The Rise and Decline of the Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, 1609–1689
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The Anglo-Dutch rivalry of the seventeenth century provides an excellent vehicle for studying the evolution of international rivalries. The relationship between England and the United Provinces evolved from cooperation in the form of English intervention to support the Dutch in their revolt against Spain in the sixteenth century, to a commercial competition, and then to a strategic rivalry, which led to three naval wars (1652–54, 1665–67, and 1672–74). In the third war England abandoned its French ally after two years and recentered the war on the side of the Dutch four years later. England and the Netherlands were joined in a personal union under William of Orange in 1689, though William administered the two states separately. This ended the strategic rivalry, but the Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry persisted for another century.

The evolving Anglo-Dutch relationship is important theoretically for a number of reasons, but especially because it entailed a commercial rivalry that evolved into a strategic rivalry that then escalated to war. Wolf (1970: 37) describes the First Anglo-Dutch Naval War (1652–55) as "the first wholly commercial war in modern times." Kennedy (1987a: 48) argues that "the Anglo-Dutch wars, more than any others fought by the British in the past four centuries, were trade wars." As the English admiral George Monck reportedly said at the time, the key issue was that "the Dutch have too much trade, and the English are resolved to take it from them" (in Kennedy 1987a: 48).

Although economic competitions led to war more frequently in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Howard 1976: ch. 3; Luard 1986; Holsti 1991), the phenomenon of the militarization of commercial rivalries may again become important as we enter the next millennium. Conflicts of interest among the great powers are more often economic than military; economic primacy appears to be as important a goal of leading actors (Huntington 1993); and economic conflicts can generate substantial public opinion. Not all commercial rivalries evolve into strategic rivalries, of course, and not all strategic rivalries arise from commercial rivalries, but for reasons of theory and policy it is imperative that we understand the conditions under which such a transformation might occur. The Anglo-Dutch rivalry offers one of history's classic cases.

There were a number of other variables that affected the Anglo-Dutch rivalry. These included changes in the international distribution of power and the structure of trade, in intersecting rivalries and wars, and in symmetries of dyadic economic and military power. By midcentury England was militarily stronger but economically less efficient than the Netherlands, leading a Dutch diplomat to say, "[T]he English are about to attack a mountains of gold; we are about to attack a mountain of iron" (Wilson 1978: 60). There was also a clash of economic ideology, between English mercantilism and Dutch liberalism. Domestic variables were also important, particularly changes of regime, crises of legitimacy, incentives for scavenging, and the influence of private economic interests.1

This chapter examines the impact of these variables on the evolution of the Anglo-Dutch rivalry over time. A central question is why a commercial rivalry that had persisted for four decades as a peaceful competition suddenly escalated into an intense strategic rivalry that produced three wars in two decades. I examine this question through the logic of a longitudinal controlled comparison.

Preliminary Issues of Definition and Method

Rivalry is defined here as a relationship that is interactive, competitive, nonanonymous, hostile, sustained, and self-conscious. It is interactive in the sense that the behavior of one actor affects the welfare of its rival. A rivalry is competitive because it involves the division of scarce goods, be they tangible resources or less tangible reputational or ideological considerations (Goertz and Diehl 1992: 153). A rivalry is nonanonymous in that each actor can identify a specific rival (or rivals); this is distinct from a market competition, in which the impact of one's actions is so widely dispersed that its effect on a single actor is neither intentional or consequential (Kuenne 1989: 555; Thompson 1995). A rivalry is hostile because rivals perceive value in relative terms; they believe that a gain for one involves to some extent a loss for another, recognize that...
these gains and losses affect the future of the rivalry, and thus evaluate outcomes in terms of their impact on the rivalry itself rather than in terms of their intrinsic value (Vasquez 1993: 76). A rivalry is sustained over time and involves more than isolated conflict or a brief series of incidents, no matter how intense. Finally, a rivalry is self-conscious, or mutually acknowledged; each actor perceives that it is involved in a sustained, hostile competition with a particular adversary or adversaries, and expects that the confi3cual relationship will persist into the future (Diehl 1998: 2-6).

Vasquez (1993: 76-77) suggests that leaders in a rivalry will adopt a negative affect calculus rather than a cost-benefit calculus and that a major motivation for actions in a rivalry is psychological hostility. Although it is reasonable to hypothesize that rivalries characterized by psychological hostility are more intense or more confi3cual than other rivalries, I prefer to view this as an hypothesis to be tested empirically rather than build into the definition of rivalry. I can also imagine rivalries driven by cold calculations of relative advantage and reputation rather than by psychological hostility. This was Kissinger's approach to the U.S.-Soviet rivalry (as opposed to Dulles's more ideologically driven perspective) English and Dutch political leaders probably also followed this pattern, although psychological hostility was more prevalent among the public in each state.

This conceptualization differs from that currently seen in political science, where enduring rivalry is defined by the occurrence of a certain number of militarized interstate disputes within a given period of time (Goertz and Diehl 1992; Bennett 1996; Hensel 1996; Diehl 1998). I broaden this definition by not requiring that a rivalry be militarized. Economic rivalries usually involve sustained, hostile, and nonanonymous competitions and thus qualify as international rivalries under my definition but not under the conventional one. These rivalries are an important form of competition for power and wealth in international politics and need to be incorporated into the definition of rivalry. Although the initial interest in enduring rivalries was motivated by the belief that the history of a relationship is important, that earlier quantitative studies of international conflict did not capture this, and that there was a need for a more dynamic conception of dyadic relationships, there has been a tendency in quantitative studies to approach rivalries from a rather static perspective (Hensel 1996). The concept of enduring rivalry has been used primarily as a case selection device (Diehl 1998), and there are many studies that compare the behavior of enduring rivals and that of other states. There are relatively few studies that explore the dynamics of the evolution of rivalries, though this has recently begun to change (Maoz and Mor 1998; Diehl 1998).
The Origins of the Anglo-Dutch Commercial Rivalry, 1609–49

The Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry grew out of the earlier trade wars between England and the Hanseatic League (Cosbybear 1987) and the rapid rise of the Dutch economy in the late sixteenth century. The Twelve Years’ Truce in the Dutch-Spanish War (1609–21) triggered an economic boom that catapulted the Dutch into a position of world leadership in production, commerce, and finance. By the 1620s the English provinces was the leading seafaring country in the world, primarily on the basis of its supremacy in the carrying trade in Europe, its role in the colonial trades, and the dominance of its fishing industry (Parker 1979; Wallerstein 1980: ch. 2; Kennedy 1987b: 68–69; Rastor and Thompson 1989: 99–100; Israel 1989, 1995).

