VU Research Portal

The Dutch and English fiscal-naval states: a comparative overview

Brandon, Pepijn; Blakemore, Richard

Link to publication in VU Research Portal

The Dutch and English Fiscal-Naval States: A Comparative Overview

Richard J. Blakemore and Pepijn Brandon

Warfare at sea defined the relationship between the Dutch and English states during the second half of the seventeenth century. The ships of these two nations encountered one another again and again, in vast battles and in small skirmishes, in European waters and around the world. Many thousands fought in these conflicts, which had an impact upon the entire populations of both countries, as well as having significant consequences for global politics.[1] Mobilising the naval forces that fought these wars was an enormous undertaking, and naval administration and operations occupied much government time and resources in England and the Dutch United Provinces throughout this period. Both countries can therefore be considered as fiscal-naval states, a concept which has emerged from debate around the existence of an early modern military revolution by land and by sea, and which draws on John Brewer's description of England as a fiscal-military state in the eighteenth century.[2] Fiscal-naval states were, as N. A. M. Rodger puts it, 'distinguished by [their] commitment to a capital-intensive, high-technology mode of warfare demanding long-term state investment', and both the Dutch and English states easily fit this definition.[3]

As we will explore in this chapter, this commitment and this investment had profound implications for the shape of these two states as they developed across the seventeenth century, with consequences for domestic as well as foreign policies. The Dutch and English navies

---

[1] For an accessible overview of these wars, see J. R. Jones, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1996).

[2] John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1689-1783* (Cambridge, 1989), and for a more recent reflection on the term, see Rafael Torres Sánchez (ed.), *War, State and Development: Fiscal-Military States in the Eighteenth Century* (Pamplona, 2007). For the maritime dimension of the military revolution debate, see Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1988), ch. 3; Jaap R. Bruijn, 'States and their Navies from the Late Sixteenth to the End of the Eighteenth Centuries', in *War and Competition between States*, ed Philippe Contamine (Oxford, 2000), pp. 69-98; Jan Glete, *Warfare at Sea, 1500-1650: Maritime Conflicts and the Transformation of Europe* (London, 2000); Jeremy Black, *Naval Power: A History of Warfare and the Sea from 1500* (Basingstoke, 2009); Louis Sicking, 'Naval Warfare in Europe, c. 1330- c. 1680', in *European Warfare, 1350-1750*, ed Frank Tallet and D. J. B. Trim (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 236-63; the roundtable of articles by Gijs A. Rommelse, John F. Guilmartin, and N. A. M. Rodger, in *Journal for Maritime Research*, 13 (2011), pp. 117-50; Jürgen G. Backhaus (ed.), *Navies and State Formation* (Berlin, 2012); Richard Harding, *Modern Naval History: Debates and Prospects* (London, 2016); David Plouviez, 'Marines Européennes, Développements Administratif, Économique et Financier', in *The Sea in History: The Early Modern World*, ed Christian Buchet and Gérard le Bouëdec (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 773-84.

[3] N. A. M. Rodger, 'From the "Military Revolution" to the "Fiscal-Naval State"', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 13 (2011), pp. 119-28, at p. 122; see also Patrick O'Brien, 'State formation and Economic Growth: The Case of Britain, 1688-1846', in *Navies and State Formation*, ed Backhaus, pp. 217-72; N. A. M. Rodger, 'Introduction: Navies and State Formation', in *Navies and State Formation*, ed Backhaus, pp. 9-20; N.A. M. Rodger, 'Social Structure and Naval Power: Britain and the Netherlands', in *The Sea in History*, ed Buchet and Bouëdec, pp. 679-85

influenced government revenue, expenditure, and taxation, which affected a wide swathe of society; they directly employed large numbers of people; and they drew on extensive networks of suppliers and contractors. These navies held a key place not only in national defence but also in national identities, even while such identities coexisted (sometimes uneasily) with local loyalties, which also featured heavily in naval ideology, especially in the Dutch case. While our purpose here is primarily to examine how these two fiscal-naval states developed over the seventeenth century, and to establish similarities and divergences, we also wish to offer some comments on the broader significance of these developments. We will pursue this comparison by exploring, in turn, the organisation of the two navies; the structures of revenue and expenditure which financed them; and the scope and scale of private involvement in and alongside state activities.

1. The organisation of the two navies

As we have noted, navies held an important position in the ideologies of early modern states, especially those, like England and the United Provinces, which relied upon seaborne trade and pursued imperial ambitions. The concept of 'naval theatre', developed by historians of twentieth-century empire, provides a useful starting point for considering early modern naval policy, as it emphasises that navies' role in advertising and thus reinforcing the idea of state authority is vitally important as well as their actual military activities.[4] Dutch and English rulers both sponsored scholarly disquisitions on maritime sovereignty which supported their imperial agendas.[5] They also paid for large and lavishly decorated warships as an immediately accessible statement about their power. The *Sovereign of the Seas*, built in 1637, the *Naseby*, built in 1655 and renamed the *Royal Charles* in 1660, and the *De Zeven Provinciën*, built in 1665, all served the same propagandistic purpose, and the Dutch seizure of the *Royal Charles* in 1667 was one of the most dramatic and symbolic moments in the wars between these two states. Even though neither country's might at sea ever matched up to the grand claims made for it, the well-publicised association of the state with naval power was nevertheless a key component in their political legitimacy, and this wider dimension is an aspect of early modern fiscal-naval states which deserves further investigation.

---

[4] For a discussion of this concept, see Daniel Owen Spence, *Colonial Naval Culture and British Imperialism, 1922-67* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 2-3, and the historiography cited there.
[5] Martine Julia van Ittersum, *Profit and principle. Hugo Grotius, natural right theories and the rise of Dutch power in the East Indies, 1595-1615* (Leiden / Boston, 2006); Richard J. Blakemore, 'Law and the Sea', forthcoming.

The ideological position was not contradictory to, but overlapped with, the obvious implications of these navies for international power-projection and economic success. Dutch political and economic elites were committed to maintaining naval power as a central plank of state policy. An aggressively trade-oriented strategy of naval interventions in the Baltic, Mediterranean, and Atlantic basins underpinned mid-seventeenth-century Dutch primacy in international trade.[6] The self-perception of the Dutch state as a mighty maritime republic, even surpassing Venice at its prime, simultaneously became deeply engrained in public consciousness.[7] An incipient culture of veneration around successful admirals like Michiel de Ruyter helped to establish the figure of the 'sea-hero' as an important protagonist in patriotic narratives, prefiguring the central role of maritime history in the construction of nineteenth-century Dutch nationalism.[8] However, the Dutch Republic also participated on a major scale in continental wars, from the Eighty Years' War with Spain that continued through the first half of the century, to the string of conflicts sometimes referred to as the Forty Years' War between the Dutch Republic and France, which the country found itself in the middle of by the end of the century.[9] As a result, Dutch rulers always had to balance their priorities between warfare on land and at sea.

