A Network-Based Merchant Empire

Dutch Trade in the Hispanic Atlantic (1680–1740)

Ana Crespo Solana

Spanish colonial trade in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries was intended to be a state-controlled monopoly business. At the same time, this trade was financed privately and involved many non-Spanish actors. Since the early sixteenth century, when Spanish monopolies were instituted, there were two major restrictions in place regarding colonial trade. Firstly, commerce could only be carried out from a single port city (Seville, between 1503 until 1717, Cádiz from 1717 onwards). These cities would be the centers for the organization, administration, and taxation of the colonial trade. Secondly, the right both to trade with, and to travel to, the Americas was exclusive to the citizens of the kingdoms in the Spanish monarchy. Thus, trade was a privilege granted by the king to his subjects.¹

Yet, ironically, an ever-increasing participation of foreign merchants characterized Spanish trade with the Americas. The participation of foreign merchants highlights the discrepancies between legislation and trade to the Americas as it was actually practiced.² Since the very beginning of the Atlantic expansion, the economic and financial structure of the Spanish-American empire was constructed from an intricate network of transnational interests. The Spanish empire was a truly multinational enterprise, and the Spanish element was but one among many.³

This chapter focuses on the contributions of Dutch and/or Flemish merchants to this truly multinational enterprise. They were of vital importance

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- 1 José María Oliva Melgar, *El monopolio de Indias en el siglo XVII y la economía andaluza. La oportunidad que nunca existió* (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2004); See also: Ana Crespo Solana, “Merchants under close scrutiny: Spanish monopoly with America and laws against foreigners’ illegal commerce (1714–1730),” in *Urban Europe in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Lars Nilson (Stads- och Kommun: Historika Institutet, 2006), CD-ROM.
- 2 For a discussion of the contradictions between law and reality in a different colonial context, see Aviva Ben-Ur and Jessica Vance Roitman, “Adultery Here and There: Crossing Sexual Boundaries in the Dutch Jewish Atlantic,” in this volume.
- 3 Henry Kamen, *Empire: How Spain Became a World Power, 1492–1763* (Harper Collins: New York, 2003).

for the functioning of the Spanish Atlantic system, as I will show by focusing on the “nodal point” of Cádiz. The Hispanic monarchy had to fundamentally alter its relationship with its former enemies in order to maximize the profits to be had from American trade. The Dutch went from enemies to allies and potential beneficiaries of this empire as they became intermediaries for, and collaborators with, the Spanish. Their vital role also illustrates the contradiction in the Spanish monopoly laws whereby foreign persons who were not subjects of the King of Spain were supposedly not allowed to participate in the colonial trade, while at the same time the crown itself was the first to act in breach of these regulations. Foreigners, therefore, participated widely in the “Spanish” colonial trade to the Americas despite the laws prohibiting this.

Although the focus of this chapter is on the Dutch, it should be stressed that the Dutch were only one group in a long line of foreigners who participated actively in the Spanish trade to the Americas. For more than two centuries, the foreign presence in Seville and Cádiz, as well as in other Spanish port cities linked with the Atlantic economy, increased considerably and was highly lucrative to all parties involved.⁴ Many scholars assert the importance of the trade conducted by foreigners and believe that the colonial system could not have survived without them. According to Oliva Melgar, “The best part of Spanish trade was in foreign merchants’ hands [...]. Foreign ships amounted to three quarters of the total number of ships that participated in the American trade, and foreign goods represented the bulk of the goods exported to the New World.”⁵ Nevertheless, the Dutch are a particularly interesting example of this participation of foreigners in the Spanish trade with the Americas. The Dutch trade vividly illustrate the contradiction between the laws “on the books” and the reality of trade as it was practiced. But it also highlights the fact that although the Dutch and the Spanish monarchy had been at war for 80 years, a vibrant trade by Dutch merchants was permitted and even, in some cases, encouraged. This, in turn, demonstrates two things: the necessity of foreigners for the maintenance of the American trade – a necessity that sometimes outweighed political concerns – and the cultural

4 For a more detailed explanation of the Spanish trade monopoly see Ana Crespo Solana, “The Spanish colonial empire in an age of transition: Political discontinuity and commercial interests at the time of the Treaty of Utrecht,” in *Peace was made here: The Treaties of Utrecht*, ed. Renger de Bruijn and Maarten Brickman (Rastatt and Baden: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2013), 42–49.

5 Oliva Melgar, *El monopolio*, 537–538.

integration of many of the Flemish and Dutch traders into the mercantile system of Cádiz.⁶

The Legal and Political Background to Dutch Participation in the Spanish American Trade

The relationship between the formerly deadly enemies, Spain and the Dutch Republic, began to thaw after the Peace of Münster and Treaty of Westphalia (both in 1648), and continued to improve after the Treaty of the Quadruple Alliance signed in 1673 in The Hague. The signing of the Treaty of Münster marked the beginning of a new era of Dutch-Spanish commercial cooperation, which was continued and expanded by the treaty of 1673.⁷ These treaties helped the Dutch to build an institutional superstructure to protect their commercial interests in several Spanish ports as the most favored foreign nation. This, in turn, enabled Dutch entrepreneurs to travel to, and settle in, Spain so they could run their businesses themselves. The Treaty of Münster's eleventh article clearly stipulated that "the subjects and inhabitants of the territories ruled by Philip IV and by the States General will hold good correspondence and friendship, and are entitled to frequent, stay and reside in one another's country and there trade by sea or land with no hindrance or limitation."⁸ Direct Dutch trade with the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean increased, and Dutch commercial firms grasped the business opportunities to be had in the Spanish Atlantic. Meanwhile, certain Spanish ports became factories for the Dutch redistribution traffic in Europe, Spanish America and the Mediterranean.

The treaties of 1648 and 1673 were explicit in terms of commercial cooperation and navigation. Signed in The Hague, these two treaties were designed to be advantageous to private mercantile interests while also ensuring that the Dutch had free access to the Andalusian regional market and to colonial exports. The stipulations were ambiguous because the Dutch were not allowed

6 For a discussion of the porous boundaries between Iberian and Dutch merchants in the early modern period, see Jessica Vance Roitman, *The Same But Different? Intercultural Trade and the Sephardim, 1595–1640* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

7 Miguel A. Echevarría Bacigalupe, "La cooperación económica hispano-holandesa 1637–1659," *Hispania* 187 (1994): 467–504.