The key issues in the rivalry concerned the distribution of the carrying trade in the Baltic and from northern Europe to the Iberian peninsula; the question of whether the English or the Dutch would perform the processing function on raw English cloth, Dutch access to the fishing grounds off the English coast; the English doctrine of “sovereignty of the seas”; and questions regarding the freedom of the seas, the rights of neutrals, and the increasing colonial competition in Southeast Asia and the American English hostility toward the Dutch for their dominance of the carrying trade was reinforced by the growing Dutch position in the cloth trade and in the fisheries. Cloth was England’s primary export (Wilson 1984: 53, 69), but the Dutch captured much of the profit because unfinished English cloth was exported to Holland for finishing and then reexported to the rest of Europe, including England (Giammoni 1974: 501; Wilson 1978: 29, 1984: 53, 69). The fishing industry, and the herring industry in particular, was the lifeblood of the Netherlands, employing a fifth of the Dutch population by midcentury (Edmunds 1911; Wilson 1978: 34; Holsti 1991: 53); but the main fisheries were off the British coast and thus provided a constant source of tension.

These conflicts led to the widespread belief in England that the Dutch economic success was built on the exploitation of England and that England’s inability to overcome its position of dependency in world trade could be traced to the power and strategies of the Dutch. According to this perspective, the Dutch reaped most of the profits from the manufacture of unfinished English cloth, stole from English waters, and generally drained the stocks of English raw materials and bullion (Wilson 1973: 144–45). These arguments took on a strong emotional tone; the Dutch were portrayed, for example, as “parasitical monopolists living on English resources and draining the life-blood of their [England’s] economy” (Wilson 1978: 22–23).

The breakdown of the Twelve Years’ Truce and the resumption of the Dutch-Spanish War in 1621 ushered in a new phase in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry. A Spanish embargo isolated the Dutch from the Iberian and Mediterranean trade and precipitated both a decline in Dutch commercial fortunes in Europe and the growth of English prosperity. In this context Charles I (1625–49) decided in 1635 to revive his crown’s claim to exclusive sovereignty of the “British Seas” and to demand “honors of the flag,” which involved a traditional salute (lowering the topaul and striking the flag) by any vessel meeting an English ship in the English Channel, the Dover Straits, or the coastal waters of the North Sea (Fulton 1911).

This doctrine and related issues regarding the freedom of the seas and the rights of neutrals added a new dimension to the Anglo-Dutch rivalry and contributed significantly to its escalatory potential. The doctrine and its associated practice of the search and seizure of Dutch ships posed a serious threat to Dutch fishing, to the Dutch role as the great carriers of world trade, to the principles of the freedom of the seas and “free ships, free goods,” and thus to the continued prosperity of the United Provinces, which depended on unobstructed navigation. As Kennedy (1987a: 51) notes, “The whole economy of the United Provinces had been built upon its role as a trader, transporter, middlman, producer of finished goods and financier, so that if its shipping was stopped its credit in the world would collapse and it would be ruined. … The Dutch, then, were fighting for their economic lives.”

The termination of the Spanish-Dutch War in 1647, and with it the long Spanish embargo against the Dutch, led once again to a change in the structure of trade and a reversal in the Anglo-Dutch economic relationship. The Dutch reclaimed their dominant role in the Mediterranean and elsewhere and enjoyed a period of unprecedented prosperity, while English trade declined sharply and contributed to a general depression in 1649–51 (Israel 1989: 199–200; Wilson 1978: 54; Cooper 1970: 235). This was an especially hard blow to England in the context of the Second Civil War, royalist uprisings in Scotland and Ireland, a Scottish invasion under Charles II, the beginning of an undeclared maritime war with France, the execution of Charles, and questions surrounding the legitimacy of the Commonwealth.

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Confronted with these internal and external pressures, Parliament sought to consolidate its position at home and abroad, reduce the threat from Scotland...
and Ireland, interdict external support for the royaltyists, gain diplomatic recognition, and protect the trade and shipping that provided the economic foundation of the new regime (Gros indignia 1873, 44; Marcus 1961: 131). It undertook a major expansion of the English navy, which by 1652 led to rough parity with the Dutch in terms of numbers of warships (Marcus 1961: 136–37; Kennedy 1987a: 46, Modelski and Thompson 1988: 196, 217) and contributed to a more assertive foreign policy and ascendant enforcement of the claim to sovereignty of the British seas (Wilson 1975: 52; Capp 1989: 72).

Although the sudden death of William II in 1650 led to a shift in power from the more hawkish and hawkish-back to the provers and the regents (Kossmann 1964: 278; Rowsen 1978: 56) and to a recognition of the Commonwealth, hopes of Anglo-Dutch conciliation were short-lived. The English proposed a mutual defense pact and political confederation of the two leading Protestant powers in 1651 (Wilson 1975: 50–52; Rowsen 1978: 55), in part to head off the ongoing possibility of the restoration of the Stuarts. The Dutch rejected the proposal, fearing that they would be the weaker partner in any political confederation, and proposed instead a series of economic agreements. These did not satisfy the English, who, jealous of Dutch prosperity, were convinced that English trade and shipping needed special protection and were annoyed with the Dutch for rejecting their offers of political confederation (Rowson 1978: 55; Wilson 1978: 49–50; Groenveld 1987: 556).

Parliament responded in October 1651 with the protectionist Navigation Act (Wilson 1978: 52–58; Farnell 1964; Kennedy 1987a: 46–47), which triggered enormous hostility in the Netherlands. The Dutch tried to force its repeal, the conflict gradually escalated, and preparatory military measures were taken by both sides. Domestic pressures for war increased in England, in part because of the economic failure of the Navigation Act (Wilson 1978: 149) in the context of a continuing depression. A two-hour naval battle precipitated by a dispute over the naval salute in May (Pufendorf 1979: 188; Wilson 1978: 59) led to a significant escalation of the crisis. The English rejection of Dutch proposals of compromise led the Dutch to consider war. The Dutch would be diplomatically humiliating, economically costly, and politically risky at home, particularly given the danger of an Orangist resurgence (Wilson 1978: 60). In July 1652, after nearly four decades of relative calm, the commercial rivalry had finally escalated to war.

De Witt became Grand Pensionary in July 1653 and Cromwell became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland in December. By this time each was eager to negotiate a peaceful settlement to consolidate his position at home, and the Treaty of Westminster in April 1654 ended the war. Although the military outcome favored England, the terms of peace were quite lenient, in part because Cromwell hoped for a Protestant alliance with the Dutch against the Catholic powers (Crabtree 1973, Pincus 1996). Cromwell backed off his demands for commercial concessions and recognition of sovereignty of the British seas (Capp 1989: 84) but secured an agreement from Holland (with some protests from other provinces) never to appoint a prince of Orange as Dutch ruler or captain-general, thereby reducing the possibility of an Orangist revival that might enhance the royalist cause in England (Gey 1969).