For England, not only was international warfare conducted largely by sea throughout this period, but the navy was intimately tied to the monarchy; indeed, except for the interregnum of the 1650s, the navy was the personal possession of the crown. While this relationship has sometimes been characterised as a misplaced interest on the part of the Stuarts in grandiose decoration and unwieldy magnificence with little concrete value, such an assessment is unfair.[10] The rulers of England were personally concerned with the practical side of naval affairs as much as the lustre it might lend to their reign, though to differing degrees. James VI and I, Oliver Cromwell, and William III largely relied on their subordinates, though all of them intervened at times, while Charles I and his two sons took a much more direct role in running the navy. Charles I's reign collapsed and the navy largely sided with his opponents in

---

[6] Jonathan I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585-1740* (Oxford, 1989).

[7] Classical statements are C.R.Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800* (London, 1965); Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1987).

[8] Ronald Prud'homme van Reine, *Zeehelden* (Amsterdam, 2005).

[9] Marjolein 't Hart, *The Dutch Wars of Independence. Warfare and Commerce in the Netherlands, 1570-1680* (Abingdon / New York, 2014); David Onnekink, *Reinterpreting the Dutch Forty Years War, 1672-1713* (London, 2016).

[10] Andrews, *Ships, Money & Politics*, pp. 130-8; N. A. M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain, 660-1649* (London, 2004), pp. 380-1; Richard J. Blakemore, 'Thinking Outside the Gundeck: Maritime History, the Royal Navy, and the Outbreak of British Civil War, 1625-42', *Historical Research*, 87 (2014), pp. 251-74, at p. 259; J. D. Davies, *Kings of the Sea: Charles II, James II & the Royal Navy* (Barnsley, 2017), pp. 14-15.

4

the subsequent civil wars, but this was probably the result of the political tensions that disrupted his reign, rather than his naval policy itself.[11] Charles II and James II were more successful in their management of the navy, and kept a tight control over decision-making, though as with their father this did not prevent James's eventual downfall.[12] At times a lord high admiral held office, but they were often assistants to, not independent deputies of, the sovereign; at other times, commissioners carried out the functions of the admiral, usually with the monarch at their head.[13] In 1679-84, rather exceptionally, the admiralty commissioners sought to take over direction of the navy and diminish the king's role, but by the end of his reign Charles II was back in command.[14] Throughout much of this period, then, England's rulers themselves oversaw the management of the navy, though parliament played an increasing role from the 1650s onwards, and especially after 1689.[15]

The practical activities of English naval administration were carried out by various forms of 'navy board', originating in the Tudor era. Initially known as the four principal officers of the navy, these were augmented and then replaced by a sequence of navy commissioners and committees during the 1640s and 1650s, and reinstated in 1660 but with additional officials.[16] Most of these positions were personal appointments by the king or the admiralty, and were sometimes held for life. While this reflected another close tie between ruler and navy, it also provoked repeated accusations of corruption.[17] There were also separate organisations for specific tasks. Victualling was carried out alternately by the surveyor of the navy, by a specific victualling board, or by a syndicate of contractors, and the Ordinance Office was also independent, although placed under admiralty oversight in 1653.[18] Though all administrators

---

[11] Brian W. Quintrell, 'Charles I and his Navy in the 1630s', *Seventeenth Century*, 3 (1988), pp. 159-79; Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', pp. 23-44; Andrews, *Ships, Money & Politics*, ch. 6; Blakemore, 'Thinking Outside the Gundeck'.

[12] Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 26-7; Davies, *Kings of the Sea*, ch. 6.

[13] Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 372, 391-2; N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2004), p. 87.

[14] J. D. Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins: The Officers and Men of the Restoration Navy* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 189-98; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, 25-32; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 109-10; Davies, *Kings of the Sea*, pp. 113-25.

[15] Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 181-7.

[16] Tedder, *Navy of the Restoration*, p. 42; Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', pp. 66-85; Andrews, *Ships, Money & Politics*, pp. 188-9; Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 389, 432-4, 553, 582-4; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 44-50, 156-62; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 331-3, 370-4; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 33-7, 103-6; Blakemore and Murphy, *Civil Wars at Sea*, pp. 87-91

[17] A. P. McGowan (ed.), *The Jacobean Commissions of Enquiry, 1608 and 1618* (London, 1971); Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', pp. 85-102, 171-8; Andrews, *Ships, Money & Politics*, pp. 190-5; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 364-8; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 99-102; Blakemore and Murphy, *Civil Wars at Sea*, pp. 9-3.

[18] Tedder, *Navy of the Restoration*, pp. 112-4; McGowan, 'Royal Navy', ch. 8; Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', chs 6-7; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 200-2; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 42-3, 46, 188-96.

across this period faced similar limitations, there was a general trend of increasing institutional efficiency, at least in relative terms.

The highest tier of naval organisation thus remained closely tied to the monarch and became more effective at realising the ruler's wishes as the century went on, but it was also relatively small in terms of personnel, even at the end of the century. Beyond the central administration the English navy relied on locally placed officers, such as dockyard commissioners or squadron commanders; the navy's most important dockyards were those on the Thames at Deptford and especially Chatham, the largest dockyard in Europe, but Portsmouth also grew in size and activity.[19] The admiralty issued ever more detailed regulations to govern the actions of these officers, both general codes like the Articles of War of 1652 and General Instructions of 1663, and specific commands on a plethora of naval matters.[20] Nevertheless, some degree of independence to interpret these orders, if not to disregard them entirely, remained. The administration of the English navy, therefore, was in principle under the close personal supervision of the monarch, and was increasingly bureaucratic and authoritarian, but presided over an organisation in which there was flexibility at all levels.

By contrast, the Dutch navy maintained a strictly federal administration. Naval direction was subdivided between five separate admiralty boards located in Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland. They operated under the States General and worked out common policies during meetings in The Hague (called the *Haagse Besognes*), but retained administrative independence in the execution of their tasks.[21] The roots of this federal naval organization lay in the Habsburg period, when the Zeeland town Veere acted as the seat of the imperial fleet in the Low Countries, but armed trade protection largely remained within the purview of the different trading towns.[22] The Dutch Revolt led to the establishment of a state navy and the five admiralty boards, of which those for Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Zeeland became the most important. Attempts to bring these five local boards under a unified central administration faltered on the particularism of Dutch provinces and towns.[23] Instead, a complicated system of

---

[19] Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, p. 14; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 335-7; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 178-85; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 103-4, 188-9.

