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A Texel fishing lineage: the social dynamic and economic logic of family firms

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Abstract

In the 1970s and early 1980s, several maritime anthropologists and sociologists pointed out that for a number of economic, social and psychological reasons, the performance of commercial fishing firms based on kin-based capital and labour was highly adaptive. For this reason, most crews in the North Atlantic area seemed to be organized around a core of agnatic relatives with women playing important shore-based roles. As of the early 1990s, the attention of anthropologists and sociologists shifted away from 'classical' themes such as the social organization of fishing to issues of policy and management, particularly property rights regimes and rights-based fishing. Consequently, the topic of kin and family in the fisheries disappeared into the background. Nonetheless, it would appear that family firms are still predominant in the fisheries. In this paper, I will analyze their logic and dynamic in conditions of ecological, economic and political uncertainty, using ethnographic material from research in Dutch fishing communities on the island of Texel. Considerable attention will be devoted to the issue of what rights-based management regimes have meant for the social organization of and kin involvement in fishing firms.

Keywords: Family firms; Occupational inheritance; Agnatic capital; Netherlands

Introduction

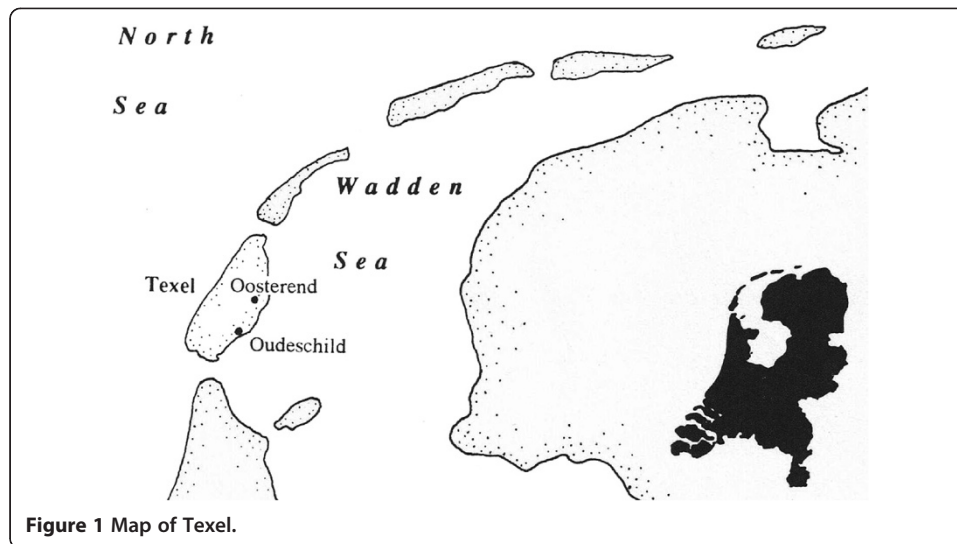
Throughout Europe, the fishing industry is in serious decline. This situation is often blamed on the proverbial greed of fisher folk: had it not been for the European Union's measures, the seas would have already been depleted some time ago. Adding insult to injury, fishermen are thus stereotyped as victims of their own rapacious behaviour. This image has turned into a conviction. However, Europe's post-war governments contributed to exacerbating the problem of overfishing. They urged vessel owners to expand and modernize and heavily subsidized their national fishing industries. When by the mid-1970s the devastating consequences became apparent to politicians and policymakers, the European supranational entity began attempting to harness the industry. This development generated its own tragic stories, with non-propertied crewmembers usually paying a particularly heavy price. New management regimes also severely affected owner-operators, but they often attempted to hold on to their occupation against all economic odds, especially if they were running a family firm.

In many cases, family firms have proven to be exceptionally versatile and resilient. Kinship plays a prominent role in the European fishing industry's social organization, particularly where fishing is a form of petty or domestic commodity production

(Sinclair 1985). In the 1970s and early 1980s, several maritime anthropologists and sociologists pointed out that for a number of economic, social and psychological reasons, the performance of commercial fishing firms based on familial capital and labour was highly adaptive. Many of these reasons continue to be highly significant. Agnatic kin (father-son(s), paternal uncle-nephew(s) or brothers) - are strongly interdependent and have to stick together to continue fishing because a vessel constitutes an undividable asset (Löfgren 1972; Norr and Norr 1978). More importantly, a family firm is a common pool of resources. Relatives share forces of production, labour, capital, knowledge and expertise. In so doing, they spread risks and reduce vulnerabilities. The earnings remain within a narrowly defined core of kinsfolk, enabling the quick accumulation of capital in good seasons. All participating family members ultimately benefit. Therefore, the family firm is a system of self-motivated labour (Thompson et al. 1983:156). Conversely, in bad times owners tend to work longer hours and/or cut back on their expenditures. They often defer their income from the ship's share and, if they work aboard ship, take a smaller part of the crew share. They will reduce profit margins, postpone reinvestments in equipment and, if necessary, even eat into their own savings. Generating profits is not their only objective. Thus, the family firm is also a form of self-exploitation (Jorion 1983:10). Moreover, close social ties are believed to enhance teamwork aboard a fishing boat and 'the model of a family partnership makes possible the conversion of the kinship values of trust, solidarity, the equivalence of siblings and mutual aid on the private level into the organizational norms of voluntary cooperation, equality and mutual reliance on the team level' (Byron 1975:155).

However, by the early 1990s the anthropologists' and sociologists' attention shifted away from the social organization of fishing and its importance in fisheries management contexts. Instead, they began focusing on resource management regimes per se. Although he largely ignores the earlier social science literature^a, geographer David Symes's (1999):142 argument that 'there has been relatively little emphasis on the internal social structures of the "family firm" and its external linkages or on the socially and culturally constrained decision making within these important micro-institutions' certainly holds water. Thus, while kinship is at the core of social organization in fishing communities, our comprehension with regard to its manifestations and, by extension, processes of social reproduction is dated and rather fragmentary. We know surprisingly little about more recent forms and dynamics of familial and kinship involvement in the fisheries. It is also unclear whether the preference for a crew composed of kinsmen 'arises from obligation, necessity or choice' (Symes and Frangoudes 2001:163), although it usually emanates from 'a complex relationship of interwoven strands of economic interest and social obligation within and across the generations' (Byron 1994:287).