The Treaty of Westminster failed to resolve the underlying issues that had led to the war, including trade and sovereignty of the British seas, and continuing tensions between England and the Netherlands led to several subsequent crises later in the decade. The first arose during the Anglo-Spanish War of 1656–59. With a growing debt in its treasury, "boundless confidence" in its naval strength after the victory over the Dutch (Capp 1989: 86), and Cromwell's conviction that Catholic Spain was the enemy, England joined France in its ongoing war with Spain, hoping to seize Spain's key colonial possessions.

The Anglo-Spanish War renewed the danger of a conflict with the Dutch. It produced Cromwell's uncompromising policy of the search and seizure of neutrals, jeopardized the Spanish trade and bullied that was so important to the Dutch, and led to substantial Dutch shipping losses (Wilson 1978: 80; Israel 1989: 230). Hostile perceptions on each side exacerbated tensions. Some in Parliament believed that the war with Spain was "a Dutch war under the Spaniard's name" (Capp 1989: 105). Many Dutch feared that England's reconciliation with France might make the Netherlands the prime target for future French aggression. Incidents at sea escalated between the United Provinces and France, and the English resisted Dutch efforts to negotiate a maritime treaty (Rowson 1978: 276–80). But prudence prevailed as both Cromwell and de Witt did their best to manage these crises and avoid a costly escalation.

The Baltic provided another possible source of a second Anglo-Dutch war. As Wilson (1975: 51) notes, "if there was a trade vital to their prosperity and security, it was the Baltic trade, and they were prepared to go further towards war to maintain their advantage here than perhaps anywhere else." The Baltic provided the only abundant source of naval stores in Europe, which were critical for both countries (Israel 1989: 18–21; Roberts 1961: 414–15). Danzig was known as the breadbasket of the Netherlands and was the largest entrepot for Dutch trade in the Baltic, and free access through the Danish Sound was indispensable for the Hanseatic and Mediterranean trade. All these links were threatened by Charles X's plans to achieve Swedish supremacy in the Baltic. After Charles invaded Poland in 1655, the Dutch dispatched a fleet to break the Swedish siege.
of Danzig in 1636 and reached an agreement with Denmark to defend the Baltic
trade.

During the first Anglo-Dutch War Sweden gave England help but Denmark
blocked English shipping through the Danish Sound. Although Cromwell had both
strategic and economic reasons to support the Swedes and thereby reduce Dutch
influence, and although he retained the hope of bringing Sweden into a Protestant
alliance (Roberts 1961: 437–18), he also recognized the importance of the Baltic
to the Dutch, realized that extensive support of Sweden might lead to Dutch mili-
tary aid to the Spanish, and feared the consequences of another Dutch war which
was overshadowed both militarily and economically. For these reasons he was more
concerned with maintaining a balance of power in the Baltic and access to naval
stores than with encouraging Swedish ambitions that might embarrel England in a
war with the Dutch (Wilson 1978: 82).

Still, it was a close call. Sweden defeated Denmark, and by the Treaty of
Roskilde (1658) Sweden and Denmark shared control over the sound, which
was closed to hostilities, thus the disadvantage of the Dutch (Patterson 1982: 18; Rowen 1978: 319). When Charles X attempted to press his advantage
by laying siege to Copenhagen in August 1658, the United Provinces responded
with force and defeated a Swedish fleet. An English fleet sailed to support the
Swedes, but a combination of Dutch naval superiority (Capp 1989: 110–11; Israel 1989: 221) and domestic turmoil under Richard Cromwell (1658–60)
ultimately led to an English withdrawal, a Dutch defeat of Sweden, and a reversal
of the terms of Roskilde in favor of the Dutch. The very real threat of an
Anglo-Dutch war finally passed with the death of Charles X in 1660.

The next threat of an Anglo-Dutch war came in the early 1660s. The Navi-
gation Act of 1660, which was anti-Dutch, aimed to control imports, gain a
Dutch attempts to negotiate a comprehensive trade treaty with Charles II (1660–
85) were met with English resistance. When Charles demanded that the Dutch
don not fish within ten miles of the British coast, the Witt replied that “sooner
than acknowledge this imaginary sovereignty over the seas . . . we would shed our
last drop of blood” (Wilson 1978: 105). Relations were strained further after the
death of Mary, wife of the late William III, which left her brother Charles II as
the guardian of William of Orange. This revived the dynastic question and raised
fears among Dutch merchants of a return to a centralized government under the

There was also much talk of war among English merchants, who had clashed
with the Dutch in North America and off the coasts of Brazil and West Africa in
early 1661. They believed more than ever that war trade was zero-sum, that
the prosperity of he 1650s resulted from the military successes of the first war,
and that England was better prepared for war against the Dutch than it would be
a few years later (Wilson 1978: 107; Wolff 1978: 41–42). This war fever was
strongly opposed by Clarendon, who emphasized the danger of French inter-
vention (after a Franco-Dutch alliance in April 1662), the strength of the Dutch,
the severe financial constraints associated with an economic depression and
This view suited Charles’s prejudices, and Clarendon was able to obtain an
Anglo-Dutch alliance in 1662, which turned out to be a temporary respite.

The Dutch, meanwhile, were increasingly concerned about the possible
threat from France, which was no longer tied down by the war with Spain, had
recently secured Dunkirk from England, and was eyeing the Spanish Nether-
lands. De Witt concluded that it would be impossible to stop Louis XIV militarily,
especially with a much-weakened Spain, and instead concluded a Franco-Dutch
alliance (1662) is the hope of resolving outstanding issues. But a partitioning
of the Spanish Netherlands with France was blocked by the States of Holland,
which refused to accept any partition that might lead to the resurgence of Antwerp
as a powerful trading center (Rowen 1978: 484–85; Wolff 1978: 43).

The colonial conflict was also beginning to heat up, particularly in Africa.
After an English captain, Robert Holmes, clashed with the Dutch in 1661 and
claimed the entirety of the African coastal trade, the Dutch responded with a
blockade of the Gold Coast (Geyl 1964: 84), and English attempts to run the
blockade caused a number of incidents. Meanwhile, after failing to establish a
trading company in Africa, Charles issued a charter in 1663 that gave the Royal
African Company a monopoly over most of the trade on the west coast of Af-
rica. This conflict directly with the territorial claims of the Dutch West Indies
Company (Zook 1919), caused further incidents, and accelerated the spiral of
conflict.