8 Article 11 of the Treaty of Münster printed in Alejandro del Cantillo, *Tratados, convenios y declaraciones de paz y de comercio que han hecho con las potencias extranjeras los monarcas españoles desde el año 1700 hasta nuestros días* (Madrid: Imprenta de Alegria y Charlain, 1843), 390–400.

to trade directly with Spanish America but were only allowed to become involved in the colonial re-export trade from Andalusian factories.⁹ With the Treaty of The Hague in 1673, the Dutch Republic succeeded in securing preferential treatment from Spain, a situation which would last until 1778, at which point internal politics and fierce competition from England and France jeopardized Hispano-Dutch relations.¹⁰ Three new clauses were created in the treaties of 1648 and 1673. Customs officials in charge of smuggling would not visit Dutch ships at Spanish ports, the list of banned goods was reduced, and more flexibility was sought when dealing with cases of “trade with the enemy.”¹¹ The latter offense allowed the Spanish authorities to seize ship and cargo when there was suspicion of trade with countries with which Spain was at war. Traders charged with this crime could only buy their way out of the difficulty by paying a fine or *indulto* (pardon), as Abraham de Sadeler, a Jewish merchant from the Republic and consignee for the Amsterdam Admiralty, had to do in May 1693.¹²

In the decades after the establishment of these Spanish-Dutch treaties, a shift in the Republic's internal politics resulted in a closer relationship with England, especially after three consecutive Anglo-Dutch wars and the Nijmegen peace treaties in 1678. Nevertheless, a thriving trade between the United Provinces and Spain continued, partly due to war-related businesses such as shipbuilding and shipping supplies, as well as supplying salt.¹³ During the war between the Dutch Republic and Portugal (1657–1660), the former lost access to the salt from Setubal and were able to turn to the salt mines in Western Andalusia as an alternative. Moreover, Dutch merchants proved to be shrewd intermediaries who took advantage of the political situation after the aforementioned treaties were signed. For instance, the Amsterdam Admiralty became involved in the arrangements for the Messina War (1674–1675) under the command of Admiral De Ruyter.

9 *Tratado ajustado de orden del Rey, Nuestro Señor: dada al señor embaxador Antonio Brun, sobre la materia de la navegacion y comercio, con las personas diputadas por los señores Estados Generales de las Provincias Vnidas del País Baxo* (city unnamed: Domingo García y Morrás, 1651); Manuel Herrero Sánchez, “La Monarquía Hispánica y el Tratado de La Haya de 1673,” in *V Coloquio Hispano-holandés de historiadores, Diálogos Hispánicos*, ed. J. Lechner and H. de Boer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 103–188, 105–110.

10 Ana Crespo Solana, *El comercio marítimo entre Amsterdam y Cádiz (1713–1778)* (Madrid: Banco de España, 2000).

11 Ibid., “Comercio con el enemigo”.

12 National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague (hereafter NL-HaNA), Admiraliteitscolleges, 1.01.46, inv. no. 1884.

13 Ibid., 13 September 1692.

In 1672 the city of Messina, in Northeastern Sicily which was under Spanish rule, revolted against the Hispanic Monarchy. Messina was a key center for connections between the Western and Eastern Mediterranean as well as being a strategically important naval port. Spanish troops were sent to Palermo to crush the rebellion which was instigated in part by the French at the same time they had invaded the Netherlands. At that moment, the Hispanic monarchy was embroiled in a war against France, and the French were very interested in getting ahold of Messina. France made its claim legal on the basis of the short French presence in Sicily before the so-called “Sicilian Vespers” (1272). The Dutch were also keen to avoid the risk of French domination in the region. Therefore, the Dutch sent a fleet to Palermo to assist the Spanish against the French.¹⁴

In return for such services, the Spaniards would pay with salt as stipulated in a contract signed in Cádiz in 1679 – a contract that would be valid until 1715.¹⁵ In the early autumn of 1678 the Amsterdam Admiralty extracted around 10,000 shiploads of salt as ballast.¹⁶ The wool export business in the early eighteenth century also benefited from this new period of collaboration between the Dutch and the Spaniards.¹⁷

Between the Treaties of Münster and the first decades of the eighteenth century, the relations between both countries were mutually beneficial, even if there were ups and downs, which is not surprising as these relations were built upon the trade with vast markets in the Spanish empire and were also heavily influenced by fierce English and French competition. Commercial relations would only start to deteriorate from the 1740s, as Spanish institutions attempted to increase profits by appointing officers in charge of spot-checking Dutch merchandise for volume, inventory and profitability in the ports belonging to the customs perimeter.¹⁸ Dutch merchants in Seville and Cádiz wanted to

14 See Luis Ribot, *La Monarquía de España y la Guerra de Mesina (1672–1678)* (Madrid: Editorial Actas, 2002).

15 Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid (AHNM), Estado, Libro 683, leg. 609, no. 234, “Consulta del Consejo de Estado relativa a otra del gobernador de Hacienda sobre los Almirantazgos de Holanda, sobre las salinas de Andalucía,” minuta s.f. (circa 1715).

16 NL-HaNA, Schonenberg, 1678–1702, 1.02.04, inv. nos. 24–32.

17 Carmen Sanz Ayán, “Las redes financieras franco-holandesas y la lana en el tránsito del siglo XVII al XVIII,” *El negocio de la lana en España*, ed. Agustín González Enciso (Madrid: 2001), 77–108.

