and had removed the issue of trade to Brazil from the agenda of the meeting.<sup>513</sup> This confirms the nearly illegible anonymous meeting scribbles of one of the High-Mightinesses that all provinces supported free trade in one form or another. Even the Zeeland delegates had been convinced by what Johan Maurits had written from Brazil as their position was 'open trade according to the advice of count Maurits'.<sup>514</sup> Effectively this meant that the WIC chamber of Zeeland no longer had support in the States General and these directors realized that they needed to give to the new regulations.<sup>515</sup> Consequently, the third point on the agenda for the following meeting of the Board of Directors on 5 July 1638 became 'to confirm the peace and unity between the different chambers' now that it was restored.<sup>516</sup> That did not mean, however, that Zeeland supported the issue, they simply accepted that further resistance was futile.

### 3.8. CONCLUSION

This episode on the issue of free trade was the most fiercely debated issue in relation to Brazil and the debate showcases several important elements. The first is the relevance of the practice of petitioning for political decision-making in the Dutch Republic; in particular for the issue of political economy. Petitions were without a doubt the primary vehicle for Atlantic interest groups to request changes in regulations. As chapter 2 has demonstrated this for regulations within the colony, this chapter has demonstrated the importance of petitions for trade, the relation between the colony and the metropole, and visions of colonial governance. The primary actors in the debate, the chambers of Amsterdam and Zeeland both made extensive use of petitions to address the States General and the provincial States. Both parties not only used petitions to bring their arguments to the political mandataries, but further appropriated this medium to demonstrate strength and support in numbers. While

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<sup>513</sup> 'Haer Hoog Mog. hebben ons verbot gedaen, dat wy op de vergaderinge niet en sullen verschynen voor en aleeer die van Zeelant de notulen van de voorgaende vergaderinge, in Den Hage gehouden, hebben geteeckent en datse uut de pointen van beschryvinghe laeten eenighe pointen, die daer offgehandelt sijn, toecherende het openstellen van den handel op Brasil', Kernkamp, "Brieven van Samuel Blommaert," 153-154. See also NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, 4845, 19 June 1638.

<sup>514</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 12564.5.6, Undated meeting scribbles from 1637 or 1638.

<sup>515</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 4845, 8-Jul-1638.

<sup>516</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5755, 12-May-1638, Agenda for the next meeting of the Heeren XIX.



Amsterdam did this through physical presence while presenting their petition, Zealand made use of signatures of main shareholders to transfer their voice in petitions. Moreover, petitions were an important tool for inhabitants of the colony in Brazil to argue for their interests in the Republic. Even when they could not, or preferred not to, travel across the Atlantic, a petition functioned as a means to make themselves heard. Moreover, petitions demonstrate the diverging interest within either a Company (i.e. between Zealand and Amsterdam) or an individual chamber (i.e. the investors and directors petitioning in Utrecht).

Moreover, outside of all the 'official lobbying' through letters and petitions, this chapter has partly lifted the veil of the informal channels. The Amsterdam city council clearly had a stake in the issue and they coerced some of the States General expert witnesses through informal measures. Also, the letter by Artichefsky to Johan Maurits showed how the WIC directors from both sides approached him immediately after his return from Brazil and tried to influence his opinion. When learning that he supported free trade, Artichefsky suspected, the monopolists succeeded in refusing him access to the States General to explain his view on the Brazilian trade. This shows once more how certain networks in the Republic were able to informally control the decision-making mechanisms to the highest political levels. That does not mean however that the political decision was only dependent on patronage connections. The detailed calculations provided by both proponents and opponents of a WIC monopoly in the trade to Brazil shows that arguments were also considered of importance.

The second important element that this episode has demonstrated is that, through the episode on free trade contestations surfaced regarding sovereignty in the Republic. The provinces were eager to accept petitions on the issue to demonstrate their particularism in a Republic that was becoming increasingly federalist. Moreover, the States General clearly established itself as mediator for conflicts in the Republic at the expense of the Stadtholder. Again thus, the party battle between the Organists and the Republicans features in the background of this issue. Thirdly, the States General claimed a right that exceeded their one voice in the meetings of the nineteen gentlemen when they, for example, ordered the other directors not to travel to Board of Director's meeting until the chamber of Zealand had signed the minutes of the previous meeting. Granted, tensions within the Company had risen to such an exorbitant level that it made people honestly worried about the future of the

conquests in Brazil.<sup>517</sup> And perhaps this warranted extraordinary measures. Yet, in doing so the States General demonstrated that *they* had the authority to do so, and created a precedent that they could hold decisions and the Board of Directors hostage. Effectively, this episode thus informally enlarged the High-Mightinesses' influence on the decision-making process in the Board of Directors. Concomitantly, it stressed the increase of direct sovereignty of the States General over the South Atlantic.