Domestic factors played an important role in fueling this conflict, particu-
larly in England, where a prowar coalition had emerged (Wilson 1978: 111–26).
A nationalist group led by Charles’s brother James, duke of York (and later James
II), was particularly influential and eager for war, to the point that a French
ambassador asserted that James was the “true author of the war” (Hutton 1989:
218). Many senior officers had been royalist privates and were eager for the
spoils of war (Jones 1966: 57). Moreover, the influence of the more concilia-
tory Clarendon was waning.

The torchbearers of London, suffering from economic depression as a result of
the high costs of the English-Spanish war, pushed strongly for a hard-line
policy to extract concessions from the Dutch, and in April 1664 they petitioned

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Parliament for a redress of grievances. Parliament informed the king that the main obstruction to English trade was Dutch behavior in India and Africa, and it was at this time that Thomas Mun’s mercantilist tract England’s Treasure by Foreign Trade was published. The political pressure on Charles was intense; his sense of isolation is suggested in his statement that “except myself I believe there is scarce an Englishman that does not passionately desire a war with [the Dutch]” (Pafford 1982: 30). To the surprise of many, he demurred from war and put less coercive pressure on the Dutch while continuing to build warships. Although he disliked the Dutch regents and their policies, he was concerned about French intervention and feared that war would increase his financial dependence on Parliament.

Holmes seized a number of Dutch African possessions in May 1664 and without authorization declared war on the United Provinces. Although Charles put him in the Tower of London for his insubordination and assured the Dutch that his actions were those of “a private captain without authority,” the incident seriously exacerbated tensions. In response, de Witt gave de Ruyter secret orders to sail to the Gold Coast and recover Dutch possessions. He deceived the English about the mission by assuring Sir George Downing in May 1664 that the fleet was not sailing for Africa. De Ruyter inflicted substantial losses on the English; this, along with the deception, outraged the English and led Charles to order the confiscation of all Dutch ships in English ports. Meanwhile, the Dutch continued to seize Portuguese ports in India (even after the Dutch-Portuguese treaty of 1661), which cut into the increasingly prosperous English trade with Portugal. In September 1664 an English fleet forced the capitulation of the Dutch settlement at New Amsterdam.

De Ruyter’s expedition to the African coast was indeed a turning point, for Charles conceived the conception as an insult to himself and to the honor of the crown and adopted a more positive view of war. He was further influenced by the increasingly prowar opinion of the elite and the public. As one pamphleteer commented at the time, “there was nothing more unanimously applauded by men of all persuasions and interest as a Dutch war” (Wilson 1978: 125). This was a classic conflict spiral fueled by the hard-line bargaining tactics of both sides. Downing pressed for a coercive stance against the Dutch because he was convinced that the Dutch feared war, that an English victory was certain, and that the Dutch would back down. But de Witt stood firm, strengthened by the French alliance, by excellent finances and access to credit (Jones 1966: 56–57), and by the belief that conciliatory talks could intensify English demands rather than pacify them (Wilson 1978: 119). The spiral escalated when in November 1664 Charles ordered a blockade of Dutch shipping in the English Channel, which de Witt regarded as an unofficial declaration of war. This, along with the English attack in December on the Dutch Symrna convoy returning from Turkey, had transformed the conflict into an intermittent colonial war into a military conflict in European waters. The United Provinces declared war on 16 June 1665, followed by England in March (Wilson 1978: 123–29).

It should be clear from this description that although English commercial interests played an important role, Kossmann (1964: 288) goes too far in asserting that this was a “purely commercial war” in which “no political element exercised any influence.” Charles had vetoed earlier demands for war in 1662 and April 1664 under similar economic conditions. His decision to go to war in 1665 was a function of the shifting political influence of his advisors, the escalating series of colonial incidents with the Dutch, and his personalization of the conflict after de Ruyter’s African expedition.

The Dutch navy was much better prepared to fight a war and protect Dutch commerce in 1665 than in 1652, but the Dutch army had been seriously weakened by the Act of Seclusion and the absence of a central command; it required French intervention to beat back opportunistic invasion by the bishop of Munster. Although the French did not engage England in a naval war after declaring war in January 1666, their actions did serve to isolate England diplomatically. In addition, Dutch financial strength provided subsidies to draw Denmark into the war, while Charles lacked the resources to draw in Sweden.

By mid-1667 the war was going well for the Dutch, but de Witt wanted to end it quickly to restore trade and strengthen his position against France, which invaded the Spanish Netherlands in May. De Ruyter sailed up the Thames to the dockyards and captured the Royal Charles in a remarkable naval coup, humiliating the English at a time when they were suffering from the dampening effects of war on their commerce and from the Plague and the Great Fire. The growing fear of Louis XIV and the need for an ally led de Witt to refrain from pushing England any further. Rather than extracting what he could from his military advantage at the Peace of Breda (July 1667), he pursued a moderate course, securing modest concessions regarding the rights of neutral shipping and a relaxation of the Navigation Laws (Pafford 1982: 63).

England, too, was increasingly fearful of France and in January 1668 joined the United Provinces and Sweden in the Triple Alliance, which sought to block Louis from further gains and coerce Spain into accepting new boundaries in the Spanish Netherlands that were also acceptable to Louis. This treaty was short lived, however, for when Louis learned of its secret anti-French provisions he turned his anger against the Dutch and negotiated the Treaty of Dover in June 1670 with Charles. This was an offensive alliance that called for an attack against the United Provinces, though military action was delayed until 1672.
Charles’s treaty with Louis and his decision for war were driven in part by the same motivations that had led to the two previous wars: traditional antipathy for Dutch republicanism, demands for respect for sovereignty of the British seas, payment for fishing rights in English waters, a restructuring of trade in the East Indies, and compensation for past costs (Baxter 1966). But domestic factors were also important. One of the major objectives of Charles, his brother James, and their ministers was to secure subsidies from Louis that, along with a victorious war, would substantially increase the power of the Crown and reduce its dependence on Parliament for funds (Ogg 1961: 310–11; Ashley 1971: 167).

Domestic politics in England also had an important religious component. Given Charles’s intentions to convert to Catholicism, and given the staunchly anti-Catholic English nobility, Charles sought Louis’s support in the event of domestic opposition to his conversion. Though there is some debate as to Charles’s intention to follow through with the “Catholic causes” and make a public declaration of his faith, there was no doubt at the time about James’s religious orientation, the likelihood that he would be the next king, or about the Crown’s motives behind the war. A. Jones (1996: 273) argues, “virtually all actions of opinion came to believe that the third war was a cover not just for the establishment of arbitrary government, one freed from its dependence on Parliament and the restraints imposed by the law, but for the introduction of Catholicism.”