Based upon in-depth historical and anthropological research on the Dutch island of Texel, I will show how the social dynamic and economic logic of the family firm operates in practice and what makes it such a profoundly adaptive and resilient organizational entity^b. Texel is a municipality and has approximately 13,800 inhabitants, most of whom reside in one of its seven villages. For two of these villages the fisheries are particularly important: Oudeschild - where the harbour is situated - and Oosterend - home to most of the offshore family firms (see Figure 1). Both villages have a population of between 1,300 and 1,400 people. Currently (June 2013), Texel's fishing fleet



boasts eleven family-owned and operated beam trawlers of around forty meters in length that are equipped with 2000 hp engines. These capital-intensive vessels operate pulse trawls in the southern and south-eastern North Sea to catch sole and plaice and associated flatfish stocks on four- to five-day trips. In addition, there are nine inshore cutters with up to 300 hp engines. They are mainly used in shrimp and flatfish fishing in the Wadden Sea and the North Sea's 12 nm zone. About a hundred fishermen crew the local fishing fleet, while in addition there are a dozen or so co-owners who have terminated their active fishing careers.

At face value, there would seem to be considerable continuity in most Texel family firms in the fisheries. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that there is much variety as to how succession within firms is arranged and which occupations male family members choose or end up in during their life cycle. I will illustrate this by presenting some examples from a local fisher lineage. In family businesses, lineages often do not develop. There is a popular saying that someone started a firm, his son brought it to wealth and then the grandson destroyed it. This is not generally the case with family firms in the Texel fishing industry. Though one should take care not to single out a successful 'old' firm as paradigmatic for the entire local fishing industry (Marcus 2005:618), examples of firms with a long continuous history do exist and they may be instructive to learn about the dynamics of success and failure in fisheries family businesses. In this article, I will focus on the van der Vis fishing lineage^c.

Currently, the owner-operators of five Texel vessels share van der Vis as their last name. The owners of another vessel have recently decommissioned it. They are related through - partly distant - paternal kinship ties. All of them share Pieter van der Vis, himself a fifth-generation van der Vis fisherman who was born in 1801, as their ancestor. For over two centuries, many van der Vis agnates have been active in the local fishing industry and some of them rose to positions of prominence economically and also as board members of fisheries organizations and local institutions. The family is deeply rooted in the village of Oosterend and environs and its male members belong to a Protestant denomination, the Dutch Reformed Church. Their marriages have predominantly been locally and religiously endogamous, with settlement generally being virilocal: a van der

Vis husband and his wife usually hailed from the island, in many cases from Oosterend, and they settled in the husband's village upon marriage. In the past, a fisherman's wife often was a fisherman's daughter. In addition to agnatic consanguinity, in some cases ties of affinity have, therefore, also been important in the continuity of family firms because intermarriage between fisher families was until recently rather common. So much so, that there were - and are - complex inter-linkages between several of the island's - and particularly Oosterend's - fisher families. However, so as not to tremendously complicate things, I will mainly focus on consanguineous ties through the descending male line.

A Texel fisher folk lineage

The involvement of the van der Vis family in the Texel fishing industry dates back to the end of the seventeenth century (see Figure 2). Meeuwis van der Vis, an inland bargeman, hailed from a mainland village and married a Texel woman in 1693. The couple settled on the island that same year. She gave birth to two sons. Little is known about Meeuwis, but given his background he most likely picked up a maritime occupation after moving to Texel, in all probability making him the progenitor of the van der Vis fishing lineage. We know for certain that his youngest son Willem was a fisherman. Only one of Willem's sons, Pieter, survived childhood and followed in his father's footsteps. Pieter married Hiltje Brouwer, who in 1767 gave birth to a son, Willem, her only child. As tradition required, sons and daughters were named after their grandparents and other patrilineal or matrilineal relatives. If children died young, their names were passed on to children born after them. These naming practices led to a repetition of names across several generations, first-born cross-cousins usually receiving the same first names. To avoid confusion, people were nicknamed or referred to by the patronymic name (male ascendant line). Thus, Willem would be known as 'Willem of Pieter' or 'Willem Pzn', 'Pzn' being an abbreviation of 'Pieter's son'.

Willem Pzn in 1792 married Engeltje Saris, who descended from a locally prominent family of aldermen and oyster skippers. They had two sons and five daughters – three of whom died in infancy. The sons, Jan and Pieter, became fishermen. Ideal-typically, occupational inheritance in the agnatic descending line was common. It depended on having male offspring, of course. Nuclear families were generally quite large, but poor health conditions led to high infant mortality. This made father-to-son succession a contingent factor, which depended on boys surviving childhood. Young boys not even in their teens joined their fathers aboard, usually got paid nothing or only some spending money, received an on-the-job training and gradually learned the ropes of the occupation. Having a son could thus save on money that otherwise had to be spent on paying a non-related deckhand. Consequently, Jan and Pieter joined their father as young boys, saving

Generation	Born	Male van der Vis offspring (fishermen)	
I	1660s	▲	Meeuwis van der Vis (b. 1667)
II	1690s-1700s	▲▲	
III	1720s-1730s	▲▲	
IV	1760s	▲	▲ = Willem
V	1790s-1800s	▲▲	▲ = Jan Wzn ▲ = Pieter Wzn
VI	1820s-1840s	▲▲▲▲▲ ▲▲▲▲	Jan 5 sons Pieter 4 sons
VII	1860s-1870s	▲ ▲▲▲▲ ▲▲▲ ▲▲▲▲▲ ▲▲▲▲	Jan 7 gr.sons Pieter 8 gr.sons

Figure 2 Seven generations of van der Vis fishermen.

out on a hired deckhand. Until they got married, they did not receive any remuneration for their labour. The money thus saved was earmarked to redeem debts and invest what was subsequently available. In matrimony, Jan and Pieter turned independent. For four generations, there had been no more than two van der Vis sons in the male descending line. But between them, Jan and Pieter had nine boys. It was when they reached maturity that the van der Vis fishing lineage became firmly established in Texel's fishing industry.

Jan Wzn had three sons with his first wife and after she died another two with his second wife. All of Jan's five boys had to crew at an early age. Depending on the stage of the family cycle, family members crewed the boats and eventually made way for younger siblings so that a boat would not be overstaffed. The older ones would become independent or crew for another relative if that was feasible. Even though Jan's sons augmented the household budget, in the mid-1840s he was one of Oosterend's poorest skipper-owners, earning an annual income of no more than 200 guilders in 1846. At the time, oyster fishing was in a grave crisis. Despite the prospect of poverty, all of Jan's sons continued fishing either for a number of years or as a lifelong career. The island economy offered few alternatives. In 1850, Jan's vessel broke adrift and was lost. His youngest sons began hand-picking mussels and sold them for fifteen cents per bucket to villagers and farmers. His spouse started peddling rolls and cakes on the island. Through these petty jobs, charity, and a loan, the family collected just enough money to buy another second-hand boat, the smallest sailing vessel of the local fishing fleet. It would not be the last time that misfortune assailed Jan's family. Seven years later, this substitute boat was also nearly shipwrecked. Repairs were expensive.