[20] Tedder, *Navy of the Restoration*, pp. 67-71, and see also pp. 48-54; Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, pp. 43-50, 87-8; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 219-25; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 59-60.

[21] For a general overview see Jaap R. Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (St. John's, Newfoundland, 2011).

[22] Louis Sicking, *Neptune and the Netherlands. State, Economy, and War at Sea in the Renaissance* (Leiden / Boston, 2004), chapter 6; J.P. Sigmond, *Zeemacht in Holland en Zeeland in de Zestiende Eeuw* (Hilversum, 2013), pp. 86-110.

[23] C.A. Davids and M.C. 't Hart, 'The Navy and the Rise of the State. The Case of the Netherlands c.1570-1810', in *Navies and State Formation. The Schumpeter Hypothesis Revisited and Reflected*, ed J. Backhaus, N. Kyriazis and N. Rodgers (Muenster, 2012), pp. 273-316, at pp. 282-7; Pepijn Brandon, *War, Capital, and the Dutch State 1588-1795* (Leiden / Boston, 2015), pp. 58-9.

6

cross-representation was erected, in which towns and the nobility retained seats on the admiralty boards. For example, in 1606-1795 there were twelve seats on the Amsterdam admiralty board, of which six were filled by representatives of the province of Holland, and the other six by representatives of each of the other provinces that made up the Republic. The six seats of Holland in turn were divided between the nobility, Haarlem, Leiden, Amsterdam, Gouda, and Edam. Meanwhile, the Amsterdam magistrate had one permanent representative on the admiralty board of Zeeland and one on the board located in Holland's Northern Quarter.[24]

This federative organizational structure made naval administration itself a terrain of conflict between competing regional interest-groups, and between the admiralty towns and the States General.[25] For example, in 1621, the wish of the States General to put into action a fleet of over one hundred ships failed because of local opposition against the costs of such an operation, as well as the preference of the admiralty towns to prioritize convoying missions to protect their immediate trading interests.[26] On the other hand, it could also lead to an exceptional level of direct investment of local political and economic elites in the making and execution of naval policy, especially in the towns that housed one of the admiralty boards.[27] Thus, throughout the seventeenth century the Amsterdam mayors regularly acted as intermediaries between the admiralty board and rich Amsterdam houses to secure emergency loans when inland provinces proved reluctant to pay their share of the agreed subsidies.[28] Undoubtedly, the readiness with which Amsterdam regents responded to emergencies was enhanced by the fact that on the admiralty board 'that city was always represented by one of its foremost elder burgomasters ... [while] close relatives of city council members occupied the permanent positions of secretary, advocate fiscal and collector general.'[29]

Overlap between admiralty boards and other local or regional institutions of power was not limited to direct representation and familial ties with urban magistrates. Out of the 287 admiralty councillors sent to fill one of the seats for the province of Holland on the Amsterdam admiralty board before 1795, 52 also at some points of their lives served as directors of the

---

[24] Ibid, 62.
[25] Bruijn, *Dutch Navy*, p. 27.
[26] Olaf van Nimwegen and Ronald Prud'homme van Reine, 'De Organisatie en Financiering van Leger en Vloot van de Republiek', in *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog. Van Opstand naar Geregelde Oorlog 1568-1648*, ed. Petra Groen (Amsterdam, 2013), pp. 353-401, there 384-5.
[27] Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations. Warships, Navies and State Building in Europe and America, 1500-1860* (Stockholm, 1993), Volume I, p. 154.
[28] Van Nimwegen and Prud'homme van Reine, 'De Organisatie en Financiering van Leger en Vloot', 384.
[29] Bruijn, *Dutch Navy*, p. 27. The close connection is further substantiated in Brandon, *War, capital, and the Dutch state*, p. 63, and Annex 1 and 2.

Dutch East India Company (VOC) or the West India Company (WIC), or as governors of the Society of Suriname. From the last quarter of the seventeenth century onward, the Amsterdam admiralty board usually included at least one councillor who simultaneously acted as a director in the Amsterdam chamber of the VOC.[30] The Dutch navy therefore did not experience the kind of efforts at centralisation that in the English case emanated from the crown and national parliament, but there was still a degree of coordination between the different federal institutions which constituted the Dutch fiscal-naval state.

Beyond their administrations, both the Dutch and the English navies were substantial employers – among the largest in either country. At its peak during wartime, the English navy employed more people than populated any city in England apart from London, and the crews of its largest warships were equivalent in number to the residents of a village.[31] In terms of employees and estates, as well as expenditure, the navy was easily the largest single department of government in England. This highlights another aspect of the fiscal-naval state worthy of more investigation: the navy brought government directly into the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, just as central and local authorities did.[32] The hierarchy of naval personnel reflected contemporary social status. In England, the high command were generally aristocrats or gentlemen, as were many captains; the expansion of the navy during the 1640s-50s brought in many 'tarpaulin' (non-aristocratic) officers, which provoked debates after 1660 about their suitability, although this was as much about political allegiance as it was about social standing, and these divisions should not be exaggerated.[33] Over the course of the century various government initiatives, such as the introduction of the examination for lieutenant in 1677, led to professionalization and a greater sense of identity among the English naval officer corps regardless of their background.[34]

The rest of the navy's employees probably did not share this sense of professional identity tied to the navy as an institution, as opposed to a more general identification as part of a global sector of maritime workers. Although some seafarers spent their lives in the navy,

---

[30] Pepijn Brandon, 'Global Power, Local Connections. The Dutch Admiralties and their Supply Networks', in *The contractor state and its implications, 1659-1815*, ed. Richard Harding and Sergio Solbes Ferri (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2012), pp. 54-76, at p. 59.

[31] Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p. 213.

[32] For an overview, see Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England c. 1550-1700* (Cambridge, 2000).

[33] Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, pp. 5, 27-33, and ch. 3; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 171-9; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 94-9; Davies, *Kings of the Sea*, pp. 126-80.