Louis was driven by a combination of strategic, reputational, economic, and religious considerations. His quest for glorie was clearly an important underlying factor, but whether Louis aimed for continental hegemony is a matter of debate (Sonnino 1989; Lovsly 1994; Lynn 1994; Eikberg 1979). Though his actions and rhetoric were aggressive, his ultimate aim, many argue, was the establishment ofdefensible frontiers. He wanted to break what he perceived as Habsburg encirclement of France before the Dutch could interfere with his aim of securing the whole of the Spanish Netherlands, France-Comte, and Luxembourg for the French crown. He believed that these were part of France’s “natural” boundaries and would allow him to control strategic territory that historically served as gateways for the invasion of France (Holsti 1991: 57). Louis made war a feasible option by diplomatically isolating the United Provinces through subsidy treaties with England, Sweden, and several minor states, and he secured the neutrality of the emperor Leopold.

The evidence is more mixed regarding the importance of French economic interests, at least with respect to the Dutch War. Colbert, his minister of finance, was a strict mercantilist who had initiated a trade war against England in 1664. He believed that Amsterdam was “the warehouse of the world’s goods,” however, and was convinced that the Dutch were a greater threat to French economic prosperity than the English (Murat 1984: 147). He set up a trading company in the Dutch West Indies to take trade away from the Dutch, increased tariffs against Dutch imports (which led to a tariff war), prohibited French goods from being loaded onto Dutch ships, and finally concluded that war was a desirable instrument of French economic policy. To this effect he stated that “If the King were to subjugate all the United Provinces of the Netherlands, their trade would become His Majesty’s trade; there would be nothing left to wish for” (Murat 1984: 150; Kaiser 1990: 151). Colbert was just one of Louis’s advisors, however, and not always the most influential one, and in fact Colbert opposed the Dutch War because its heavy costs would undermine his internal reform program. When Colbert informed Louis that he could not raise the money for such a war, Louis threatened to dismiss him (Sonnino 1989: 172). The Dutch War of Louis XIV (the first two years of which coincided with the Third Anglo-Dutch Naval War) began in May 1672 on land and sea. By the end of June, with their outlying defenses crushed, the Dutch opened the sluices and flooded the countryside to protect themselves and their retreating armies. Reluctant in defeat, they initiated peace negotiations with Louis and offered substantial concessions of conquered territory that would leave Louis in a good position to take the Spanish Netherlands. Louis’s greed and overconfidence, encouraged by his minister Louvois, led him to escalate his demands to the point that negotiations broke down (Eikberg 1979: 112). This marked a turning point in the war and in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry.

The End of the Anglo-Dutch Strategic Rivalry, 1674–89

It is hard to identify a single point at which the strategic rivalry between England and the Dutch Republic ended. Three key events stand out: (1) England’s defection from the French alliance and its separate peace with the Dutch in 1674; (2) the Anglo-Dutch alliance and England’s reentry into the war against France in 1677; and (3) the personal union of England and the Netherlands under William III.

The combination of military collapse, the breakdown of negotiations with France, and increasing dissatisfaction with de Witt among the Dutch resulted in William’s appointment as Stadholder in 1673. As expected, this worked to reinvoke the war effort under a popular leader, and William succeeded in 1673 in bringing Spain, the emperor, and the duke of Lorraine as allies into the Grand Alliance of the Hague.

The formation of the first coalition against Louis XIV along with a string of Dutch naval victories over the English and the French, forced England to
reconsider the war against the United Provinces.13 The newly military situation made it unlikely that Charles would achieve many of his war aims. It also raised concerns about waging war against a number of European powers and about the future balance of power in the presence of a growing French military and naval power (Wolf 1970: 60). In addition, despite their superiority at sea the Dutch adopted a conciliatory strategy, agreeing to honor the British flag and allow crews to negotiate a settlement in the East Indies and a commercial treaty that was perceived as favorable to England. The entry of Spain on the Dutch side further hurt trade because Spain was an important British partner (Ekberg 1979: 154).

Domestic factors were also important, for opinion both in Parliament and among the public had begun to turn against the war. Merchants, having learned that war could be costly to commerce, had been less eager for this war than for the wars of 1652 and 1665, and suffered from its continuation. Parliament was very concerned that the continuation of the war would result in a further increase in the power of the Crown over Parliament and society (Jones 1987: ch. 5, p. 8; Law 1665; Jones 1966). Religious questions also played a part. Parliament perceived the war as an assault by an intolerant Catholic state on a Protestant state led by a Stuart; it also feared that Charles would attempt to re-Catholicize England and to use the war to reduce its dependence on Parliament. These concerns led Parliament to use its budgetary powers to pressure Charles to withdraw from the war (Ogg 1961: 311).14

The formation of the Grand Alliance against France and the cessation of hostilities between England and the United Provinces transformed the war into a traditional l'outrous Habsburg struggle. As Louis tried to divide the coalition by offering separate peace treaties and subsidies, it became increasingly apparent, certainly to William, that Louis’s concern to break a Habsburg encirclement had become a struggle for dominance in Europe. William defined his mission as a fight against French hegemony, to the point that, according to some, “defeating Louis XIV became the all-consuming passion of his lifetime” (Maland 1966: 343; Kossmann 1964: 295–96; Baxter 1966).

It was partly for strategic purposes that William wedded Mary (1677), the elder daughter of James II, the heir apparent to the English throne. After Louis rejected Charles’s conditions for a general peace, Charles signed an alliance with William that called for peace on his original terms (Hill 1967: 150). He then recalled all English troops fighting for Louis and dispatched an army and a fleet to aid the coalition in blocking further French aggression. After fighting in 1672–74 to crush the United Provinces, he now joined a coalition to save it.

The Dutch were eager for peace once the war left their soil, for the war had placed heavy financial burdens on them and cost them key markets in neutral countries. The Dutch signed a separate peace with Louis at Nymegen (1678) that abolished the prohibitive tariffs of 1667 and gave them some degree of free trade. Louis then made treaties with Spain, the empire, Brandenburg, and Denmark. William, still concerned about the power of France and perhaps also that peace might restrict his powers at home (Maland 1966: 345), opposed the termination of the war, interpreted the Treaty of Nymegen as a defeat, and made a final (and unsuccessful) attack on the French army.

William’s fears were confirmed by subsequent events. France annexed additional territories, fueling Dutch fears and making the strategic rivalry with England a distant memory. Although the United Provinces joined the enterpris, Spain, and Sweden in the Quadruple Alliance in 1652 to deter further French expansion, Spain declared war against France in December 1683 and French armies moved into the Spanish Netherlands. William pressed for Dutch intervention in support of Spain but was blocked by the peace party in Holland, leaving Spain and the emperor to sign the humiliating Armistice of Ratisbon in 1684.