Jan's brother Pieter Wzn established his own household in 1825 when he married an oyster skipper's daughter who was pregnant with their first child. The couple settled in the hamlet of Oost and Pieter bought a second-hand vessel to earn a living. His wife gave birth to thirteen children, several of whom died in infancy. In addition to bringing up the kids and managing the household, she ran a petty shop and did odd jobs - including heating the foot-stoves in church, which earned her a few extra cents. Nonetheless, the household was as poor as Jan's. The sons - Willem, Simon, Biem and Pieter - came aboard their father's vessel by age nine, the usual age for boys to enter a fishing career in the first half of the nineteenth century. When Willem joined his father in 1835, oyster fishing was still thriving. It was the Oosterend fisher folk's mainstay. But by the time Simon was old enough to assume the third man position twelve years later, it was in serious decline as oyster stocks were depleted (see van Ginkel 1996a). All members of the household subsequently took on any kind of work to weather the depression. In many cases, fishermen's spouses for example ran a small shop, did the laundry for well-to-do families, sewed clothes or worked as cleaning ladies. Young girls would usually also contribute to a household's revenues by running errands or working as maidservants. As family firms were units of production and units of consumption, economizing on household expenditures was an oft-used strategy to cope with adverse times.

Although they were very poor, with five and four sons, respectively, Jan and Pieter availed of considerable 'agnatic capital'. Yet this in itself was insufficient to ensure family firm continuity in the long run. Not a single member of Jan Wzn's agnatic offspring is currently working in the fisheries. All of today's van der Vis owner-operators are descendants of Pieter Wzn, who is their (great)-great-grandfather. Jan's sons became independent in the 1860s, but some of them quit fishing rather quickly and migrated to the mainland or to the island's main town of Den Burg. There, they switched to land-based jobs. Others shared

a history of misfortune, including shipwrecks. In two cases, this made them dependent on charity to enable them to acquire other vessels. All of Jan's grandsons exited the fishing industry well before the advent of the Second World War. For very few of his sons it had provided a lifelong occupational career. In one instance, we avail of considerable detail because the person in question, Jan's son Frederik (1842–1925), wrote a life history.

Frederik joined his father and his stepbrother Dirk Jzn as an apprentice deckhand when he was eleven years old. They targeted eel and oysters in the fall and winter, gathered cockle shells in the spring and harvested eelgrass in the summer season. The revenues from eelgrass mowing were used to get through the lean winter season. With a crew of only three needed, Willem Jzn and Pieter Jzn started crewing for other skippers. In 1858, Dirk and Frederik narrowly escaped from being shipwrecked more than once. Damages to their boat were substantial and repairs cost 300 guilders, which constituted a veritable fortune at that time. Two years later, Dirk married and turned independent. Pieter thereupon started crewing on the family boat again with his youngest stepbrother, Simon. Pieter's former skipper hired Frederik, then 18, as a deckhand for a fixed annual wage of 130 guilders and free board. Two years later, Frederik began working for another owner-operator, Jan Wuis, who would become his brother-in-law: he married Frederik's sister Elisabeth.

When his stepbrother Pieter turned independent, Frederik began skippering the family boat with his brother Simon as a deckhand. They still resided in the parental home, taking care of their elderly parents. Father Jan passed away in 1865. Late that year, Frederik, Simon, their brother-in-law Jan Wuis and several other Texel fishermen were involved in illegally salvaging bags of sugar from a shipwrecked brigantine. They were caught and sentenced to six months incarceration. While in solitary confinement in their cells in 1867, Frederik and Simon left their mother without an income. She succeeded in getting her sons out of the Amsterdam jail two months before the end of their prison terms. The episode turned Frederik into a pious man who scorned worldly authority.

Once out of prison he picked up fishing again, this time as an independent man. Deeming his boat to be too small and too old, Frederik in 1869 bought a second-hand vessel with a loan from a cousin. When Simon got married, Frederik hired a deckhand for three guilders per week. Hiring and firing was done without much ado: agreements were valid from Christmas until Christmas the next year, whereupon skipper and deckhand were free to part ways again. Frederik's mother set up a small shop, so that she no longer depended on Frederik's money. At long last, like many other Texel fishermen, he was doing well. The local fishing economy was booming.

In 1872, Frederik married a woman who was thirteen years his senior, 42-year old Neeltje List. She was a well-to-do farmer's widow with two sons and three daughters. They bought a house and with her financial assistance, Frederik in 1873 commissioned a new and fully equipped 48-foot flat-bottomed fishing boat for 2,300 guilders. He named it 'De Nieuwe Hoop' (The New Hope). Frederik skippered and his teenager stepsons Maarten and Jacob Bas crewed the boat. Although he was now a rather successful fisherman, on many occasions in his career Frederik had narrow escapes and when he began suffering from a persistent pneumonia he was keen on changing jobs.

At age 33, he bought a second-hand barge for 1,500 guilders and turned into a freight skipper, temporarily exiting the fisheries. Among many other things, he shipped

eelgrass to inland destinations for a local businessman, always attempting to get some return freight to the island. Despite being dependent on traders who commissioned transportation of goods, Frederik liked his new metier. In 1882, he placed an order for a new barge which he purchased for 4,435 guilders, again partly with Neeltje's money. When she died two years later, Frederik had to pay his stepchildren their share of the vessel's assessed value. He and his stepson Jacob Bas became the barge's part-owners.

But Frederik wished to expand his activities and with six fellow fishermen, he in 1888 established a shrimp-processing firm in the mainland town of Den Helder. A year later, he took over the firm with Jacob. In 1891, they sold it because most fishermen began boiling and salting the crustaceans themselves. In the same year, Frederik remarried a widow with three children, Jannetje Bakker. Jannetje started running a shop from their home. She and Frederik had a son, Jan Jacob (1892-1960), and a daughter. Frederik was a respected villager by now and in 1892 was asked to become an elder of Oosterend's Dutch Reformed Church, an honourable position he held for the maximum term of eight years. Soon after his wedding, Frederik specialised as a barge skipper again, leaving the fishing industry altogether. Until his death in 1925, he, his wife and Jan Jacob - who started as a deckhand on the barge by age ten - earned a modest livelihood.

The case history shows that nineteenth-century crew composition could be rather dynamic. Father-son(s) or all-brother crews were preferred but not necessarily the rule, and switching careers temporarily or permanently was not at all exceptional. Crew configurations therefore varied and even considerable agnatic capital did not guarantee becoming a successful firm, as the ventures of Jan's sons - including Frederik - showed.