[34] Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, pp. 40, 52-4; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 179, 195-201; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, p. 409; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 98-9; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 119-23; Davies, *Kings of the Sea*, pp. 141-50; Daniel Baugh, 'The Professionalisation of the English Navy and its Administration, 1660-1750', in Buchet and Bouëdec, eds, *The Sea in History*, pp. 852-66.

especially warrant or petty officers, the majority of sailors moved in and out of naval employment throughout their careers.[35] The government introduced a distinction between 'ordinary' and 'able' seamen in 1652, the latter more experienced men who received higher pay, as one of many measures throughout this period to encourage skilled seafarers to enlist.[36] Volunteers generally met the English navy's requirements during peacetime, but in wartime demand repeatedly outstripped supply, a situation not helped by low naval wages and poor-quality victuals (usually the result of the navy's financial difficulties), and by harsh naval discipline.[37] The English navy therefore turned to compulsion to fill its ships, and though impressment rarely matched the caricature of the violent and indiscriminate pressgang which was popular in later centuries it was nevertheless predictably unpopular with sailors.[38] The Dutch navy faced similar problems and also put considerable pressure on sailors to sign up, though preferring economic means such as embargoes on merchant shipping barring alternative routes for employment.[39] While their naval administrations reflect the different political structures of the two states, there are thus significant similarities in the way that both navies employed large numbers of their states' subjects, and in the coercive authority they claimed over these subjects.

2. Structures of revenue and expenditure

Both naval administration and naval employment depended upon, and impacted upon, another essential area of state activity: revenue and taxation. Comparing the costs and

---

[35] On warrant and petty officers see Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', pp. 163-70; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 201-11, 230-43; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 100-4; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, p. 124.

[36] Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, pp. 79-82; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 258-62; see also Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', pp. 204-5, 207-12; Andrews, *Ships, Money & Politics*, pp. 221-4;; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 327-8; Andrew Little, 'British Seamen in the United Provinces during the Seventeenth-Century Anglo-Dutch Wars: the Dutch Navy – a Preliminary Survey', in Hanno Brand, ed., *Trade, Diplomacy, and Cultural Exchange. Continuity and Change in the North Sea Area and the Baltic c. 1350-1750* (Hilversum, 2005), pp. 75-93; Geoffrey L. Hudson, 'The Relief of English Disabled Ex-Sailors, c. 1590-1680', in Cheryl A. Fury, ed., *The Social History of English Seamen, 1485-1649* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 229-75; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 46-8, 104-5, 194-6, 210, 312-13; Richard J. Blakemore, 'The Legal World of English Sailors, c. 1575-1729', in Maria Fusaro, Bernard Allaire, Richard J. Blakemore, and Tijl Vanneste, eds, *Law, Labour, and Empire: Comparative Perspectives on Seafarers* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp. 100-20, at pp. 104-5.

[37] Tedder, *Navy of the Restoration*, pp. 63-6; Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, pp. 79-80, 82-4; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 272-82; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, p. 403; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 122-4; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 19-20, 40, 60.

[38] Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', pp. 214-47; Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, pp. 71-8, 136-8; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 272-82; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 398-403; Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 108-13; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 55-9, 126-32; Blakemore and Murphy, *Civil Wars at Sea*, pp. 98-104.

[39] Jaap R. Bruijn, 'Career Patterns', *"Those Emblems of Hell"? European Sailors and the Maritime Labour Market, 1570-1870*, ed Paul C. van Royen, Jaap R. Bruijn and Jan Lucassen (St. John's, Newfoundland, 1997), pp. 25-34, at p. 29.

effectiveness of early-modern fiscal-military and fiscal-naval arrangements is notoriously difficult, as figures are incomplete and often denote wildly different things. Moreover, while competing directly and on more or less the same terms in some areas, states also pursued very different strategies and aims, creating their own highly specific demands and criteria for what amounted to the effective deployment of manpower and strategic resources. Nevertheless, when embedded in long-term narratives of state development, such comparisons can enlighten us about structural trends in state formation.[40] Naval organisation and operations in the seventeenth century were expensive activities, and both the Dutch and English navies repeatedly faced problems in securing the funds they needed; the response to these problems in large part determined the shape and nature of each fiscal-naval state.

Both the Dutch and English states initially relied on revenues from trade to pay for their navies. Following a plan formulated at the end of the 1580s at the same time as the five admiralties were established, the main source of revenue (the 'ordinary income') earmarked for the Dutch navy was from customs. The admiralty boards themselves organised the collection of this tax.[41] Similarly, in England under the early Stuarts, as in the medieval and Tudor periods, the navy (like other departments of government) was funded out of the monarch's ordinary revenue drawn from customs duties, as well as their own estates and a few other sources.[42] The underlying principle seems to have been that since the navy's primary function was to protect trade, it should be funded by a tax on trade. The main hitch for the Dutch system was that through the federal structure of the republic, as we have seen, local merchant communities could exert great pressure on admiralty officials. They predictably tended to employ this influence to ensure that custom tariffs remained low overall, and there were strong incentives for the local admiralty boards to give their 'own' trading communities comparative advantages by consistent under-taxation.[43]

---

[40] For some recent examples, see David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires. England and the Netherlands in the age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (Cambridge, 2003); Marjolein 't Hart, 'Mobilising Resources for War. The Dutch and British Financial Revolutions Compared', in Sánchez, ed., *War, State and Development*, pp. 179-200; Patrick O'Brien and Xavier Duran, 'Total Factor Productivity for the Royal Navy from Victory at Texel (1653) to Triumph at Trafalgar (1805)', in *Shipping and Economic Growth, 1350-1850*, ed Richard W. Unger (Leiden, 2011), pp. 279-308; Wantje Fritschy, *Public Finance of the Dutch Republic in Comparative Perspective. The Viability of an Early Modern Federal State (1570s-1795)* (Leiden and Boston, 2017); Plouviez, 'Développements des Marines Européennes', pp. 777-84.

[41] Davids and 't Hart, 'The Navy', pp. 287-91.

[42] Scott, *Making of a World Power*, pp. 94-8, 120-7; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 341-4.

[43] Marjolein C. 't Hart, *The Making of a Bourgeois State. War, Politics and Finance during the Dutch Revolt* (Manchester and New York, 1993), pp. 100-8; Wietse Veenstra, *Tussen Gewest en Generaliteit. Staatsvorming en Financiering van de Oorlog te Water in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden, in het Bijzonder Zeeland (1586-1795)*. Dissertation, VU Amsterdam, 2014, pp. 78-98.