Buoyed by his successes, Louis pushed too far in 1685 by revoking the Edict of Nantes, which had assured toleration of the Reformed religion. The subsequent persecutions in France renewed concern throughout Europe, which was fanned by Fugueotes intellectually in exile. This was particularly important in the Netherlands, where anti-French sentiment encouraged by the Huguenots gradually eroded the antiwar spirit that had dominated since 1678 (Wolf 1970: 87–88). All of this played into William’s hands, and in 1686 most of the German states entered the League of Augsburg to defend existing treaties.

With the formation of the League and with Habubv victories over the Turks, Louis felt the balance of power turning against him and sent his armies into Palatinat in August 1688.15 This tipped the balance for William, for by tying up French armies in Germany it diminished Dutch concerns about vulner-ability to a French invasion. Another key turning point was Louis’s renewal of an aggressive guerre de commerce against the Netherlands in 1687. This led the merchants of Amsterdam to give their support to William and his plans for a war against France and a possible invasion of a politically and religiously divided England (Israel 1995: 844–46).

Meanwhile James II, a devout Roman Catholic, gained the English throne after Charles died without legitimate heirs in 1685. James was determined to restore Catholic worship in England, and a series of actions (including his charges against Anglican bishops) and the birth of a son in June 1688 increased fears that the Roman Catholic Church would be restored in England. When James

William’s “invasion” of England led Louis to declare war on the Netherlands, which precipitated a general European coalition against France. William was able persuade Englishmen to join in part because of reactions against Louis’s support for James’s attempt to reconquer his throne from England. This marked the end of the final stage in the Anglo-Dutch strategic rivalry, as England and the Netherlands cooperated to contain French power while continuing to compete in the commercial and colonial spheres.

Theoretical Summary

The Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry derived from the rise of the Netherlands to a position of world economic leadership by the 1620s and from specific conflicts regarding the distribution of the carrying trade in Europe, the finishing of raw English cloth for export, Dutch access to the fisheries off the British coast, and the colonial trade. The economic competition was exacerbated by envy and hostility on the part of the English, who felt that Dutch success came at their expense and that a significant expansion in English trade and prosperity could only come by taking trade away from the Dutch.

The intensity of the commercial competition varied over time. It was affected significantly by the outbreak and termination of major wars that arose from interacting rivalries (Diehl and Goertz 1997). These wars made an impact on the Anglo-Dutch rivalry in its early stages mainly by altering the structure of world trade (and particularly the relative access of the two rivals to key trade routes and markets) rather than the European balance of power.

The interconnection of the Anglo-Dutch and Dutch-Spanish rivalries was especially important. The end of the Dutch revolt and the beginning of the Twelve Years’ Truce made possible the rapid expansion of the Dutch economic system, which triggered the Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry. The outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War in Germany was a key external shock (Goertz and Diehl 1995) that fostered a renewal of the Spanish-Dutch war, which led in turn to the isolation of the Dutch from the Iberian and Mediterranean trade, the rise of English prosperity in both absolute and relative terms, and an increased assertiveness in English foreign policy. Finally, the end of the Dutch-Spanish War led to a rapid recovery of trade routes and markets by the Dutch, which restored their economic dominance and contributed to economic contraction and depression in England in 1649–51.

Although the basic issue driving the commercial rivalry was that England wanted “more of the trade the Dutch now have” (in Munk’s words), and although some interpret the first two Anglo-Dutch naval wars as “purely commercial” (Wolf 1970: 37; Kossman 1964: 288), a purely economic explanation is misleading. The escalated potential of the economic conflict in fact owed much to the close connections between economic and strategic issues. For the Netherlands the question at stake was national survival. The Dutch depended on the sea for their very livelihood; the fisheries and the carrying trade provided the basis for their economic well-being. Thus Holst (1991: 57) argues that “access to ocean territory . . . was a ‘core interest’ vital for national survival” and Kennedy (1987a: 50) concludes that this was “a quarrel about who should rule the waves and reap the commercial benefits of that privilege.”

The commercial and navigational conflict was exacerbated by England’s periodic attempts to enforce sovereignty of the British seas, particularly in the English Channel. This doctrine led the English to insist on the salute of their flag and on the search and seizure of Dutch ships, which was costly, humiliating, and clearly threatening to vital Dutch commercial and naval interests. It was difficult, if not impossible, to separate economic issues from strategic and reputational ones. As Kennedy (1987a: 48) argues, “Motives of prestige, power and profit are hard to disentangle in any period, but they seem particularly closely connected in the seventeenth century.”

The conflicting economic interests of England and the Netherlands were reinforced by a conflict of ideology between English mercantilism and Dutch economic liberalism, though these ideologies closely paralleled the economic interests of each side. English writers such as Selden (More Clauzum Sea Dominum Mariis, 1635) and Mun asserted that power and wealth were mutually reinforcing, that economic activity should promote the mutual interests of the merchants and the state, and that this required a favorable balance of trade and the accumulation of treasure (Viner 1948; Wilson 1978: ch. 2). These views were widely held throughout Europe and did, in fact, reflect certain realities of
the international political economy of the seventeenth century (Wilson 1975: ch. 2; Howard 1976: 48). As Howard (1976: 38) argues, "The capacity to sustain war and so maintain political power became, during the seventeenth century, increasingly dependent on access to wealth either extracted from the external European world or created by the commerce ultimately derived from that wealth. Trade promoted wealth, wealth facilitated the development of armies and navies, and these could be used to acquire more wealth.

The symbiotic relationships between power and wealth and between state power and mercantile interest—and the economic ideology that reinforced them—had important implications for the prevailing conception of war and the disposition to use force in the service of economic goals. Just as political leaders saw commerce as an instrument of state power, merchants saw state naval power as an instrument of commerce. War became, in Clausewitzian terms, a continuation of commerce by other means (Howard 1976: 47), and commerce became a continuation of war. These views were reflected in the status and behavior of the great mercantile trading companies of the seventeenth century, which were granted quasi sovereign powers and allowed to build and use military forces in the defense and extension of commercial interests (Thomson 1954: 32–42). As we have seen, the behavior of the trading companies played an important role in the Second Anglo-Dutch Naval War.

The Dutch, by contrast, articulated doctrines of economic liberalism and the principle of the freedom of the seas. Dutch political leaders and merchants alike perceived war as a costly and inefficient activity and strongly preferred peace to war, because it allowed them to pursue expansive trade policies abroad while lowering taxes and the national debt at home (Wilson 1978: ch. 2). The role of the state was to promote a liberal trading order and a peaceful international system; economic activity and diplomacy were to be separate. These views were reflected by Grotius in Mare Liberum in 1608 and by Pieter de la Court in Het Interesse van Holland in 1662; he argued that "war . . . is most prejudicial to the arts of peace and very beneficial for Holland" and that Holland should never initiate an offensive war (Wilson 1978: 17).