Pieter Wzn's offspring

The fishing history of the lineage of Jan's brother Pieter Wzn took quite another turn. Pieter Wzn skippered a boat until his death in 1866. Although his wife became the vessel's owner, her deceased husband left her in dire straits. Until she passed away in 1884, she depended on her sons for a living. By that time, they were married with children. While most of Pieter's descendants were also confronted with serious setbacks, two of them, Willem Pzn and Biem Pzn, had meanwhile become rather successful fishermen. Without going into the genealogical details, it is clear that their agnatic capital proved an important asset: Willem had four sons who were born in the 1860s and survived childhood, Biem had three. His boys were born in the 1870s. It is important to remember, however, that sons were a precondition for firm continuity and possibly expansion, but as we have seen they did not necessarily lead to a firm's success.

Biem was a petty shellfish fisherman, toiling to eke out a living with his flat-bottomed sailing vessel. He also harvested eelgrass in the summer. Initially, he and his nuclear family lived a hand-to-mouth existence. His wife for some time ran a small shop, but as the number of debtors increased, Biem begged her to forsake the unprofitable business. She then went out working for thirty cents a week. Eventually, Biem - nicknamed 'Biem-with-the-big-hands' - was not doing bad. In due course, he would even own two boats. As one of the island's foremost fishermen, he was on the board of several local fishermen's organizations^d. His boys joined him as crewmembers when the local fishing industry was thriving. But the period of boom was short-lived and from the mid-1890s

onwards, many Texel fishermen exited the fishing industry or specialized as North Sea fishermen. In offshore fishing, tragedy was always lurking. Pieter van der Vis Wzn – ‘Big Piet’, a son of Biem’s brother Willem Pzn – was one of nine Texel fishermen who drowned when a sudden storm burst on the local fishing fleet in late March 1896. Three vessels were lost, four others ran aground. Pieter’s mortal remains washed ashore after eighty days. His wife’s father also died in the disaster, which plunged the island’s fishing communities in deep sorrow. Such perils may have deterred some men from entering the occupation, but as long as it provided employment and an income, fishing remained an economic necessity. However, proceeds from fishing began lagging behind expectations and many fishermen and their sons opted for an onshore job. This also applied to a number of the van der Vis brothers and patrilineal cross-cousins. For instance, Biem’s eldest son began working as an independent barge skipper, maintaining a regular service between Texel and a mainland town, and his youngest son Jan also left the fishing industry, albeit temporarily. In 1899, he migrated to a mainland city and began working as a wage-laboured barge skipper. But seven years later he returned to Texel and started fishing again with his father and his brother Toon.

The brothers Toon and Jan would ultimately belong to the island’s fishing elite. Their father Biem retired in 1921 at the age of 77. It was a transition period. Sails made way for engines, steel began replacing wood (see Figure 3). Toon and Jan entertained thoughts of motorizing the boat, but their parents did not want to be indebted all over again. They asked Toon and Jan to acquire the firm, while they made do with an old age allowance of five guilders per week. Toon and Jan had a 26 hp auxiliary engine installed in their wooden-hulled sailing boat. Engine-powered vessels implied that fewer fishing days were lost, for example due to a lack of wind. Jan’s children did odd jobs and contributed their savings - amounting to almost a hundred guilders - to enable their father and uncle to buy the engine. At Christmas later that year, Jan gave each of his five kids a hundred guilders in gratitude: because of the engine, it had been a successful year. Toon and Jan gained a reputation of being outstanding skippers. They were on top of new



Figure 3 Newly built cutter of a van der Vis firm, 1920s (photograph collection author).

developments, and this also applied to several of their cross-cousins and second cousins. But they remained keenly aware of the fact that their parents and grandparents had experienced poverty and hardship. They had listened to their stories and in turn passed these on to their children and their children's children.

Toon and Jan had three and two sons, respectively. When they were old enough, they joined the crew. This implied that more hands were available than was required. The brothers Toon and Jan thereupon decided to go separate ways in 1928. They had been earning well, and after the financial settlement Jan - whose nickname was 'the Old Russian' - purchased a new steel-hulled flat-bottomed boat with a 45 hp engine. Toon continued operating the old vessel with his sons, but within two years they bought a new cutter with a 100 hp engine that cost 12,000 guilders. The family firm was highly successful, and already in 1936 a new steel-hulled cutter was launched, this time equipped with a 150 hp engine. Jan also adopted an expansive strategy. In 1930, he bought a new steel-hulled cutter with a 100 hp engine. Jan was one of the founding fathers of the local fisheries cooperative that was established in 1931. He also became a deacon and an elder in Oosterend's Dutch Reformed Church, and from 1935 to 1939 he served as councillor for a confessional political party. He was a deeply religious man, accepting the vicissitudes of fishing. In 1939 he again bought a new cutter that was equipped with a 150 hp engine and cost almost 45,000 guilders.

Cutters were comparatively cost-effective and efficient and could be handled by a relatively small crew. Their owners obtained excellent financial results, but buying a cutter required a considerable investment. This in turn changed the balance of forces of production from labour being more important to capital becoming ever more important, although the local fishing industry's social organization remained predominantly based on family firms. The economic logic and social dynamic of the family firm contributed importantly to the Texel fishing fleet's expansion. Highly significant to this was an ethic of deferred gratification. Relatives were prepared to cut their own incomes for some predefined or implicit future goal. With the greater capital outlay needed in the North Sea cutter fisheries, it was important to obtain the funds needed to buy seaworthy boats. Although skipper-owners were usually able to redeem debts, account for depreciation and still save money to buy new boats, vessel prices were such that they usually needed to contract higher loans. Using a boat - and often a house too - as collateral, banks would be prepared to provide part of the money, particularly if an owner had sons. Sometimes, bank loans would not entirely suffice. The fishermen therefore also had to raise funds through private loans that had to be redeemed. Usually, they called on relatives whom they knew or believed to be affluent. In order to quickly redeem such loans, owners and their crewing offspring usually only took a modest predetermined sum of cash per week. This would amount to less than a deckhand's share. Young unmarried crewing sons of owners would generally receive 'spending-money' only. The money thus saved would be remitted to the firm so that debts could be redeemed quickly, enabling investment in a new boat at some point in future.

This mode of self-restraint and self-exploitation stimulated rapid modernization and growth. In 1931, Texel's fishing fleet boasted four steel-hulled cutters with 100 to 150 hp engines: eight years later there were twelve such vessels, four of them owned by members of the van der Vis lineage. A century earlier, their forebears had still belonged to the poorest villagers of Oosterend, but this was no longer the case. Although the

1930s were a time of economic depression, this did not apply to the North Sea segment of the Texel fishing fleet. However, the advent of the Second World War brought an end to an era of prosperity. The German occupiers impounded the best fishing vessels, including the cutters owned by van der Vis skippers. After the liberation and following intensive search parties, three of the latter were retrieved. The next generation would crew these vessels.