For both navies, moreover, rising costs and greater activity meant that demand repeatedly outstripped supply. The English crown occasionally supplemented their revenues by levying direct taxation on the approval of parliament, especially in times of war – but, like their Dutch counterparts, the members of the landed gentry and merchant elite who sat in the English parliament were reluctant to levy high taxes. This precipitated a series of crises and provoked tensions between the crown and parliament during the first half of the seventeenth century, and inadequate financing was the main cause of several humiliating naval defeats during the 1620s.[44] The Dutch navy, too, had to find additional funds to carry the costs of naval operations beyond immediate trade-protection, and, as with the English parliament, for these 'extraordinary expenses' petitions were put to the States General for approval. Once approved, provinces paid these subsidies from their tax incomes according to set quota, but the federal structure of the Dutch republic again led to great variations in the level of commitment to the actual payment of these approved sums by the various provinces. In 1635, the provinces in total were in arrears by approximately £400,000,[45] which at that time amounted to total naval expenses for an entire year. By 1685, arrears had almost doubled to over £700,000, and by 1700 reached almost £1 million. However, about half this sum accrued to the admiralty board of Zeeland alone. Amsterdam suffered such underpayment to a far lesser extent, with provincial arrears amounting to £140,000 in 1635 and £170,000 half a century later.[46]

Mainly due to this support in Holland, and building on the sixteenth-century 'financial' revolution which had created a relatively efficient fiscal and credit system there, customs revenues and subsidies did provide consistent funds for most of the seventeenth century.[47] Yearly naval expenditure remained at wartime levels of around £400,000 in most of the early decades of the century. About 75 per cent of these expenses went to operational costs: outfitting fleets and hiring and feeding men. The most costly elements of naval policy were the maintaining of the blockade of the Flemish coast, and the outfitting of convoys (principally in the North Sea, the Baltic, and the Mediterranean), which cost just below £100,000 each.[48] After the peace of Westphalia/Münster that ended the eight decades of armed conflict with the

---

[44] Alan P. McGowan, 'The Royal Navy under the First Duke of Buckingham, Lord High Admiral 1618-1628' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1967), ch. 4; Andrew D. Thrush, 'The Navy under Charles I, 1625-40' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1990), pp. 123-63, 198-200; James Scott Wheeler, *The Making of a World Power: War and the Military Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 26-33; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 357-63, 373-6.

[45] The exchange rate between the guilder and the pound at this time fluctuated roughly between 10:1 and 11:1. To make comparison easier, we have consistently used 10:1 as the rate here, rounding figures downwards.

[46] Davids and 't Hart, 'The Navy', pp. 273-5, 302-4; Veenstra, *Gewest en Generaliteit*, 99-102.

[47] 't Hart, 'Mobilising Resources', pp. 181-6; Davids and 't Hart, 'The Navy', pp. 276-80.

[48] 't Hart, *Bourgeois State*, p. 52 and p. 54; Van Nimwegen and Prud'homme van Reine, 'De Organisatie en Financiering van Leger en Vloot', pp. 384-5.

Habsburg Empire, a clear popular sentiment existed to cut back on war expenses, shared by substantial sections of the Dutch ruling class. This partially explains why the Dutch came quite unprepared into the first Anglo-Dutch war that broke out in 1652. With average annual expenditures of around £600,000 during the war-years 1652-1654, the Dutch fell well behind the English during this war.

This level of English expenditure in the 1650s was only possible because of substantial changes in the structure, basis, and level of English naval financing which had already occurred, contrasting to the continuity visible in the Dutch case, and which reconfigured the navy's place within the English state as a whole. In response to the failures of the 1620s, Charles I tried to improve naval finances in 1635-9 with 'Ship Money', a direct levy which he imposed by his own authority rather than through parliament. Though it initially raised funds which were indeed used for the navy, it proved controversial in subsequent years and has often been regarded as a cause of the civil wars of the 1640s.[49] Ironically, however, parliament's victory in those wars led to a far higher level of taxation than Charles had ever imposed. Parliament introduced excise taxes on several commodities and levied direct taxes through the monthly Assessment, which were as unpopular as 'Ship Money' had been, but which parliament were more successful at carrying out. The income from specific goods was directed to the naval fleet, which had largely sided with parliament in 1642, and which aided parliament's eventual victory.[50] Parliament spent more on the navy, and set out larger fleets, than Charles I was ever able to, and this continued into the 1650s: expenditure rose from £200-300,000 a year during the 1640s to over £1m a year in 1653-4.[51] Between 1649 and 1660 the navy received a total of £8m from the government, compared with £3.5m in 1625-9 and less than £1m in 1634-40.[52] This system also meant that a much wider range of Britain's population contributed to naval expenditure through taxation, and established a much closer association between parliament and the navy.

---

[49] K. R. Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics: Seafaring and Naval Enterprise in the Reign of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1991), ch. 6; Andrew Thrush, 'Naval Finance and the Origins of the Development of Ship Money', in Mark Charles Fissel (ed.), *War and Government in Britain, 1598-1650* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 133-62; Braddick, *State Formation*, pp. 241-4; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 381-3; See also David D. Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government, 1616-1642*, pp. 30-41, for a smaller and earlier levy to fund a naval expedition.

[50] Wheeler, *Making of a World Power*, pp. 102-19, 127-43, 148-67, 179-94; Braddick, *State Formation*, pp. 213-21; Patrick K. O'Brien, 'Fiscal Exceptionalism: Great Britain and its European Rivals from Civil War to Triumph at Trafalgar and Waterloo', in *The Political Economy of British Historical Experience, 1688-1914*, ed Donald Winch and Patrick K. O'Brien (Oxford, 2002), pp. 245-66;Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 37-40; Richard J. Blakemore and Elaine Murphy, *The British Civil Wars at Sea, 1638-1653* (Woodbridge, 2018), p. 91.

[51] Bernard Capp, *Cromwell's Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution, 1648-1660* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 9-10; see also J. S. Wheeler, 'Navy Finance, 1649-1660', *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), pp. 457-66; Wheeler, *Making of a World Power*, pp. 39-42, 45-52, 204-5.

[52] Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p. 4; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, p. 46.

The interregnum regimes could not ensure consistent support for the navy, due to reduced taxation and political disruption in the later 1650s, and in 1660 Charles II inherited a navy that was deep in debt. Even so, he maintained some of the interregnum's taxes, which also enabled him to continue another fiscal innovation of the 1640s-50s: securing loans at better rates by assigning predicted future taxation to their repayment. The navy faced problems with liquidity in each subsequent war, but there were improvements in cost-effectiveness, and it still had a sounder financial base than at any previous time.[53] Throughout Charles II's reign it cost around £300-400,000 annually in peacetime, and up to £1m annually in war, generally representing over one fifth of government expenditure.[54] An additional £600,000 was provided for a ship-building programme in 1677, even though it was peacetime.[55] Overall, Dutch and English naval expenditure continued to stand at quite similar levels in the three decades that followed the first Anglo-Dutch war. During the second war, the Dutch doubled their naval expenses to about £1.2 million per year, slightly more than the outlays on the navy by the English government.[56] Moreover, it has to be kept in mind that the Dutch state simultaneously footed the bill for massive involvement in continental warfare, which the English state managed to avoid for most of the seventeenth century.