18 See Hans S.A.M. van Koningsbrugge, “Tussen Mars en Mercurius: De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden, Spanje en de Quadruple Alliantie,” in *Tussen Twee Culturen. De Nederlanden en de Iberische wereld, 1550–1800*, ed. P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, F.M.A Robben, Hugo de Schepper (Nijmegen: Instituut voor Nieuwe Geschiedenis 1988), 39–70;

avoid paying this tax, and this led them to clash with their own consulates and resulted in subterfuge on a number of occasions.¹⁹

There was a prelude to the reforms of the 1740s. After the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), the Spanish government attempted to strengthen the basic pillars of its monopoly, including implementing changes in port policies. Fiscal reforms were undertaken, most importantly centralizing the administration of the system of fleets, galleons and the navy in Cádiz. Between 1717 and 1726, the administrative institutions governing American commerce were moved to Cádiz, which became the headquarters of the monopoly. The relocation from Seville to Cádiz of the *Casa de la Contratación* (the Board of Trade that registered all ships, crews, equipment and merchandise bound for the Indies) and the *Consulado de Cargadores* (an association or guild of merchants) was an attempt by the Bourbon government to reinstate the monopoly as a business exclusive to the State. These attempts proved futile, also because these commercial institutions had already become obsolete due to bureaucratic incompetence and official corruption.²⁰

As part of this over-arching reform effort, the monarchy tried to establish new laws designed to control the foreign share of the colonial trade. Laws against foreigners had a series of common objectives. Specifically, their main aim was to place under close scrutiny the commercial activities in the Americas of foreign merchants living in Spain. Although it was not the only reason for the reforms, the preponderance of foreigners trading out of Cádiz was one of the main arguments employed in order to encourage the government to step up the control of foreign merchants' activities in the city. There were a number of attempts to bring the economic activities of the foreigners under control. For instance, the *Junta de Dependencias de Extranjeros* was created in 1714 with the objective of overseeing foreign businesses in Spanish ports. The main functions of this agency were the appointment of consuls and other representatives, the surveillance of foreigners either living in Spain or staying there

Ana Crespo Solana, "Implicaciones y consecuencias de las Pax Hollandesa: la República y el equilibrio hispano-británico (1702–1787)," in *El equilibrio de los imperios: de Utrecht a Trafalgar*, ed. Agustín Guimerá and Víctor Peralta (Madrid: Fundación Española de Historia Moderna, 2005), 101–119.

19 Archives Générales du Royaume, Belgium (AGRB), Secrétaire d'Etat et de Guerre, 675.

20 Ana Crespo Solana, *La Casa de la Contratación y la Intendencia General de Marina de Cádiz, 1717–1730* (Cadiz: University of Cádiz, 1996); Carlos Martínez Shaw, "Bourbon Reformism and Spanish colonial Trade, 1717–1778," in *Atlantic History: History of the Atlantic System, 1580–1830*, ed. Horst Pietschmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 375–387. Josep M. Delgado Ribas, *Dinámicas imperiales*

temporarily because of diplomatic privileges, and fiscal affairs related to taxes, as well as the provision of gifts granted by foreign merchants to the Spanish administration at some crucial junctures.²¹ The design of new laws had a pragmatic character, as legislation served to both incorporate qualified immigrants into the Spanish administrative infrastructure, and to clarify the legal situation of foreigners, whose numbers had increased, particularly after the passage of pro-immigration legislation in 1716.²² The *Junta de Dependencias* became a platform for the recovery of privileges that had been granted in the past to the various “nations” settled on Spanish soil.²³

Even given the lack of any real institutional change, the reforms enacted which aimed to bring foreign trade under Spanish control did lead to conflicts and lawsuits against the so-called *jenízaros* (descendants of foreigners). Although many of the functions of the *Casa de la Contratación* became obsolete soon after the relocation of its headquarters to Cádiz, the newly created *Intendencia de Marina* (Navy Board) did function well in the preparation of the fleets in the first decades of the eighteenth century, and also managed to organize the register of ships in the 1740s.²⁴ The policies of the officials of the *Casa* and the *Intendencia* and the fiscal authorities in the port of Cádiz remained contradictory, as they simultaneously tried to control foreign merchants and to attract and support them in order to boost the Cádiz trade.

It is in this contradictory context that we should view the Dutch and Flemish merchants in Cádiz. But we also need to consider that much of the legislation designed to control foreigners did not affect the Flemish and Dutch in Cádiz at all, as a separate “Flemish nation” had long been recognized by the Spanish crown as citizens and subjects of the King of Spain, and, moreover, the privileges of

(1650–1796). *España, América y Europa en el cambio institucional del sistema colonial español* (Barcelona: Ediciones Bellaterra, 2007).

- 21 J. Hidalgo Gonzalez, *Historia de las Dependencias de Extranjeros y Colección íntegra de los Reales Decretos. Resoluciones, Ordenes y Reglamentos que por punto general se han expedido para su gobierno y otras providencias que se hallaban incorporadas al Cuerpo de la Legislación* (Madrid: Archivo del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (AHMAE), 1806), 3 vols.; Eugenio Larruga, *Historia de la Real Junta de Comercio, Moneda y Minas* (Madrid: n.p., 1798), 13 vols., vol. 3: Manuscrito (Mss.) Archivo del Ministerio de Hacienda (AMH), AHNM, Estado, bks. 222–223 (“Registros de las consultas de la Junta de Dependencias de Extranjeros”); Estado, bk 683.
- 22 AHNM. Estado 629, 1–3.
- 23 These new laws also led to censuses of the foreign population, but the results of these misrepresented the actual foreign population in Spanish cities. See Crespo Solana, “Merchants under close scrutiny.”
- 24 Crespo Solana, *La Casa de la Contratación*, 34–40.

the treaties of 1648 and 1673 remained valid. The particular status of the Flemish and Dutch in Spanish cities can obviously be traced back to the structure of the Habsburg empire prior to the Dutch Revolt starting in 1568. The Flemish part of the Habsburg Low Countries, and particularly the cities of Bruges and Antwerp, entertained strong economic relations with the Iberian Peninsula.²⁵ Flemish migration to Spain was tolerated as many of these immigrants were merchants. These merchants may have been viewed with some suspicion after the start of the Dutch Revolt, but their presence continued to be accepted as they were clearly contributing to the prosperity of the cities where they settled.