Family firms in an Era of expansion

Gradual growth of the offshore fleet and the rather rapid decline of the inshore segment characterized post-war developments in the Texel fishing industry. It was evident that owner-operators needed to modernize to stay in business. Those who were unable to do so began lagging behind and in most cases were ousted from the fishing industry or had to muddle through and accept substandard incomes. In the early 1950s, the state established a committee to look into the matter and introduced special subsidies for decommissioning and development of the fishing fleet, so that family firms could more easily obtain external capital for investments. In a letter to a fishery weekly, retired Texel fisherman Jan van der Vis Bzn ('the Old Russian') wrote that expansion and state support were unnecessary and even undesirable as well as irresponsible. He regarded the extant fishing fleet sufficiently large. In his view, growing exploitation and increasing competition were not in the fishing industry's interest. Of course, he implied the *vested* interest: newcomers with state-of-the-art equipment would inexorably lead to fiercer competition. At the time, members of the van der Vis family owned five out of twelve local offshore vessels (41.6%) and accounted for fourteen out of their sixty-two crewmembers (22.6%), while several in-laws also crewed with them. Van der Vis fishing firms had obviously become part of the local fishing elite. Jan van der Vis Bzn's words were ignored. Subsidies became available for the modernization of the fisheries, not because fishermen called for them, but because politicians indulged in economic nationalism.

In hindsight, however, modernization in offshore fishing was initially rather modest. By 1960, the Texel fleet boasted sixteen offshore cutters. In many respects, they resembled the ones that dated from the mid-1930s. Generally, engine power had only slightly increased to between 150 and 250 hp. Otter trawling for flatfish and pair trawling for herring did not require enormous pulling power. However, with the advent of new technology, this would change radically as of the early 1960s. It was the beam trawl's (re)invention, in particular, that brought about a headlong expansion and innovation of the fishing fleet, leading to an unmitigated 'horsepower race' in the Texel and Dutch fishing industries. Flatfish catches increased extraordinarily and so did the fishermen's incomes. The fisheries thrived. With few restraints and many incentives to invest, as of the early 1960s the Texel family-owned fishing fleet expanded at a fast pace, both in number of boats and in engine power. By 1970, there were 28 vessels with over 300 hp engines. The underlying causes for this unprecedented growth included social and cultural factors, not least the logic and dynamic of the family firm. The owners did not solely reckon in terms of net losses or profits and future returns on investments or other economic incentives. Nor were status considerations alone sufficient reason to desire growth. Social reasons - continuity of the family firm and equal opportunities to

all sons - were also important in their motivations. Fishermen thus had their own rationalities to expand; rationalities that might deviate from pure business economics.

Despite the 'Old Russian's' reservations, the van der Vis fishermen were very much involved in the Texel fleet's modernization. Jan's own son Biem and particularly Biem's three sons were very expansionist indeed. By 1960, they operated two state-of-the-art vessels. A year later, Biem Jzn retired as an active fisherman at age 56, maintaining his co-ownership. In 1966, a year before he passed away, he opted out. The value of the firm's assets was split five ways: two daughters received their shares and Biem's three sons established a partnership. The brothers were eager to reinvest and usually were the first to avail of Texel's most powerful beam trawlers. The situation was similar in the case of the 'Old Russian's' brother Toon's sons. Toon passed away in 1957, at age 84. The following year, the firm - that operated two vessels - fissioned. Having no successors and being unfit to skipper, the youngest son sold his share to his brothers Pieter Anthonie Tzn and Jan Tzn who then each established an independent firm. Skipper-owner Pieter Anthonie and his three sons continued operating the TX 37, while Jan Tzn, whose sons were still too young to crew, became the skipper-owner of the TX 36. He soon purchased a second vessel, which was crewed by outsiders and skippered by a son-in-law. His sons came aboard around 1970, and both soon moved on to skipper the vessels. When he was in his late fifties, Jan Tzn turned a shore captain, taking care of the firm's administration and other chores. The situation in other van der Vis fishing families was very similar, though not all of them were equally successful as Jan's and Toon's offspring.

Relatives working as crewmembers provided an important social asset. Depending on the stage in the household's life cycle, a father and son(s) or brothers constituted the crew's core. The strength of this preference shows in the fact that in the late 1950s, about half of Texel's cutter crews had a core of three or more agnates, often partly supplemented by in-laws. If skipper-owners had male offspring, their sons would often be impatient to assume their father's role, work aboard and eventually become skipper-owners themselves. There was a pervasive sense of the significance of occupational inheritance and handing down of fishing traditions, knowledge and zeal. It was every owner's dream to have at least one successor to continue the family firm, putting a strong moral obligation on the male offspring of owner-operators to follow their father's example. Fishing was an important source of identity and an occupation that was highly valued by those in the industry, something skipper-owners in particular wanted to pass on to the next generation. Better still was to have more sons and to provide each of them showing an interest in fishing with a vessel of his own. Obviously, continuity depended on the social contingency of having at least one son who, in addition, had to be physically and mentally up to the job. Daughters were - and are - regarded as unsuitable successors. However, for want of agnatic successors, a son-in-law would sometimes succeed his father-in-law or become a co-owner. For example, a son and a son-in-law succeeded Willem van der Vis in 1960. When the son soon after that decided to sell his share and start a fish retail shop, the son-in-law became the sole owner of the firm, which was continued by his sons and currently his grandsons.

Thus, one of the driving forces underlying the growth of the Texel (and Dutch) fishing fleet was the fishermen's desire to become independent and, ideally, to set up each owner's son with his own vessel to skipper. When the father retired - often maintaining

a position as paterfamilias and 'shore captain' for a considerable time - brothers usually continued the firm and cooperated until their sons joined them aboard ship. There would sometimes be insufficient positions to accommodate them all. In addition, cousins (FaBroSo) often did not get along regarding fishing matters and other decisions and wanted to work with their own father on their own vessel. Consequently, schisms of family firms usually occurred during the stage when two or more brothers each had sons aboard. Conflict and subsequent fission could also occur if one of the cooperating brothers felt that he contributed disproportionately to the firm or in case the characters of siblings or cousins proved incompatible. As a van der Vis owner-operator related: 'There is bound to be someone who is obstinate and it easily kindles feelings that the one does more than the other does. You should contribute equally, but a skipper does less work with his hands, and if his brother is a deckhand and does manual labour, he might say "you don't do anything". The fat would be in the fire then...' Both centripetal and centrifugal forces (Faris 1973:93) consequently characterize the family firm. Due to this dynamic, the Texel fishing fleet expanded, particularly in times of boom, making family firms even more common. Occupational inheritance and - where several agnates (or cognates) were co-owners - fission or expansion of family firms meant that the number of vessels increased. At that time, there were few legal restrictions on accessing the fishing industry. As in other Dutch fishing communities, the fishing family firm dynamic was an important reason for the local fleet's growth. Continuity of the family firm was deemed extremely important - for most owners even a *raison d'être*.