As Wantje Fritschy has shown, a real divergence of naval expenditure levels only occurred after the Glorious Revolution in 1689. This event brought the two states into an alliance, but also shifted the balance of naval strength between them. In the two major European wars that followed, the war of the League of Augsburg and the war of the Spanish succession, the Dutch maintained annual levels of naval expenditures around £1 million and £900,000 respectively (the latter for the years 1702-1709).[57] However, English annual expenditure at the beginning of the eighteenth century briefly peaked at just below £8 million, roughly equivalent to Dutch naval expenditure for the entire decade. During most of the eighteenth century, the Dutch state accepted the role of junior partners in a naval alliance with Britain, concentrating their expenses on financing long-distance convoying of the merchant fleet

---

[53] Arthur William Tedder, *The Navy of the Restoration, from the Death of Cromwell to the Treaty of Breda; its Work, Growth, and Influence* (Cambridge, 1916), pp. 3-6, 45-8, 54-6; Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, pp. 148-9, 163; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 333-65; J. D. Davies, *Pepys's Navy: Ships, Men & Warfare, 1649-1689* (Barnsley, 2008), p. 36; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 40-1, 95-102, 108-10; Patrick O'Brien, 'The Sea and the Precocious Transition of the British Isles into a Hegemonic Political and Economic Power', in *The Sea in History*, ed Buchet and Bouëdec, pp. 756-62.

[54] Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins*, p. 15, n. 18; Michael J. Braddick, *The Nerves of State: Taxation and the Financing of the English State, 1558-1714* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 30-2; Wheeler, *Making of a World Power*, pp. 54-8, 143-6, 167-72, 195-6, 204.

[55] Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 108-9.

[56] Fritschy, *Public Finance*, p. 268.

[57] Veenstra, *Gewest en Generaliteit*, p. 126.

13

and cutting back expenditure levels.[58] British naval expenditure, meanwhile, continued to increase in leaps and bounds, supported by a British 'financial revolution' that in some ways copied, but eventually outstripped, the Dutch system, and in which indirect taxes played an increasingly important role.[59] Though there were some resemblances between the two states in the sources of funding, both in customs revenues and direct taxation, and in the level of expenditure, the two states had very different fiscal underpinnings which unsurprisingly mirror their political and naval organisation: one centred on the crown and parliament, the other decentralised and under the strong influence of local commercial elites. The Dutch fiscal system of customs revenue and additional provincial taxes was established early and remained fairly stable throughout this period, despite the problems of limited taxation and underpayment. The English system developed more slowly and fitfully, was driven in part by political turbulence, and resulted in a shift in public attitudes: while 'Ship Money' and parliament's excise taxes provoked intense resistance, by the end of the century the idea of increased taxation in support of the navy had largely been accepted by the political nation.[60] Moreover, this comparison of long-term trends shows that there is no clear link between the 'tactical revolution' at sea during the first half of the seventeenth century, or the increase of Anglo-Dutch naval competition in the mid-seventeenth century, and the centralisation of fiscal-naval arrangements. The decentralised Dutch state spent more on its navy and was overall more successful financially than England before the 1650s, and largely kept pace with English spending up until the 1690s, suggesting that no one model of the early modern fiscal-naval state was automatically more effective at extracting and deploying resources.[61] In a similar way, these states depended on varying levels of private involvement to achieve the same objectives.

Naval power and private enterprise

---

[58] 't Hart, 'Mobilising Resources', pp. 193-200; Bruijn, *Dutch Navy*, pp. 127-40; Davids and 't Hart, 'The Navy', pp. 304-8; Brandon, *War, Capital, and the Dutch State*, pp. 130-5; Fritschy, *Public Finance*, 268-9.
[59] Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, pp. 34-42, and ch. 4; Patrick O'Brien, 'Inseparable Connections: Trade, Economy, Fiscal State, and the Expansion of Empire, 1688-1815', in *The Oxford History of the British Empires, Volume 2: The Eighteenth Century*, ed P. J. Marshall and Alaine Low (Oxford, 1998), pp. 53-77; Patrick O'Brien and Philip A. Hunt, 'England, 1485-1815', in *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, ed Richard Bonney (Oxford, 1999), pp. 53-100; O'Brien, 'State Formation'.
[60] Braddick, *State Formation*, p. 271, 284-5. Sarah Kinkel has argued, however, that the navy remained a topic of considerable political debate: see *Disciplining the Empire: Politics, Governance, and the Rise of the British Navy* (Cambridge, MA, 2018).
[61] See also Louis Sicking, 'Le Maritime, Fondement de la Prédominance Commerciale et Économique des Provinces-Unies', in *The Sea in History*, ed Buchet and Bouëdec, pp. 455-65, at p. 464.

While standing navies expanded in terms of infrastructure and administration, operations, and personnel, they remained only one (albeit the most important) component of an early modern fiscal-naval state. Private enterprise continued to play a significant role both in support of navies and as an alternative to them throughout the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth. However, there were significant shifts in the nature and extent of this participation which resulted from naval expansion. For example, from the medieval period until the mid-seventeenth century naval warfare had relied to a large degree on the state hiring merchant ships to supplement the relatively small number of state-owned warships.[62] Yet the hiring of merchant ships created tensions between private interests and the strategic and tactical priorities of the state. For example, employing merchant ships for martial purposes benefitted those who hired out their ships – often at high rates, exploiting wartime urgency – and established a close link between the navy and certain merchants, which could be problematic. In 1647, critics accused English parliamentarian naval administrators, most of whom were merchants, of hiring their own ships for state service at exorbitant rates even if they were unsuitable for naval service.[63]

This approach also created a route to by-pass central state institutions in the organization of protection, as the Dutch case illustrates well. In 1631, the States General, under pressure from a number of trading towns, had given its approval to the formation of new institutions, the *Directies*. These committees existed in several ports, and were headed by burgomasters and representatives from different groups of traders. Their task was to hire and arm merchant ships on their own account, in order to organise additional convoys which were financed through a separate tax, levied only on the merchants who profited directly from their employment.[64] Though these *directie*-ships acted under the formal command structures of the navy during operations, they were organisationally independent, and during the first Anglo-Dutch war they attracted criticism for their low quality, their reluctance to take risks during battle that endangered valuable private assets, and the disreputable conduct of their captains. Several mutinies broke out on *directie*-ships during the 1650s, showing 'that the old axiom was untenable that the merchant fleet, as a reserve for the state navy, should be seen as the backbone of protection at sea'.[65]