Immigrant “colonies” of merchants in Spanish cities had their own internal organization and identity, regarding themselves as a separate “nation,” with distinct legal, administrative, linguistic and religious characteristics. The “Flemish Nation,”²⁶ and foreign nations in general, were characterized by such criteria rather than by nineteenth-century territorial and judicial conceptualizations.²⁷ This early modern concept of “nation” referred to a sort of corporation, as is seen in the documents sent by the Flemish nation to the *Junta de Dependencias de Extranjeros*.²⁸ Strong blood ties and common interests further defined the nation. Trust-based relations were the norm and the shared conception of belonging to a common nation was the basis of a strong inner cohesion. Good relations between the earliest members and the rest of the group, including their often highly mobile representatives, were of vital importance.²⁹

The Flemish community was well-integrated into Spanish society and was relatively large. They had their own charter of privileges and exemptions and were known as the “ancient and noble Flemish nation.”³⁰ This body boasted its

25 Raymond Fagel, “Spanish Merchants in the Low Countries: *Stabilitas Loci* or *Peregrinatio*?”, in *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th centuries): Merchants, Organisation, Infrastructure*, Proceedings of the International Conference, Ghent-Antwerp, 12–13 January 1997, ed. Peter Stabel, Bruno Blondé and Anke Greve (Leuven and Apeldoorn: Garant), 87–104.

26 This documentation can be found in the Archivo Diocesano de Cádiz (ADC).

27 K.E. Spierling and M.J. Halvorson, *Definitions of Community in Early Modern Europe* (London: Ashgate, 2008).

28 AHNM, Estado 623, 2, expediente 532.

29 Frédéric Mauro, “Merchant Communities, 1350–1750,” in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 255–286, 264; Ana Crespo Solana, “Elementos de transnacionalidad en el comercio flamenco-holandés en Europa y la Monarquía Hispánica,” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna. Anejos* 10 (2011): 55–76.

30 Ana Crespo Solana, *Entre Cádiz y los Países Bajos: una comunidad mercantil en la ciudad de la Ilustración* (Cádiz: Fundación Municipal de Cultura, Cátedra Adolfo de Castro, 2001), 112.

own consulate and confraternity, the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew (*Capilla de San Andrés de los Flamencos*),³¹ while the Dutch Republic had only a small consulate.³² Hence, most migrants from the Northern provinces, the new Dutch Republic, preferred to join the Flemish nation. Their affiliation with this body granted them Hispano-Flemish citizenship, assured that they were assumed to be Catholic and made them, therefore, subject to the Spanish king but also entitled to privileges and legal representation before the local authorities.³³ Affiliation with the Flemish nation also brought a respectable status and economic benefits, as most of these Dutch citizens operated as consignees for merchandise shipped under the name of Flemish merchants.³⁴

Immigration of Dutch to Spain over Time

What was the scale of the migration of these communities? Historian J.G. Briels noted that by the end of the sixteenth century, around 80,000 families in the war-torn Southern provinces of the Netherlands left for Spain and Portugal.³⁵ Many of these immigrants settled in Spain's port cities, often as merchants. The businesses set up by immigrant traders from Brabant and Flanders helped stimulate economic growth in areas within the Kingdom of Castile, but considerable numbers settled in Seville, the gateway to trade with the Spanish Americas.³⁶

This well-organized community continued to attract new immigrants from the Low Countries. A sample taken from notarial sources shows that migration

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- 31 Ibid., 129. See also Ana Crespo Solana, "Trusteeship and Cooperation in the Flemish merchants community in Cádiz: the brotherhood of San Andrés de los Flamencos (17th–18th centuries)," *Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2, no. 3 (2013): 1–13.
 - 32 Crespo Solana, *Entre Cádiz*, 129.
 - 33 Ibid., 133–140. Ana Crespo Solana and Vicente Montojo Montojo, "La Junta de Dependencias de Extranjeros (1714–1718): Trasfondo socio-político de una historia institucional," *Hispania. Revista Española de Historia* 69, no. 232 (2009): 363–394.
 - 34 Ana Crespo Solana, *Mercaderes Atlánticos: redes del comercio flamenco y holandés entre Europa y el Caribe* (Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones, University of Córdoba, 2009), 106–117.
 - 35 J.G.C.A. Briels, *Zuid-Nederlandse immigratie, 1572–1630* (Haarlem: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1978).
 - 36 Eddy Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders of de handelsbetrekkingen der Zuidelijke Nederlanden met de Iberische wereld, 1598–1648* (Brussel: Palais der Academiën, 1971), 2 vols.; Raymond Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld. De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders, 1496–1555* (Brussel and Nijmegen: Archief en Bibliotheekwezen in België, 1996).

to Cádiz rose in the 1660s, with a sharp increase between 1710 and 1740 and came to an almost a complete halt after that.³⁷ The initial spurt is logical given that the peace treaties signed in 1648 allowed for this migration. According to their wills, migrants came from a variety of locations. Between 1650 and 1699, 25 percent were from Flanders and 48 percent from Brabant. A minority had come from Holland (14.5 percent), Zeeland (0.5 percent) or other provinces such as Overijssel and North-Holland (12 percent). The Northern provinces of the Low Countries had been a preferred destination for thousands of merchants fleeing the Southern Low Countries during the Dutch Revolt, and ironically descendants of these refugees were now sent to Spain to apprentice in the merchant houses dedicated to the Atlantic trade. After 1700, the geographic distribution of people who left for Cádiz changed, with more migrants from Holland and Zeeland (24 percent) and fewer from Brabant (29 percent). Of the 41 percent of migrants claiming to be from Flanders, many were likely from other places in the Low Countries.