The family firm usually rests on close conjugal cooperation and the fisherman's wife's organizational, economic and emotional contribution to the fishing household is often crucial for its flexibility, versatility and resilience. The role of women in Texel family firms was usually considerable. If they had been married in community of property, a deceased skipper's widow owned the cutter, but her son(s) usually ran the firm. If she had no boys or if they were too young to crew, she might employ a hired skipper and deckhands. For example, the widow of a van der Vis owner-operator who suddenly died from a heart attack at a young age continued the firm and had the relatively new cutter skippered by an unrelated deckhand until her eldest son could take over the helm. As in this case, most couples were married on equal terms, so that the wife in theory owned half her husband's property. Some women played an important part in running the financial side of the firm, but with very few exceptions they did not work aboard ship^e. Underlying the division of tasks are cultural and symbolic constructions and constrictions. Although they were mostly indirectly involved in the fishing industry, the women's - and particularly the skipper-owners' wives' - supportive role allowed the men to go out to sea and earn a living. In their role of rearing the children, mothers were also important for ingraining the values boys needed at sea. They were just as keen as their fathers were to prepare them for their future role in the firm, as occupational inheritance in skipper-owner families usually was a matter of course. Ideally, skipper-owner's sons would be skipper-owners themselves in future. Living economically and being thrifty often made expansive growth possible. Women had a significant part to play in accomplishing this goal. Their spending patterns reinforced the firm's financial strength and facilitated redeeming debts and paying interest on loans in time. By making do with a rather modest weekly allowance for running the household, she enabled her husband to reinvest or to keep up with his brother(s) in purchasing his share in the firm.

All in all, the family firm's economic logic and social dynamic - including the role of women - facilitated the expansion of production units, ultimately leading to processes of fission. Because of family involvement in fishing firms, ownership was rather widely distributed in the occupational community of fishermen. From 1960 until 1971, between thirty and forty per cent of the Texel fishermen co-owned a vessel. The vast majority of Texel owner-operated family firms had a single fishing boat. In some cases, fisher families with several agnatic kinsmen who could be on a crew owned more than one vessel. For example, in 1969, four firms - including two van der Vis firms - owned two cutters and one firm owned three. Newcomers from non-fishing lineages also contributed considerably to the local offshore fishing fleet's growth. In the 1960s, especially, several deckhands aspired to become independent and bought their own vessels. In many cases, the newcomers also followed the 'family logic' and worked with agnatic kin - usually a father and son(s) or two or more brothers. In the first stage of such firms, they bought a second-hand cutter, working their way up until they were able to order a new vessel. Of at least thirteen newcomers in the offshore segment between 1961 and 1969, two firms began with a father and sons as co-owners, and three started with two or three brothers as co-owners. As soon as they consolidated their firms, the family dynamic of occupational inheritance applied. The father would leave at a certain stage, the brothers would cooperate until their sons entered the crew and the firm would split. Among the newcomers were two firms that began as a partnership between two former crewmembers. These were not successful - the firms were dissolved after only a few years. Two former partners set up new firms with siblings, while the other two went it alone. Two brothers-in-law set up another firm, but as they disagreed on almost everything and could not get along, they quickly went their separate ways, each establishing a firm of his own. Both firms only existed for a few years. Although it would be too simplistic to say that family involvement alone determined success, it certainly contributed to it.

Family firms under New management regimes

Family firms remained important following the introduction of quota regimes in the 1970s and a co-management regime coupled with an Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) system in the 1990s. Many owner-operators accumulated rights, leading to a concentration of quota entitlements in fewer hands. It has become virtually impossible for newcomers to enter the fishing industry. Crew loyalty diminished, since investments in quotas meant lower percentages in the share system of remuneration. This in turn led to declining interest in becoming a fisherman, while at the same time it became more difficult to maintain family firms. Starting a firm from scratch is nearly impossible, since outsiders cannot obtain a licence and quotas unless they buy a firm. The value of entitlements makes the costs prohibitively high. Therefore, aspiring newcomers are effectively barred from entry to the fishing industry, as access boundaries prove to be insuperable. There are even considerable problems with occupational succession within family firms. Young fishermen, especially, experience difficulties, while older slipper skippers use their entitlements as an old-age pension.

The earlier common pattern of fissions of family firms has now become virtually impossible. Dividing entitlements would jeopardize maintaining an economically viable firm. The value of quotas usually exceeds the vessel's value. It used to be possible to bequeath these allowances, but when tax inspectors started to take into account their

value, succession duties and other taxes rose phenomenally. The same applied when a retiring co-owner transferred rights to his agnates. Even if a brother or another co-owning relative was prepared to sell his share at a reasonable price, the tax collector still demanded the percentage of the estimated value, not the percentage of the actual price paid. Consequently, it became increasingly difficult to continue a family firm. Since the sense of continuity linking generations of fishermen is so pervasive, this situation has created exasperation, as the traditional pattern of succession and inheritance is no longer a matter of course. Many owner-operators have changed the juridical form of their firms into limited liability companies, in order, among other things, to make succession of ownership easier (Davidse and de Wilde 2001:33). Special tax arrangements have meanwhile made succession from father to son easier.

However, if a co-owning brother who does not have a successor wants to pass on tangible and intangible assets to a nephew, there is still a heavy tax burden. In several instances, it has forced siblings to continue operating a firm together much longer than they would have done previously. This applies to two van der Vis family firms. For one of them (firm A), the situation is critical as the co-owning brothers are in their seventies and between them have only one successor. They stopped skippering many years ago and currently are shore captains. The younger brother's son is the vessel's skipper and has meanwhile become a co-owner. He is the father of two young boys and wants to continue the firm. Although it is an economically viable enterprise, if the older brother sells his assets to his younger brother and nephew, this will put a financial burden on them and a fiscal burden on himself. Some potential successors have refrained from taking on such an encumbrance. For instance, a van der Vis firm - owned by three brothers - operated two vessels during my first spell of fieldwork. That year (1990), they decommissioned one boat. The two eldest brothers coped with health problems, and had by then already retired and turned into 'shore captains'. They maintained their co-ownership and shared in the firm's profits. The youngest brother skippered, but had no sons. Between the brothers, there was only one male successor. He was on the crew, but expressed a strong disinterest in becoming co-owner. Although he had attended Fishery School, he had no intentions of pursuing a lifetime career as a skipper-owner. He did not want to take on the financial burden of having to buy out his uncles and continue the firm all by himself. He claimed that there were simply too many responsibilities he alone would have to carry. At some point in the 1990s, he switched to a job with the island's oceanographic institute. Several in-laws were also fishermen, but the three brothers did not consider them to be feasible successors. Although some van der Vis skipper-owners had in the past secured firm continuity through an in-law connection, this was not a solution all owners with daughters only preferred, even if this meant the end of the family business. In 2002, the remaining vessel was decommissioned. The three van der Vis siblings also sold a part of their flatfish landing rights, renting out the remainder to provide in an income and old-age pension.