Although the Dutch were less likely than the English or the French to establish closed and mutually exclusive trading systems, or to believe that these systems could flourish only on the ruins of the other (Howard 1976: 46), the Dutch commitment to a liberal international economy and a peaceful international order was clearly self-interested, given the comparative advantages of the Dutch in transport, production, and finance (Brawley 1995). Moreover, when conditions for trade were unfavorable the Dutch were not hesitant to set up closed trading zones or use military force to defend their economic interests.

One reason the Spanish renewed their war with the Dutch in 1621 was that coercive Dutch tactics in peacetime had significantly increased the costs to Spain of trade in important colonial markets (Stradling 1981; Boxer 1970: 25). As Downing complained in the 1660s, "It is more liberial in the British Seas but more claunous on ye coast in Africa and in ye East Indies" (Wilson 1978: 118).

Commercial competition and strategic territory were critical in the escalation of the rivalry and were probably necessary conditions for the outbreak of the three Anglo-Dutch naval wars. These factors were not jointly sufficient for war, however, because they do not explain why the commercial rivalry was transformed into a strategic rivalry in the late 1640s, why the strategic rivalry began to escalate in 1649–51, and why it led to open warfare in 1652 but not before. To explain the escalation and the outbreak of war, it is necessary to consider not only interstate commercial competition and strategic territory but also the dyadic balance of power and the impact of domestic politics.

The commercial rivalry persisted for four decades without escalating into a strategic rivalry largely because of England's naval inferiority. Until midcentury England did not possess the naval capabilities to challenge the Dutch militarily and enforce the sovereignty of the seas doctrine. This situation derived from internal economic weaknesses that were magnified by domestic political problems; long-standing disputes between the king and Parliament limited Charles's ability to raise funds and maintain a viable navy.

The escalation of the commercial rivalry into a strategic rivalry corresponds roughly with the Commonwealth's rapid naval build-up in 1649, which was driven by both internal and external needs for security and legitimacy. The naval buildup led to an assertive foreign policy, more challenges to the Dutch at sea, and hard-line 'bargaining tactics. The growth of English naval power and the shift to parity in the dyadic balance was a necessary condition for the first Anglo-Dutch war.

There were also important domestic issues in the 1640s that interacted with dyadic and systemic variables to contribute to the escalation. The English civil wars, the execution of Charles, and the establishment of the Commonwealth and the crisis of legitimacy surrounding it were critical, for they gave Parliament additional incentives to enforce the sovereignty of the seas—indeed external support for the royalists and enhance the prestige, stability, and legitimacy of the new regime through a "ring 'round the flag" (Luard 1986: 105; Levy 1989a). Questions of legitimacy interacted with the issue of dynastic succession, given the possibility of a claim on the English crown by the house of Orange deriving from the marriage of Mary Stuart to William II. This politico-dynamic issue had a religious component, for Cromwell hoped that by ending
the war against the Dutch he might be able to enlist them in a Protestant alliance against Spain (Craisnere 1973; Pincer 1966). The change of regime in England had other consequences as well. It contributed to the influence in Parliament of shipping and mercantile interests, most of which were protectionist and anti-Dutch. This occurred at a time of strong economic competition from the Dutch, increasing competition from the French, and economic depression precipitated by the loss of English markets to the Dutch after the end of the Dutch-Spanish War in 1647.

The proximate cause of the first Anglo-Dutch war was the protectionist Navigation Act, which triggered a conflict spiral that was fueled by mutual misperception of intentions, by hard-line opinion in England, and by the intersecting Anglo-French rivalry and undeclared naval war.12 The underlying causes, however, must be traced to the incompatibility of English and Dutch commercial and strategic territorial interests, the domestic political considerations that helped drive those interests, the change in the dyadic balance of power that permitted a more assertive English policy, and the fact that in the end England demanded more than the Dutch were willing to give. As Rowen (195) argues, "While it would have been madness for the Dutch to seek war with England, they had no choice but to accept it once the English made surrender of freedom of the seas the price of peace."

The Treaty of Westminster resolved few of the underlying issues in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry, and disputes about trade and neutral rights continued to provoke occasional crises that led up to the Second Anglo-Dutch Naval War. Domestic pressures for war increased, the London merchants having learned from the first war that military force could indeed enhance trade and prosperity. None of these factors were not sufficient for war. Acute Anglo-Dutch crises that came out of the English-Spanish War and the Baltic War of the late 1650s (again demonstrating the importance of intersecting rivalries) were resolved through prudent statemanship and crisis management by de Witt and Cromwell. For five years after that, Charles II resisted domestic pressure for war. But events gave in. These considerations lead Wilson (1978: 81, 156–57) to conclude that "neither conflicting economic ambitions nor the problems of neutral rights need necessarily lead to war if those who held power exercised prudence and restraint."

Several things changed in the early 1660s. Top-level advice to Charles took on a more hawkish tone as the influence of the navalist group led by his brother James increased and that of the cautious Clarendon declined. The economic depression that followed the war with Spain and the subsequent increase in taxation also led London merchants to press harder for war as a means of overcoming their economic difficulties.

The escalation of the colonial conflict between the English and the Dutch, particularly in Africa, increased these pressures. The resulting conflict spiraled further because it intersected with the Dutch-Portuguese rivalry, as Dutch attacks on Portuguese ports disrupted the lucrative English-Portuguese trade. Reputational interests, personal as well as national, also took on considerable importance. Taking de Witt’s deception about the de Ruyter expedition as an insult to himself and the crown, Charles became determined to obtain revenge. This shift was critical, for he alone had held England back from war in the face of enormous pressures. The Dutch, emboldened by their alliance with France in 1662, were less willing to conciliate than they had been in 1652.

Although the strategic rivalry continued and helped to generate a third war, the end of the second Anglo-Dutch war was an important turning point in the rivalry (Wilson 1978: 154–55). It marked a fundamental change in perceptions as both sides (particularly the Netherlands) began to see France rather than the other as the primary threat to their interests. The French invasion of the Spanish Netherlands in 1667 (the War of Devolution) was critical because it created "the shadow of a universal military domination" (Mowat 1971: 131) and led to the formation of the Tripartite Alliance specifically to block French expansion.