The “Flemish” community in Cádiz became very large and quite diverse. Around 1720, over 600 Dutch family names were to be found in Cádiz. Almost 65 percent of these names relate to Flanders and Brabant, but there were also a large number of transient traders (*“transeuntes”*) born in Amsterdam, Haarlem, Oudewater or Middelburg. The rest were Flemish families with a longer pedigree in Andalusian port cities focused on the trade with America such as Seville and Málaga who had then relocated to Cádiz in order to continue trading with the Americas. Diversity arising from regional background had to be muted. As other “nations,” the Flemish-Dutch community needed to maintain internal social cohesion even while striving for integration into the society of Cádiz.³⁸

In the 1713 census taken in Cádiz, some of these Dutch merchants appeared as naturalized members of the Flemish nation.³⁹ However, only 26 out of the 152 merchants identified from the notarial protocols appear in the census. Many of them had settled in Cádiz only temporarily. Moreover, we know of the arrival of quite a few new migrants after 1713 due to their appearance in the business contracts drafted in the 1720s. Many of the families appearing in contracts were long established in Cádiz – such as the Van Kessel, Coghén

37 Crespo Solana, *Mercaderes Atlánticos*, 115.

38 Ana Crespo Solana, “Dutch mercantile networks and the trade with Hispanic Port Cities in the Atlantic (1648–1778),” in *Redes y comercio en el mundo ibérico, siglos XVI–XIX*, ed. Bernd Hausberger and Nikoalus Böttcher, (Frankfurt am Main and Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana/El Colegio de México, 2011), 107–144.

39 Archivo Histórico Municipal de Cádiz (AHMC) Padrón de 1713, no. 1003.

and Montefrio, Conique, Snellincq, Hercq, and Vandentrille. Their members worked for firms with a presence in Cádiz dating back at least two generations. Amongst the best-known merchants were the Conique brothers, Juan Agustin and Andres Ignacio, who had commercial dealings with Santiago de Cuba, Cartagena de Indias and some ports in Nueva España.⁴⁰

It was very common for these families to support Dutch and Flemish immigrants arriving in Cádiz to try their hand in the trading world. Some of these would begin their training working for well-established companies, some would also integrate into the nation through a fortunate marriage. Such was the case of Juan Baptista Coppenoll, who began his career as a servant in Nicolás Snellincq's house and founded his own firm around 1715 when he married Nicolas' daughter, Isabel Maria. By 1717, Juan Baptista was already running a very profitable company independently from his father-in-law and hired another traveling agent from Amsterdam by the name of Jan van der Slotten.⁴¹ All of which shows that immigration and family networks made it possible for individual traders and members of the Flemish nation to take part in colonial trade, despite the appearance of exclusion from this very trade.

Trade with the Americas by the Dutch and Flemish Based in Cádiz

An interesting paradox arises in the functioning of Cádiz as the seat of the *Casa de la Contratación* after 1717. The city became the metropolitan hub in the global Spanish empire. Cádiz was the place where foreign merchants should be monitored, but, at the same time, these merchants could freely live and trade there. As a center of multilateral trade, Cádiz facilitated cross-boundary exchanges transcending the immediate interests of the Spanish state.

Cádiz was both a port city and a derivatives market. According to historians such as Clé Lesger, this double functionality turns a region into a "Gateway System," that is a node within an integrated economic spatial system where external trade is conducted through specialized middlemen. The Cádiz market developed oligopsonic characteristics, in which very few traders had a great deal of power in the market, and a small elite group of buyers exercised maximum control over prices and the amount of products to be made available on

40 Archivo Histórico Provincial de Cádiz (AHP) p.n. 9/1585, fols. 267–73v.

41 AHP. p.n. 5/991, fol. 26–31v.

the market. Under such conditions, profits tend to be concentrated with the buyers rather than with the producers.⁴²

This situation may be observed in the functioning of Cádiz as the center of an illicit market in silver. This market was controlled by foreign merchant colonies holding a virtual oligopoly on the Spanish West Indies trade. Dutch merchants were strongly represented in the oligopolistic networks structuring this complex market. The richest and most powerful businessmen monopolized the black market in metals, predominantly foreigners, non-resident agents involved in the purchase and sale of products in exchange for silver. Most of those middlemen were related to each other. Such traders would fix market prices, undercutting the official price of silver. In order to conduct this contraband trade, they had to employ legal strategies to feign legality. These strategies skirted what was allowed by the law and exploited the ambiguity in extant legislation. The Dutch and Flemish role was particularly visible because traders from this “nation” settled in Seville and Cádiz extended their networks all over the Spanish empire, thanks to their ability to create networks and adapt to the social, economic, and political environment.⁴³

For this reason, foreign and particularly Flemish-Dutch merchants were not unhappy with the Spanish monopoly but, rather, its most eager supporters. They functioned as well-positioned intermediaries in a market with both oligopsonic and oligopolic features. A society such as Cádiz, with a substantial illicit trade component, needed discrete cooperation among the various parties. This was not incompatible with competition among the various networks focused on the different market areas and centered in diverse financial centers. To understand the role of Cádiz as a “nodal point” and the Dutch component in it, we need to consider the oligopsonic nature of the market in Cádiz with its high number of illegal silver traders, as well as the Dutch and Flemish merchants’ role as storekeepers and consignees.

Owing to their role as goods suppliers and their impressive merchant fleet, the Dutch were able to use many non-Dutch Atlantic ports as “nodal points.”

42 Pilar Nogués-Marco, *Did Bullionism matter? Evidence from Cádiz shadow market for Silver, 1729–1741*, Primer Encuentro Anual de la AEHE, Barcelona, September 2009 http://www.aehe.net/2009/07/nogues_did-bullionism-matter.pdf, and by the same author, *Tipos de cambio y tipos de interés en Cádiz en el siglo XVIII (1729–1788)* (Madrid: Banco de España, Estudios de Historia Económica, 2010), 58.

43 Ana Crespo Solana, “Legal Strategies and Smuggling Mechanisms in the Trade with the Hispanic Caribbean by Foreign Merchants in Cádiz: the Dutch and Flemish Case, 1680–1750,” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas/Anuario de América Latina* 47 (2010): 181–314.