Even with two sons who can continue their father's firm, succession is not a matter of course, as the following example from the van der Vis lineage shows. Both boys were interested in becoming fishermen, and upon graduating from Fishery School they joined the crew in 1999 and 2001, respectively. They made do with a small sum of 'week money,' expecting to be co-owners in future. But after four years of crewing, the eldest brother decided that fishing was not his cup of tea. He opined that there were

too many uncertainties in the fishing industry due to the regulations and the environmentalists' opposition to beam trawling. His younger brother was a fisherman at heart though, and began skippering the beam trawler while his father remained a shore captain. However, it proved difficult to make the firm cost-effective and several crewmen left. In 2005 the father decided to decommission the vessel, but - to the surprise of many local fishermen - a few years later the firm made a restart with a Euro-cutter that is skippered by the son.

The only van der Vis family firm (firm B) whose continuity seems to be rather secure was established in 1996. It hived off from firm A (see above). Until 1987, firm A - operating two and for some time even three beam trawlers - was co-owned by three brothers. That year, the eldest died. His rights and assets were bequeathed on his wife and four sons, who became co-owners but had to pay tax duties. Remember that by this time, a vessel and equipment plus entitlements cost many millions of guilders^f. All of the four boys aspired to a fishing career. The financial settlement following the fission was quite complicated and the tax inspector again demanded a large chunk. This happened once more when at age 43 the eldest of the four brothers tragically died in a car accident in 2003. It is now possible to bequeath rights without duties. But heirs who inherit quotas face the need to take out loans to buy out those heirs who do not fish. Whether the sons of the three brothers who own and operate firm B will succeed their fathers is too early to tell. One of them is meanwhile on the crew, though.

Thus, whereas family firm continuity - and if feasible, expansion - seems to have been rather uncomplicated for a long time, this has changed dramatically following the introduction of entitlements that proved to represent monetary value. Special precautions are currently in order. Along with the increasing value of assets in fishing firms, most spouses have opted for a marriage settlement instead of community of property, as used to be the custom until the 1980s. If married in community of property, a spouse is liable to an equal portion of the joint property. If her husband predeceases or divorces her, she can demand her share of the assets tied up in the firm, making it extremely difficult to continue it (Hoefnagel 1996:68). This is exactly what happened to a van der Vis skipper, the sole owner of a beam trawler. He and his wife were married in community of property, but divorced in 2000. She demanded the assets she was legally entitled to, amounting to millions of guilders. The firm survived this crisis, but the skipper-owner's only son did not show any interest in fishing, making it difficult to continue the firm. The problem was solved when a brother-in-law sold his vessel and in 2008 joined van der Vis as a co-owner, sharing their entitlements and other assets. Had there been solutions along agnatic lines, this merger would perhaps never have materialized. With owners currently being rights holders and the fishing industry tightly regulated, expansion of family firms is a thing of the past. Rather, the trend is contraction and scaling down of business. If a firm owned more than one vessel, one of them was decommissioned and the entitlements concentrated on the other. Agnatic (and in-law) relatives then worked together on the remaining boat. This trend coincides with the post-war demographic transition towards smaller nuclear families, which generally makes for a smaller pool of kin and in-laws from among which crewmembers can be recruited. Nonetheless, few Texel beam trawlers do not have any (co-owning) relatives at all aboard^g. But under the current system of individual transferable entitlements, the market logic seems to start prevailing over the economic logic of the family firm. Expanded reproduction is a thing of the past and has been replaced by simple reproduction.

Conclusions

On the island of Texel, kin and familial participation in fishing has been a common pattern for many decades. Some prominent family firms can even trace their roots back to the 17th century. However, the current involvement of kinsfolk in fishing crews should not be regarded as a relic of an ancient mode of production (see also Löfgren 1972; Byron 1986; Menzies 1993, 2003). Newcomers to the 1960s and 1970s local fishing arena were generally more successful if they worked with agnatic relatives, suggesting that the family firm is not an archaic form of social organization, but a well-adapted institution in the days of high capitalism - at least in the fisheries. Rules of inheritance insufficiently explain the preference for relatives: 'Among kinsmen, membership of the crew is a complex relationship of interwoven strands of economic interest and social obligation within and across the generations' (Byron 1994:287). Pooling economic, social, cultural and cognitive resources provides a common fund to cope with risks and to accommodate to shifting conditions. The family firm is a relatively fluid and flexible unit, which is highly adaptive under circumstances of uncertainty (Durrenberger and Pålsson 1985:114 ff.). This applies in times of expansion and in times of contraction, as well. The involvement of kinsmen and to a lesser extent relatives by marriage provides such firms with unusual resilience and versatility. 'The kinship system easily holds labor reserves during an economic downturn,' remark Doeringer et al. (1986):119. Whereas wage labourers would not accept major salary cuts in times of depression, 'kinship and familial solutions to economic insecurity stress job guarantees and the sharing of work and income among family members' (ibid.:119).

Co-owning relatives are usually prepared to postpone (returns on) investments, work longer hours, defer gratification, cut remuneration, adjust household budgets and eat into their capital in times of duress or to speed up the redemption of debts and intensify investments in times of prosperity. They can do so because the family firm is at the same time a unit of (re)production, consumption and (re)distribution, providing the family firm with an adaptability not usually found in company-owned firms that operate under the capitalist mode of production (also see Apostle et al. 1992:321; Sinclair 1985:18-20). The 'family firm logic' also enables accumulating capital that owners reinvest in the family firm to allow for expansion. Agnatic kinsmen who are co-owners often accept receiving a fixed sum of money out of the revenues while keeping the rest of their share in the firm. Therefore, having sons - agnatic capital - makes for an important socio-economic asset. Furthermore, a pervasive labour ethos where work permeates the entire existence of fishing households greatly enhances adaptive performance. These feats are extremely important in weathering bad times and building up the financial reserves needed to expand. With a single owner, such shock-absorbing and hoarding capacity obviously amounted to less than that of multiple owners or prospective owners who were prepared to defer gratification and still work relentlessly, as was usually the case with relatives. Young sons of skipper-owners were confident that they would in future receive their share of the patrimony. Based on this trustful expectation, they were content with a weekly allowance instead of a full share of the gross revenues. For this reason, cooperating with sons or brothers was more attractive than recruiting unrelated deckhands. Kin provided for the flexibility, versatility and resilience needed in an industry where uncertainty was rife.

