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Summary

Global workers

Globalisation, maritime labour markets and the relations between Asian and European sailors working for the Dutch East India Company (VOC)

This book aims to uncover the intercultural and social relations between European and Asian sailors working for the Dutch East India Company (VOC). It places these relations within the wider context of the vivid Asian maritime world. The chapter on 'Maritime Asia' outlines the Asian environment and the trading activities of the VOC. It provides reconstructions of the size of shipping by Asian and European merchants in Asia and of the size of the intra-Asiatic shipping and intercontinental shipping of the VOC. The chapter titled 'Global crews' looks into the history of the internationalisation of maritime labour markets. It looks at recruitment patterns of European and Asian merchants in Asia. This provides the context for tracing the strategies of the VOC, recruiting Asian, Eurasian and European sailors from both European and Asian maritime labour markets from the early seventeenth century onwards. The chapter on 'Working together' explores the maritime working environments in which European and Asian sailors came to work and live side by side. It looks at the work they performed and how this shaped working relations and diversity.

In the second part of the book the construction of relations between different groups of sailors are studied. The *interludium* outlines the relevant theoretical frameworks dealing with the construction of difference from an economic and social-cultural perspective. Taking this as a starting point, the next three chapters look at the horizontal and vertical working relations by studying categorisations, social-economic positions, labour relations and interactions. The chapter titled 'Many-sided encounters' deals with the construction of difference as shaped by the VOC and its employees in categorisations employed by the company, the differences in recruitment patterns, the resulting labour relations, payment and debts, and the negotiation position of different groups of sailors. At the end of this chapter, this is related to the differences as perceived and employed by sailors themselves. The chapter titled 'Hard hierarchies' focuses on the working relations in maritime working places of the VOC and outlines the interplay of career, patronage, violence and authority. The resulting horizontal and vertical labour relations are explored in the final chapter on 'Intriguing entanglements'. In the conclusion, the results of this study are related to three important academic debates: the history of globalization, the debate on the *Great Divergence* and the (long) history of labour, labour relations and labour markets.