A comparative analysis of Dutch and Scottish Baltic-North Sea shipping, 1700-1850

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Introduction: the importance of the home region in Baltic-North Sea shipping: England

HRF: Home Region Frequency = all Sound passages by shipmasters domiciled at ports in the selected region.

HMF: Home Market Frequency = all Sound passages by shipmasters domiciled at ports in the selected region, departing from or destined to a port in the home region.

HRS: Home Region Share = the share of the home market in all Sound passages by shipmasters domiciled at ports in the selected region.
Introduction: the importance of the home region in Baltic-North Sea shipping: Scotland

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The development of Dutch and Scottish North Sea-Baltic shipping compared.
Structure of the paper

• Similarity and relative differences
• Divergence and structural differences
• Nuances with regard to the Dutch case: unequal development at the microlevel
• Final remarks
Similarity and relative differences before 1780
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Share of the main origins of imports into the Baltic, carried by Scottish shipmasters, 1670-1780. 
Source: STRO
Similarity and relative differences before 1780
Similarity and relative differences before 1780

• The spatial structure of the distribution of goods between the Baltic and the North Seas, carried by Dutch resp. Scottish ships can now be summarized as follows:

• Though the general structure appeared to be quite similar. A majority of shipments from the Baltic was destined to the home area of the shipmasters, while a closer look at the distribution patterns for exports from the Baltic as well as imports into the Baltic revealed that both Dutch and Scottish shipmasters increasingly transported imports into the Baltic from different areas than the home region.

• In the case of Dutch shipmasters the dominant region of origin for imports in the Baltic became the Atlantic coastline; in the case of Scottish shipmasters, England became an important starting point of outbound voyages into the Baltic. It is here, that some relative differences emerge between the Dutch and Scottish maritime transport sector between 1670 and 1780.

• In particular, the predominance of imports from the Atlantic coast in outbound voyages of Dutch shipmasters going to the Baltic was much higher than the share of England in outbound voyages of Scottish shipmasters heading for the Baltic.
Divergence and structural differences after 1780

% share of the main destinations of exports from the Baltic, carried by Scottish shipmasters, 1780-1850. Source: STRO.
Divergence and structural differences after 1780
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Divergence and structural differences after 1780

Share of the main origins of imports into the Baltic, carried by Dutch shipmasters, 1780-1850. Source: STRO
Unequal development at the microlevel: Nuances with regard to the Dutch maritime transport sector
Final remarks

• Comparative analysis of shipping patterns helps to identify regions for which the supply of maritime transport services became a full-fledged business venture, like e.g. Scotland, or the Lauwers-Dollard-Ems Delta.

• Caution is necessary when regions are compared. Not all comparisons make sense...

• The better the understanding of the economic structure of the regions that are dealt with, the higher the chances of obtaining an insightful comparative analysis.

• The study of regional services economies in Europe may be much advanced by a further in-depth exploration of STRO.