The presence of Dutch fleets was felt in a great number of port cities throughout the Hispanic world, in the Iberian peninsula as well as in American ports. We cannot yet quantify the volume of business of Amsterdam firms through their networks of correspondents and branches established by the Dutch and Flemish community in Cádiz. But we know for certain that one of the most important incentives for these ships, merchants and cargoes to call in at Cádiz was American silver, a commodity that fuelled many European businesses. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Cádiz was one of the most attractive places for obtaining silver in a semi-legal way, and much of this trade ended up in the Dutch Republic, even if the French and British shares were higher.⁴⁴ Conversely, Cádiz was Amsterdam's most important silver provider.⁴⁵

The presence of Dutch businesses in the ports of Southern Spain, especially Cádiz, Seville and Málaga, should then be understood in the context of long-standing relationships facilitated by the Flemish nation in Cádiz. This long-standing network linked Andalusia with the East, and with the Hispanic Atlantic, a system geared towards accessing the flow of silver pouring in from the Americas.⁴⁶ Dutch commercial firms based particularly in Amsterdam sent their agents to Cádiz, the *de facto* headquarters of American trade, and Dutch ships plying the Amsterdam-Cádiz route were diverted off to the American territories from as early as 1690. Thus Haarlem-born Martín Guillermo Van Hemert traveled to Cádiz as consignee for the Mediterranean fleet. He admitted to having sent a Dutch vessel to Veracruz as a registered ship in the Indies fleet because he could not send it to the Levant ports due to warfare. In his will, Van Hemert listed among his business activities "consignations, trusts and commissions from various persons, my correspondents, all of them from my neighbouring northern provinces."⁴⁷

The Dutch and the Flemings played a significant role as the suppliers of shipbuilding materials and, on occasion, acted as *asentistas* and *factores* for

44 Ibidem; Manuel Bustos Rodríguez, *Cádiz en el sistema atlántico: la ciudad, sus comerciantes y la actividad mercantil (1650–1830)* (Madrid: Sílex, 2005), 245.

45 Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure and Preseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 487.

46 Ana Crespo Solana, "The Iberian Peninsula in the First Global Trade. Geostrategy and Mercantile Network interests (XV to XVIII centuries)," in *Global Trade Before Globalization (VIII–XVIII)*, ed. Federico Mayor Zaragoza (Madrid: Fundación Cultura de Paz, 2007), 103–127.

47 AHPC, notarial archives 9/1578, 514. Van Hemert passed away in Cádiz in 1715: "consignaciones, fianzas, y comisiones de varias personas, mis correspondientes, todos ellos mis vecinos de las Provincias del Norte" (sic, original in Spanish).

the *Intendencia de Marina*. Ships were built in Cantabrian shipyards with supplies from these agents.⁴⁸ Even Spanish Prime Minister José Patiño benefited from their services. Once the naval boards and tribunals relocated to Cádiz, shipping and trade made Cádiz a depot for the re-export of goods. Its location and financial services gave Cádiz added value as a secondary market for derivatives, futures and options, albeit as a subsidiary of the major derivatives markets from Northern Europe, such as Amsterdam.⁴⁹

The Flemish nation, then, could not be in a better position to exploit the position of its members as citizens of the Spanish monarchy and their perceived creditworthiness as merchants, in order to benefit from the Spanish American trade in Cádiz. The strong hierarchical structure characterizing the organization of the nation, centered around a few of the longest-resident families who formed a well-established élite, facilitated this perception of trustworthiness. These same families would welcome “temporary” immigrant agents for periods as long as over ten years. These agents worked mainly as consignees and carried most of the weight of their firm’s operations in the city.⁵⁰

The role of the Dutch and Flemings was not limited to their activities based in the ports. The *Casa de la Contratación* also granted passenger licenses for Flemish and Dutch traders to travel to the Indies.⁵¹ Such was the case of Colonel Juan Guillelmin from Zeeland, his Spanish wife, Maria de la Concepcion Valenzuela, and their two servants, Pedro Tosi from Barcelona and Guillermo Cornelio from Vic, who traveled to Santo Domingo.⁵² And they were not the only ones. In 1710, Guillermo Tomas de Roo, a Dutch member of the Flemish nation,⁵³ sailed to Maracaibo with his family because he was

48 Ana Crespo Solana, “La acción de José Patiño en Cádiz y los proyectos navales de la Corona del siglo XVIII,” *Trocadero, Revista de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea* 6–7 (1994–1995): 35–49.

49 Maurius van Nieuwkerk, ed., *De Wisselbank. Van Stadsbank tot bank van de wereld* (Amsterdam: De Nederlandsche Bank; Arnhem: Sonsbeek Publishers; Amsterdam: Stichting Vereniging voor de Effectenhandel, 2009), 108–110; Clé Lesger, *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market and Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries, c. 1550–1630* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

50 Ana Crespo Solana, “Flandes y la expansión mercantil europea: origen y naturaleza de una red atlántica (siglos XV–XIX),” in *Flandes y Canarias. Nuestros orígenes nórdicos*, ed. M. de Paz Sánchez 3 vols., (La Laguna: Cabildo, 2007), 3:13–81.

51 AGI. Contratación 5527 N.4. R.7.

52 Crespo Solana, *Mercaderes Atlánticos*, 124.

53 Guillermo Tomás de Roo was born in Cádiz but his family was from Amsterdam. His father, Juan Baptista de Roo, arrived in Cádiz from Amsterdam in 1715. In Cádiz,

appointed governor and captain-general in Merida and La Grita.⁵⁴ There are other examples that provide information about different families and the kinship ties and business relations existing among them. One such example is Adriana van Kessel, widow of Juan Van Haure, who had dealings with Thomas Antonio Coghen y Montefrio, a close relative of the consul Jacobo Vermolen. Vermolen had issued Coghen y Montefrio's son, Juan Joseph, a *carta de emancipacion* and 1000 *dobloones* (around 4000 silver *pesos escudos*) on account of his inheritance, in 1723 when he was 24 years old. This enabled him to trade and do business on behalf of his family and using the family's assets inside and outside of Spain. This is an interesting example showing the use of the "letter of adulthood" to ensure the continuity of the family's businesses.⁵⁵

Aside from these well-known, wealthy families there were many cases of Dutch enterprises linked to local Flemish and Dutch merchants in Cádiz, such as the firms of Eduardo Cornelis and Diego Van Haure, or that of the Van Hemert family from Amsterdam. The Van Hemerts were a family of textile manufacturers from Haarlem who had originally fled Antwerp, and they claimed to be Flemish in both their Spanish residences in Seville and Cádiz. Francisco Joseph and Gaspar Gregorio were born in Cádiz, and the latter sailed to New Spain on Fernando Chacón's fleet as his brother's agent or *encomendero* with the idea of becoming familiar with the American trade. At this time, the Van Hemerts had a family network that spread over a number of European and American port cities.⁵⁶