The fourth relevant element that the colony had far-reaching agency in the making of metropolitan decisions on colonial policy. Admittedly, the colonists and the High Government in Brazil were invited to share their opinion on the issue, and their agency was thus dependent on the metropole's admissibility. Nevertheless, it was Johan Maurits' proposition of a "half monopoly" that convinced Zeeland's provincial delegates to concede to (partial) free trade as evidenced through scribbles from the States General. Whether it was his status as a nobleman with on-the-spot expertise that convinced the Zeeland delegation or simply that the delegates simply realized that it was their best scenario remains unknown, but it underlines the agency of individuals in the colony on metropolitan decision-making.

Moreover, the colonial influence is demonstrated through the Varlet-Hack family network that spanned the Atlantic and that succeeded in lobbying in important political bodies on both sides of the ocean. Their experience was shared by prominent Jews in both Recife and Amsterdam. The trans-Atlantic ties of the lobbying attempts of the Varlet-Hack family demonstrates that networks were successful in safeguarding their own interests for colonial trade regulations. While Pieter Varlet and his close friend and colleague Cornelis van Wijckersloot as WIC director lobbied the Utrecht provincial states to safeguard free trade, Jacques Hack as a member of a Brazilian *câmara* succeeded in impugned closed trade 'in the name of the general inhabitants' of the colony.<sup>518</sup> Simultaneously, Jacques Hack and Abraham Varlet, while being only two of the 103 free traders, had a share of 6.45 per cent of the value of all exported sugar from Brazil in 1637.<sup>519</sup>

Lastly, even more than a decade after the charter of the WIC, Zeeland had a radically different view of the tasks of the Company than particularly Amsterdam. While the free

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<sup>517</sup> 'ist best door desen middel tijt gewonnen, opdat door disputen de saecken niet verloren gaen', Kernkamp, "Brieven van Samuel Blommaert," 113.

<sup>518</sup> 'uijt den nhaem van de generale inwoonders', NL-HaNA, 1.05.01.01, inv. nr. 52, [scan 345].

<sup>519</sup> Appendix A.

trade lobby advocated for a Company of War that safeguarded the interests of the free trades, Zeeland envisioned a Company of Trade that reaped profits from the initial investment of war. These different visions were a legacy of the struggles during the process of creation of the WIC.<sup>520</sup> However, these different visions of the Company cannot be considered separately from the economic consequences of the different policies. While a monopoly would guarantee 2/9<sup>th</sup> of the exported goods (22.2%) from the Republic to be purchased in Zeeland, free trade only led to 11.6% of goods purchased in and around Middelburg and Flushing. Zeeland only earned 57,659 guilders of a total of 496,240 guilders in recognition fees in, meaning that the value of goods leaving from, and purchased in, these port cities, was less than this chamber had anticipated. Thus, free trade policy increased the share of the economic pie for Amsterdam, but decreased the share of the pie for Zeeland.

The lobby campaign resulted in the establishment of a regulated free trade in Brazil until the end of the colony. The trade in enslaved Africans, Brazilwood, and munitions would be reserved for the Company, while the trades in other goods were opened for Company shareholders in exchange for a recognition fee. It has become apparent that, for example, the intimate network of the Varlet-Hack family was important for the realization of this policy. As a result, these networks and the Company should not be seen as separate. The Varlet-Hack family relied as much on the Company, as the success of the Company relied on networks.<sup>521</sup>

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<sup>520</sup> Chapter 1.

<sup>521</sup> For other examples of this notion, see: Fusaro, "Cooperating mercantile networks in the early modern Mediterranean."; R. Grafe, "On the spatial nature of institutions and the institutional nature of personal networks in the Spanish Atlantic," *Culture & History Digital Journal* 3, no. 1 (2014).