Of course, the cultural ideal of family-firm continuity and expansion could not be attained by all the local actors in the fishing arena. At the micro-level of the family

firm, there were contingencies related to the stage of the family cycle and the composition of the nuclear family that to a large extent determined the kind of options that were available and the course of action that could be envisaged. Some skipper-owners remained unmarried or had no offspring. Others had sons who did not aspire to skippering or were physically or mentally unfit for a fishing career, or only had daughters who - under the extant gender relations - rarely obtained or desired to obtain a berth aboard a boat. Yet others had sons or cousins who proved to be incompatible characters, making it impossible to work together in the confined space of a vessel. Although the cultural preference for working with agnatic kin is clear in the Texel case and more generally in the Netherlands, this need not be so everywhere. Byron and Dilley (1989) report that in Northern Ireland, skippers resist the obligation to recruit kin or close friends because it is harder to sack them. Furthermore, kin crews may be composed of changing coalitions (Beukenhorst 1988), while in some cases in-laws are preferred as crewmembers (Jorion 1982). In general, however, we see that crews composed of a core of (co-owning) agnatic kin who are sometimes complemented by (usually non-proprietary) in-laws are widespread in Europe.

The predominant goal of (prospective) co-owners of a family firm is to keep the firm afloat even in the face of formidable and enduring adversities. This is so because the firm - symbolized by the family boat - is much more than a material vehicle to earn an income. It is at the same time a source of pride and social and individual identification, intrinsically a *raison d'être*. It is for this reason that owner-operators often tenaciously hang on to continuing the firm so that they can hand it on to the next generation. In gratitude, a vessel is often named after a father (and sometimes a mother/wife). For instance, in the case of the van der Vis family: TX 3 'Biem-Jan' (a combination of the name of a brother who died in a car accident and the father's name); TX 21 'Pieter van Aris' (father's name = Pieter, son of Aris); TX 36 'Jan van Toon' (Jan, son of Toon); TX 37 'Pieter Anthonie' (father's name); TX 43 'Biem van der Vis' (father's name).

At the same time, however, one of the major weaknesses of family firms is that in crises they are vulnerable in that all their members face similar problems and hardships (the 'all-eggs-in-one-basket syndrome'). Some firms have attempted to cope with this weakness by diversifying their activities beyond the fishing economy per se, but obtaining incomes from other sectors poses strains on those who earn them. They may choose to opt away from the fishing business and operate independently. The firm is particularly vulnerable when the sons of brothers urge their fathers to abandon the firm and start an independent family firm with them. There is a widespread preference for a configuration with father and son(s) over brothers with sons (cousins). However, as a consequence of demographic shifts (smaller nuclear families), the likelihood of being able to work with first-order agnatic kinsmen (father-son[s], all-brother crews) has declined considerably. It is no longer a matter 'of course' that a married couple will produce sons, as was still the case in the 1940s and 1950s. Moreover, the reproductive cycle starts later in life than used to be the case. This often implies that co-owners will skipper or crew longer than previously. In the 1980s and 1990s, many co-owners quit going to sea before they turned 50. Currently, they usually cannot afford to do that anymore. The range of preferred firm members-cum-crew has consequently widened to include cousins and in-laws. In addition, several sons of owner-operators - including members of the van der Vis fishing elite - are reluctant to follow in their father's (and

uncles') footsteps, particularly if they face the prospect of becoming a sole owner. The demographic trend works against them, and they face a congeries of restrictions and uncertainties. Whether occupational inheritance will be dominant in future is therefore questionable. The continuity of several Texel family fishing firms might even be at stake.

But given their willingness to invest and innovate, the co-owners of the remaining five van der Vis firms would still seem to be confident about the future. Perhaps against all odds, they are at the forefront of innovative fuel-reduction technologies in the Dutch fishing industry, showing no inclination whatsoever to abandon ship. They certainly do appreciate their way of life, but in addition, it should be emphasized that opting out is currently not feasible without considerable loss of investments in vessel, equipment and entitlements. Not only would exiting the fishing industry mean destroying the patrimony, it would also leave most co-owners heavily indebted. Under the extant European Union's fisheries management regime newcomers are effectively barred from entry and demand for fishing assets is very low indeed. In fact, continuing a family firm would currently seem to be the only viable way to operate a fishing enterprise.

Endnotes

^aIn the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, anthropologists and sociologists connected to the Memorial University of Newfoundland have done important work in this regard. Several of their publications refer to Canada, especially Newfoundland (see, for example, Firestone 1967; Nemec 1972; Faris 1973; Sinclair 1985). MUN's Institute of Social and Economic Research published several monographs and edited volumes on fisheries, which often dealt with kinship and familial involvement to at least some extent.

^bField research was conducted on Texel from December 1989 to March 1991 and from August 2005 to September 2006. I collected data through archival and literature research, interviews and participant observation. I had full access to the archives of the local Fishery Coop, the fishermen's association, the Texel co-management group and the local Producer Organization. I held in-depth formal interviews with some fifty men and twenty-five women and informal conversations with scores of others. I attended the weekly informal meetings of (retired) owner-operators and several other social events. I was also frequently present at the quayside on Friday, when the fishing fleet arrives home from a week's fishing trip, and on four occasions I joined a crew for a week. For a comprehensive account, see van Ginkel (2009). Some of my more general points about Texel family firms also appear in that book. A version in Italian of the present article appeared as 'La dinamica sociale e la logica economica delle imprese familiari nel settore della pesca' in *In mare altrui. Pesca e territorialità in ambito interdisciplinare*, eds. G. Bulian and S Raicevich, 105-132. Roma: Aracne.

^cIt is a common practice in anthropology to use pseudonyms. I have refrained from doing so. For anyone who would wish to do so, it would be easy to detect the real surname of members of the van der Vis fishing lineage. With regard to the last four or five decades, I have been less specific about the 'who is who' in the van der Vis family.

^dOn the dynamic of local fishery organizations, see van Ginkel (1996b).

^eIn many places across the globe, there is a gendered division of labour in fishing (Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988).

^fWhen the euro currency was introduced in 2001, the conversion rate was roughly 0,45 eurocents to a guilder.

⁸In early 2005, twelve out of nineteen Texel North Sea cutters had at least two relatives who crewed. Six of these boats had three crewing relatives and in-laws and one vessel had four crewing relatives and in-laws. Kin involvement is much stronger if one considers shore-based co-owners.

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no competing interests.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Derek Johnson for encouraging me to submit this article to *Maritime Studies*, and two anonymous reviewers for their useful comments. I am grateful to the Texel fishing community, and particularly members of the van der Vis family, who generously shared their knowledge with me.

Received: 30 January 2014 Accepted: 3 July 2014

Published online: 17 September 2014

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doi:10.1186/s40152-014-0010-9

Cite this article as: van Ginkel: A Texel fishing lineage: the social dynamic and economic logic of family firms. *Maritime Studies* 2014 **13**:10.