---

[62] Andrews, *Ships, Money & Politics*, pp. 25-9; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, pp. 118-20; Bruijn, 'States and their Navies', pp. 73-6, 78-80; Sicking, 'Naval Warfare', pp. 255-8.
[63] Andrews, *Ships, Money, and Politics*, pp. 190-202; Blakemore and Murphy, *British Civil Wars at Sea*, pp. 92-3.
[64] Bruijn, *Dutch Navy*, p. 27.
[65] Johan E. Elias, *De Vlootbouw in Nederland in de Eerste Helft der 17de Eeuw 1596-1655* (Amsterdam, 1933), p. 90. On the mutinies, see Brandon, *War, Capital, and the Dutch State,* p. 88.

In the English case, the increase in naval resources across the 1630s and 1640s, and especially during the 1650s, eventually removed the need for hired merchant ships. By the end of the first Anglo-Dutch war, the English naval fleet was largely state-owned, a development that, like the changes in English naval finances to which it was closely linked, owed much to the circumstances and demands of civil war and revolution.[66] The Dutch navy, which had employed the strategy of arming merchant ships with great success in the preceding period, was slower than the English state in adapting to this new approach. The thrust towards what Jaap Bruijn has called the transition from the 'Old' to the 'New' navy came only with the poor performance of the Dutch fleet in the first Anglo-Dutch war.[67] Out of a total of 154 ships constituting the Dutch fleet, 88 had been hired merchant-men (about half of them *directie*-ships), which were regarded as less effective in battle.[68] The naval commander Maarten Harpertsz. Tromp lobbied intensively for a large building programme of custom-made warships, to bring the Dutch standing navy to the level of their English adversaries. A competing attachment to the traditional strategy of using merchant ships as a second tier of the naval fleet is apparent from the Amsterdam city council's proposal, around the same time, to instead formulate a set of rules for the building of merchant-men that would allow them to be more easily transformed into men-of-war.[69] However, Tromp's line won out in the end. At the instigation of Johan de Witt, the leading Dutch statesman at that moment, the aftermath of the first Anglo-Dutch war saw a major transformation of naval facilities, allowing for building programmes for specialized warships run by the admiralty boards themselves. The imposing Amsterdam naval storehouse and admiralty shipyard, erected in 1656, were the visible result of this change in approach.[70] The Dutch navy reaped the benefits during the second Anglo-Dutch war, when the balance of naval power between the two nations had been more or less restored.

Both navies continued to rely on private enterprise in other ways. One of them was the dependence of these enhanced facilities for the building and outfitting of warships on private ship-builders and extensive supply networks. The English navy was 'far and away the largest industry in the country ... at the heart of a web of sub-contractors that extended the navy's reach far inland'.[71] The royal dockyards relied on private suppliers for their building and maintenance programmes, and the navy also purchased victuals from merchants, drawing large numbers of

---

[66] Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp. 6-9, 80; Davies, *Peyps's Navy*, pp. 16, 57, Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 45, 59, 216-18.
[67] Bruijn, *Dutch Navy*, 59-63; see also Bruijn, 'States and their Navies', pp. 83-90.
[68] J.C. de Jonge, *Het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*. Five volumes (Haarlem 1858-1862), I, 762-3.
[69] Elias, *Vlootbouw*, p. 94.
[70] Brandon, *War, Capital, and the Dutch State*, pp. 146-7.
[71] Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, p. 33; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 112-18.

producers and artisans into the fiscal-naval state, and perhaps boosting the British economy.[72] During the 1640s and 1650s, at least, this often involved women, usually widows, some of whom ran considerable businesses which supplied the navy with hammocks, flags, and other goods.[73] The Dutch admiralty boards utilised decentralised market-mechanisms to an even greater extent, especially for provisioning. The Dutch navy did not take responsibility for organising victualling centrally; instead, captains received a lump sum per crewmember, with which they had to procure a set list of supplies. This created large possibilities for private gain, provided that captains managed to buy their hard tack, salted meat, and other daily necessities on the cheap.

Michiel de Ruyter himself provides one of the famous examples of captains who acquired a small fortune in this way. According to calculations by Prud'homme van Reine, who certainly is not a hostile biographer of De Ruyter, this successful merchant-turned-admiral managed to retain one third of the seven *stuyvers* per man per day that he received for the crew of his flagship *De Zeven Provinciën*. Extrapolating from his extant account books, Prud'homme van Reine estimates that De Ruyter received £32,000 from the Admiralty Board for victuals between 1652 and 1667, on which he could have made a profit of as much as £7,000.[74] With victualling making 14 per cent of total naval expenditure, this must have created a lush market. Of course, such windfalls were not confined to captains. Either through their personal businesses, through family members, or through underhand deals, the higher echelons of naval administration in both England and the United Provinces were routinely (and not always legally) involved in the costly provisioning of wood, rope, hemp, and other naval necessities. Next to them stood many of the leading merchants of the seventeenth century. The 'contractor state' which historians have identified in the late eighteenth century was already in existence, although perhaps less systematically organised and not always as effective as it later proved.[75]

---

[72] Davies, *Pepys's Navy*, pp. 69, 78, 200-1; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 45-6, 98-100, 105-7, 188-95; Rodger, '"Fiscal-Naval State"', p. 123.

[73] Blakemore and Murphy, *Civil Wars at Sea*, pp. 89-91.

[74] Ronald Prud'homme van Reine, *Rechterhand van Nederland. Biografie van Michiel Adriaenszoon de Ruyter* (Amsterdam and Antwerpen, 1996), pp. 219-20.

[75] Roger Knight and Martin H. Wilcox, *Sustaining the Fleet, 1793-1815: War, the British Navy and the Contractor State* (Woodbridge, 2010), especially pp. 8-16; Christian Buchet, *The British Navy, Economy and Society in the Seven Years War*, trans. Anita Higgie and Michael Duffy (Woodbridge, 2013). For an international comparative perspective, see H.V. Bowen, 'Round Table: The Contractor State, c. 1650-1815', *International Journal for Maritime History*, Vol. XXV, no. 1 (2013), pp. 239-74, and the special issue 'Extending the State. The Business of War and the Eighteenth-Century Contractor State', Pepijn Brandon, Marjolein C. 't Hart and Rafael Torres Sánchez, *Business History*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (2018).