This diversity of economic interests in both the Low Countries and in the Americas of these Cádiz-based Dutch families implied personal mobility. It was quite common for members of these families to travel for business purposes, at times to the Americas, more frequently to North Atlantic ports. An example is the case of the firm established in 1716 by Fernando Arroy, a member of the Flemish nation, and Ghent-born Juan Baptista Sholt. The latter arrived in Cádiz that same year and once his firm was fully established, he returned to Flanders in order to meet the commissions for his own firm in

De Roo joined the "Flemish Nation" and he claimed to be Catholic. AHPC, p.n. 2/372, fol. 5. They established their business under the name of "Roo, Hercq and Vandentrille, co." AHPC, p.n. 9/5354.

54 AGI. Contratación 5796, L.I. fol. 315–17v. 20 January 1710.

55 AHPC. p.n. 23/5322, fol. 474–75v.

56 AHPC. p.n. 9/1583, fol. 324; and 9/1583, fol. 553–57v.; Margarita García-Mauriño Mundi, *La pugna entre el Consulado de Cádiz y los jenízaros por las exportaciones a Indias (1720–1765)* (Sevilla: University of Sevilla, 1992), 305–310; AGI, Contratación 5470 N.2. R. 160. 28 July 1720.

Spain.⁵⁷ In comparison to the merchants who joined the Flemish nation, there were very few who registered with the Dutch and, thereby, kept their “foreign charter.” In 1765, this registry comprised Octavio Barbour, Juan Lespinasse, Francisco Heegeman, Pedro Brack, Cornelio Van Linterlo, Juan Beumer, Constancio Albertini, Jose Pedro Heegeman and Miguel Woenigh.⁵⁸

As was also previously mentioned, the number of transient traders was greater than that of the merchants permanently settled and operating under the umbrella of the Flemish nation, but their activities were very much alike. Perhaps the only difference between these two groups was the greater socio-economic prestige and prominence enjoyed by the latter in Cádiz. This differentiation becomes obvious when we study the wills and testaments collected throughout the years of the Cádiz-based trading families and their transient agents. Some of these families owned real estate in the city as well as in the countryside. Land ownership was generally associated with the privileged classes in Cádiz society. Such was the case of Ypres-born Francisco Henquel. He was the owner of estates in Rota and was related to the *regidores perpetuos* in Baeza (Jaen, Eastern Andalusia). At the beginning of the eighteenth century, he ran a firm with his nephew Juan Antonio Hendrix and was involved in the American trade. Guillermo de Graaf ran a salt supply business. He rented a salt mine and provided Esteban Van Uchelen with shiploads of salt as ballast for the return trips to Amsterdam.⁵⁹

This importance of Cádiz was widely recognized at the time. Some political and economic thinkers and writers stressed the importance of Cádiz as a factory specifically for the Dutch. Jacques Le Moine de L'Espine stated that the Dutch had business in Bilbao, San Sebastián, Madrid, Seville and Cádiz, but most of the trade was run from Cádiz as this was a sea port open to the Atlantic Ocean, at the mouth of the Strait of Gibraltar, where all fleets and galleons for the Indies trade were arranged. This was the most profitable trade for all transient merchants and travelers in the area. For this reason, he wrote, a consulate had been created and the merchant colonies paid their dues in order to meet the costs of trading in the city.⁶⁰

The general structure of these commercial arrangements did not change much in the early decades of the eighteenth century in comparison to the

57 AHPC. p.n. 5/991, fol. 84–85v. 7 March 1716.

58 Crespo Solana, *Mercaderes Atlánticos*, 122.

59 AHPC. p.n. 9/1583, fol. 1089–92v. Testament of Guillermo de Graaf, Cádiz, 16 December 1720. Incidentally, he was a relative of Juan Enrique de Graef, author of the *Discursos mercuriales económico-políticos*, 1752 (Madrid and Seville: Fundación el Monte, 1996).

60 Jacques Le Moine de L'Espine and Isaac Le Long, *De Koophandel van Amsterdam naar alle gewesten der wereld*, 2 vols. (Rotterdam: J. Bosch, et. al., 1780), 142.

second half of the previous century, but there were some modifications. Dutch fleets would export agricultural produce such as wine, olive oil, raisins, almonds and citrus fruits, and import into Spain grain from the Baltic, naval supplies, paper, linen goods, lard from Flanders, cheese, salted fish and fabrics, as well as indigo, ebony, painted canvas, both raw and patterned cotton, sugar, coffee and tea, porcelain, rolled cinnamon bales, and other goods for domestic consumption such as wheat and iron. Food-related goods were in high demand in Southern and Eastern Spain. There was also an increase in the number of fabrics and other commodities from Asia that were imported. Bernardo de Ulloa stated in 1740 that Asian spices brought by the Dutch were most sought after in Iberia and America. Spain's commercial lassitude meant that the Dutch became the main providers for certain products.⁶¹

The Dutch even took the liberty of introducing products either sourced from their own colonies or from the Spanish colonial territories into Spanish America. A clear and paradoxical example of this is cacao. A treatise composed by Cádiz traders explained that the cacao bought by the Dutch in Venezuela, stored in Amsterdam, and then shipped to Cádiz was cheaper to buy than that supplied by the *Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas*.⁶² The Dutch also supplied Cádiz with tobacco from Barinas that had been purchased on the Venezuelan shores, despite the *Estanco del Tabaco* being in operation in Spain since 1636, which made it illegal to engage in any tobacco trade not under government license. And it was not only Cádiz from which the Dutch traded. They also arrived in a number of other Spanish ports, such as Málaga, Alicante, Barcelona or Bilbao. From these ports the Dutch would buy salt, indigo, wool, cochineal and, especially, precious metals.