Beyond the navy itself, these fiscal-naval states employed privateers as a substantial and continuous part of their wartime strategy, but here there was more wide-reaching change in their purpose and activities.[76] In the Elizabethan period and again in the 1620s England had deployed large numbers of privately-owned warships in both European waters and farther afield.[77] During the 1640s parliamentarians, royalists, and Irish confederates all employed privateers, and this was especially important for the royalists and confederates who possessed no regular naval forces.[78] After the 1650s, with the increased naval fleet, English privateers became less numerous in European waters but remained important to the expanding American colonies, which depended on privateering to bring in specie and goods, and for their defence.[79] In the Dutch case, too, privateering continued to form an important part of commercial warfare. It retained an especially strong foothold in the province of Zeeland, where privateering and later the participation in the illegal slave trade partially compensated for the loss of other trading opportunities to Holland.[80] Beyond European waters commercial companies like the VOC, WIC, and English East India Company also performed essential, though gradually shifting, roles in trade protection and naval conflict throughout the seventeenth century and long into the eighteenth.[81]

As with hired merchant ships and private suppliers, the profit-seeking of privateers and the objectives of the state could align, but did not always do so. The career of the most famous English buccaneer, Henry Morgan, reveals the uneasy relationship between these fiscal-naval

---

[76] Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994), pp. 21-6, 44-54; Gijs Rommelse, 'An Early Modern Naval Revolution? The Relationship between "Economic Reason of State" and Maritime Warfare', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 13 (2011), pp. 138-50, at pp. 143-4.

[77] Kenneth R. Andrews, *Elizabethan Privateering: English Privateering during the Spanish War, 1585-1603* (Cambridge, 1964); John C. Appleby, 'English Privateering during the Spanish and French Wars', (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Hull, 1983).

[78] Ben Coates, *The Impact of the English Civil War on the Economy of London, 1642-50* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 97-9, 125-32; Blakemore and Murphy, *Civil Wars at Sea*, pp. 104-7, 110-12, 117-20.

[79] Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 23-4, 79, 92-3; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007), pp. 38-42; Douglas R. Burgess, *Politics of Piracy: Crime and Civil Disobedience in Colonial America* (Lebanon NH, 2014), ch. 2; Mark Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2015), ch. 3; Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Global Piracy on the High Seas, 1500-1750* (Abingdon, 2016), ch. 4; John C. Appleby, 'Pirates, Privateers, and Buccaneers: The Changing Face of English Piracy from the 1650s to the 1720s', in Cheryl A. Fury, ed., *The Social History of English Seamen, 1650-1815* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 213-35, at pp. 217-22.

[80] J.Th.H. Verhees-Van Meer, *De Zeeuwse Kaapvaart tijdens de Spaanse Successieoorlog 1702-1713* (Middelburg, 1986); Davids and 't Hart, 'The Navy', pp. 298-302; Sicking, 'Le Maritime', p. 464.

[81] Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*, pp. 31-40, 59-68, 97-105; Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* (Zutphen, 2003); Helen Julia Paul, 'Joint-Stock Companies as the Sinews of War: The South Sea and Royal African Companies', in *War, State and Development*, ed Torres-Sánchez, pp. 277-94; Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundation of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011); Henk den Heijer, *Geschiedenis van de WIC* (Zutphen, 2013); Philippe Haudrère, 'Les Compagnies de Commerce: Instruments de la Puissance Maritime', in *The Sea in History*, ed Buchet and Bouëdec, pp. 763-72.

states and the semi-independent privateers they employed. Morgan led several successful and brutal campaigns against Spanish America during the 1670s, and was then tried for piracy, but was exonerated and made deputy governor of Jamaica, in which role he displayed a rather ambivalent attitude towards his former comrades.[82] His experiences were part of a wider trend whereby the English state sought to circumscribe and control privateers, and eradicate piracy, starting with parliamentary and colonial legislation in the 1670s, and intensifying with further legislation and more vigorous prosecution from the 1690s onwards.[83] Piracy resurged in the early eighteenth century, and privateers continued to feature in England's (and other countries') maritime strategy throughout that century, but under much stricter control than before: another way in which fiscal-naval states flexed their muscles and dictated the terms of their authority over their subjects, this time on a global scale.[84]

Conclusions

One of the more interesting dimensions highlighted by this comparison is the internationally interactive nature of fiscal-naval state development: the extent to which change in one state drove change in others, especially those which, like the Dutch and English states, repeatedly came to blows. In some ways this happened as a blunt arms race – as when the Dutch navy were forced to adapt from merchant ships to state-owned warships, because the English had already done so – but it also occurred in a more subtle and complex fashion, such as the connections between the 'financial revolutions' which occurred first in Holland and later in England. The various similarities between the Dutch and English navies, such as their ideological associations, their employment of large portions of the population, their level and sources of funding, and the overall shift towards greater state control while preserving some role for private agents, owe much to both the competition and the connections between these two states. Fiscal-naval states must be understood within the international political ecosystem in which they evolved.

---

[82] Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, p. 123; Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, pp. 113–14.

[83] Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, MA, 1986), pp. 152-5; Burgess, *Politics of Piracy*, chs 3-6; Margarette Lincoln, *British Pirates and Society, 1680-1730* (Farnham, 2014), ch. 3; Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, chs 5-7; Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, pp. 176-90.

[84] Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, pp. 233-7; David J. Starkey, *British Privateering in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter, 1990); Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*, pp. 108-18; Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London, 2012), especially ch. 7; Burgess, *Politics of Piracy*, chs 7-11; Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, chs 8-10; Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, pp. 190-202; Appleby, 'Pirates, Privateers, and Buccaneers', pp. 222-35.

At the same time, it is important not to obscure the individual characteristics of each state. There were significant differences between the Dutch and English fiscal-naval states and their development, especially in political terms: one was a localised federal republic, the other a centralising monarchy; one was relatively politically stable, albeit with various factional and provincial rivalries, the other riven by internal turmoil with long-lasting consequences. These differences affected the shape and direction of the two navies, but they did not guarantee greater success, in fiscal-naval terms, until the start of the eighteenth century. Although Britain became the dominant maritime power thereafter, this was certainly not a predetermined trajectory. Perhaps the greatest strength of the concept of fiscal-naval states for historians, therefore, is in opening up discussion of the various ways in which warfare at sea and naval organisation is both a consequence of, and has an impact upon, wider patterns of early modern state-formation.