The Dutch and Flemish trade in Cádiz was based on two fundamental pillars. The first was the trade of goods (*goederenhandel* or *warenhandel*), which consisted of the consignment of goods, as well as the storage or distribution of merchandise sourced from various markets. The second was the practice of depositing money to be used for financing the storage of produce, as well as for the payment of import goods from America destined for various ports in Northern Europe and vice-versa. Part of the cash stored would be used for investments such as private loans, and for selling and redistributing merchandise to the hinterland – Andalusia (4.5 percent), America (62 percent)

61 Bernardo de Ulloa, *Restablecimiento de las fábricas y comercio español* (1740) (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, 1992), 91.

62 AGI Arribadas 12, "Memorial sobre el comercio del cacao que hacen los holandeses en Cádiz," 11 May 1728.

and the *Levantse Handel* (31 percent).⁶³ These two aspects were intrinsically related. They were essential for merchants involved in the American market, as they enabled them to store goods to be loaded in the fleets bound for New Spain as well as on the registered ships that set sail regularly to American ports around the Caribbean and the mainland. This broad functionality gave the Dutch and Flemish suppliers and merchants the opportunity to participate in various aspects of the American trade (storing merchandise from different sources and managing product purchases and sales) and the power to invest the cash necessary to fund business trips. This cash was funneled through instruments such as insurance policies.

The Dutch and the Flemings were also smugglers, but, to the naked eye, their trading activities appeared to be legal. The transient Dutch traders that operated as consignees for the Amsterdam and Middelburg Society of the Levant Trade (*Levantse Handel*)⁶⁴ used their connections among the Flemish merchants to introduce ships belonging to this society, under a new name, into the fleets bound for New Spain and other areas, especially the ports of Veracruz, Portobelo, Caracas and Buenos Aires. There is ample evidence for this, especially in the import and export deals conducted by Cádiz-based Dutch and Flemish merchants between 1714 and 1753.⁶⁵ This type of operation became the norm after 1740 on the registered ships. Between 1750 and 1760 a number of cases have been found demonstrating that smuggling depended on cross-national cooperation, even to the point that these illegal practices were, by and large, socially acceptable. There were a number of ways of solving any legal issues arising between the parties involved. It was apparently quite common for the port authorities to be well aware of, and approve of, what was being done. And it was hardly smuggling when the merchants involved were already entitled to trade with the Indies.

The documents relating to this trade, found in archives in Cádiz and Amsterdam, provide information on how these operations were conducted. The Amsterdam firm would grant proxies and send cash to their Cádiz partners, enabling them to introduce the ship in the fleet.⁶⁶ In addition, permission would be granted for other Cádiz merchants to load their merchandise, and further powers were issued so the products could be sold, although this was always to be done in the name of the Amsterdam correspondent.⁶⁷ On

63 Crespo Solana, "Dutch mercantile networks," 110.

64 NL-HaNA, *Levantse Handel*, 1.03.01, inv. nos. 173–75.

65 Crespo Solana, *El comercio marítimo*, 79–80.

66 AHPC, p.n. 23/5322, 456–460 (year 1743).

67 "om ze in West-Indie te verkopen ten behoeve van Gaspar en Manuel Winjgaert." Wijngaert brothers to Gaspar de Conincq y co, Cádiz, Amsterdam, 31 January 1710. Goods were

several occasions these ships would sail under convoy by Spanish warships, especially when they traveled as single registered ships from various nationalities consigned to Flemish merchants. Such was the case of a Genoese vessel purchased by Henrique de Roo and Sons.⁶⁸ It is worth noting that these merchants displayed exemplarily correct behavior as they paid all taxes due for these transactions (the *alcabala* or sales tax as well as 4 percent towards the general income tax for the city), which underlines that the Spanish authorities were not at all ignorant of them.⁶⁹ In 1740, the increased use of loose register ships seemed to encourage merchants to create alliances to be able to load more merchandise – mainly manufactured goods – and thus profit from the increasing amounts of gold and silver arriving in Cádiz.

Conclusion

To sum up, the share of locally-established foreign and particularly Flemish-Dutch merchants in Spain's commercial relations with the Americas not only continued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but was strengthened. Though there were attempts to control the activities of foreigners, these served mainly as monopolistic window dressing and nothing more. There was little incentive to really exclude foreigners from the Atlantic trade, despite new monopoly legislation in the early eighteenth century. Everyone involved in the trade, from customs officials in the ports to the highest government ministers, knew that the trade conducted by foreigners was extremely beneficial to Spanish interest. This was nowhere clearer than in the nerve center for the conduct of trade with the Americas – Cádiz.

No matter what their origins were, the residents of Cádiz worked together to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the trade with the Americas. This cooperation included circumventing laws, committing fraud, and finding ways to smuggle contraband into and out of the port. The merchants involved were often acquainted with one another via ties of kinship, place of origin, and long-standing business partnerships. The "Carrera de Indias," the Spanish colonial trade with America, depended heavily on foreign merchant communities, as this case study of the Dutch/Flemish "Nation" in Cádiz strongly suggests. Through family ties and "nation"-based networks, Dutch and Flemish merchants were vital to the functioning of the Spanish trade to the Americas.

consigned to Diego Alonso Toscano, Honduras, Amsterdam Municipal Archives (SAA), Notariele Archieven 2941/73 (translated by the author from the Dutch original).

68 AHPC, 23/5338, 140–146, AHPC, 23/5322, 456–460.

69 *Ana María Galley*, Captain Cornelio Leendertsz in 1743. AHPC, 9/1605, 299–300.

These conclusions support D.W. Meinig's hypothesis that the Dutch created a geographically fragmented Atlantic "empire" formed by a network of strategic nodal points along critical trade routes.⁷⁰ The city of Cádiz was crucial in these merchant networks because it connected Atlantic routes and market areas. Cádiz was a factory-port used by Dutch convoys for storing and redistributing products as well as for obtaining cash to fuel their businesses along the routes linking Southern Europe, the Mediterranean and Spanish America. The Dutch presence in Cádiz therefore is indicative of the importance of cross-imperial, cross-cultural trade in the early modern Atlantic.

70 D.W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), vol. 1: *Atlantic America*, 62.