These changing perceptions of threat, which had begun to appear in England after 1661, became more pronounced after the Third Anglo-Dutch Naval War. Louis's military successes, and particularly his refusal to accept Dutch concessions would have given him most of his war aims, finally impressed Charles with the magnitude of the threat of a French military hegemony over Europe, a threat that was augmented by the growth of French naval power. It is clear that systemic balance of power factors, which had little effect in the origins of the first two Anglo-Dutch wars, had now begun to play an important role in the rivalry and would be crucial in its termination. Economic factors also contributed to a shift in perceptions of threat, although these were secondary to strategic factors. France had initiated a trade war against England in 1664 and also against the Dutch, whom it perceived as giving in. These considerations lead Wilson (1978: 81, 156–57) to conclude that "neither conflicting economic ambitions nor the problems of neutral rights need necessarily lead to war if those who held power exercised prudence and restraint."
the first war regarding the utility of military force to advance trade, which contributed to the London merchants' enthusiasm for war in the early 1660s, was quickly "unlearned" during the second war. English trade was hit hard by the war and suffered further when merchant ships and crews were sacrificed to build naval strength. Thus Wilson (1978: 156) concludes that there was "from 1667 onwards, a noticeable decline in the City's partiality for naval war." 2

Religious considerations were also important and closely linked to balance of power calculations. The hegemony that was feared was a Catholic hegemony, and this contributed to the growing recognition in both England and the Netherlands that it was France who was the primary threat to their respective interests. In addition, the specter of a Catholic hegemony in Europe reinforced fears in England that Charles might impose Catholicism on England. This, along with the fear that the war would reduce Charles's dependence on Parliament, led Parliament to force Charles to end the war with the Dutch.

Individuals also played a distinctive role. Louis XIV's quest for glorie generated the external threat that was primarily responsible for the end of the Anglo-Dutch rivalry, and William's obsession with the French threat played a critical part in the formation of a European coalition against Louis. William's marriage to Mary (1677) was strategically motivated to improve ties with England and bring it into a coalition against France, as was his willingness to sail to England to accept the crown. William's invitation from England was the result of domestic political and religious considerations, especially the serious concern that James II might restore the Roman Catholic Church. Religious considerations also facilitated William's task of forming a general coalition against France, particularly after Louis's revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the persecutions in France in 1685–86, which raised questions of political and religious liberty throughout Europe.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the magnitude of the impact of different variables on the Anglo-Dutch rivalry varied over the course of the rivalry. Conflicts of interest over trade and the freedom of the seas, which drove the escalation of the Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry and the first two Anglo-Dutch naval wars, played little role in the gradual termination of the rivalry in the 1670s and 1680s. It is not that these issues disappeared, for the Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry continued for another century; rather, they "faded into relative insignificance before the threat of a resurgent Catholic hegemony in Europe." (Wilson 1978: 156) The balance of power and religious factors that were so important at the end of the rivalry played a minor role in the earlier stages. Domestic variables, however, had an important impact throughout. 3

Notes

1. This study has benefited from the helpful comments of Stacy Bergery, John Lynn, Bruce Rustett, and participants in seminars at Harvard University and at the Program in Political Economy and Security at the University of Chicago.

2. The fact that for a time the Dutch Republic confronted an institutionally decentralized English government is also interesting, given current debates about the democratic peace.

3. Similarly, I deviate from Vasquez (1993: 82) by allowing for rivalries between states of unequal strength. (The Russo-Turkish rivalry over several centuries would be one example.) Vasquez may be right that most rivalries involve relative equals and that the interactions between unequals may differ in important respects, but I prefer to leave this to empirical investigation. Notice also that the stakes involved for the two rivals are not necessarily equal or comparable.

4. For a critique of this approach see Thompson (1995) and also David Kelly's contribution to this volume.

5. It would be useful to construct a typology of rivalries that includes commercial and strategic rivalries as distinct types.


7. James II (1603–25) imposed a ban on all unfinished cloth in 1615, but this led to a brief trade war that backfired for England (Israel 1989: 118; Wilson 1984: 73).

8. This "Act of Secession" also contributed to a significant decline in the Dutch army by effectively eliminating a centralized command (Malan 1966: 326–27), the costs of which were felt with the French invasion in 1672.

9. England and France ended their six-year undeclared naval war in October 1655 and concluded an offensive treaty in March 1677.

10. Louis aimed the rights of inheritance deriving from his marriage to Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip IV of Spain. Although Maria Theresa was cut out of Philip's will, Louis used Philip's failure to pay to Maria Theresa's worthy to justify his claim to the Spanish Netherlands (Wolf 1968: ch. 13) This was the "War of Devotion." 11. In addition, Charles sought the ascension of William of Orange as sovereign or hereditary stadtholder as a means of making the Netherlands more dependent on England (Jones 1996: 14).

12. Religious and ideological considerations were a secondary factor that affected Louis's decision to go to war. He detested Calvinism and hoped to make Catholics a state-supported religion in the Netherlands. With Charles's help he planned to establish William as sovereign over a much-reduced United Provinces (Scheve 1987: 372–75; Kaiser 1990: 151).
13. This came soon after de Witt was murdered by a mob inspired by Orangist pamphleteers. Willem succeeded in bringing Orangist factions to power in Holland and in the States General.

14. As Elsberg (1979: 154) notes, “Complex factors began to turn against the continuation of the war on the side of the French alliance in 1673, but nothing was more critical than the failure of the Anglo-French fleet to defeat the Dutch at sea.”

15. Thus Parliament’s opposition to war was strongly influenced by its anticipated impact of the war on the domestic balance of power between the Crown and Parliament. For a theoretical discussion of politically motivated opposition to war, see Levy and Male (1998).

16. The brutal campaign that followed triggered a “nationalist” uprising of much of Germany against Louis.

17. Although standard treatments of mercantilism emphasize the role of the mercantilist system in advancing the power of the state (Heckscher 1955), English mercantilism emphasized a greater harmony of interests between the commercial class and the state (Wilson 1978: 153).

18. Wilson (1978: 118–19) concludes that although the Dutch oligarchs spoke of the principles of free trade and navigation, “the servants of the great companies were frequently guilty of committing all the offences against that principle which they had complained of in the Spanish and Portuguese.”


20. This pattern is consistent with power transition theory and with growing empirical evidence in support of the power preponderance hypothesis (Olsanski and Kugler 1980, Kugler and Lenke 1990, Levy 1998).

21. This ambition, and indeed Cromwell’s initiation of a war against Spain in 1656, in a case of political and religious interests dominating over economic ones: both Anglo-Spanish trade and the continuation of Spanish-Dutch hostility had been profitable to England (Kessey 1987: 54–55).

22. The importance of the Anglo-French conflict is suggested by Jones’s (1966: 49) comment that “the immediate cause of the [first Anglo-Dutch] war originated in the undeclared war being waged against France.”

23. As Kennedy (1987b: 62) argues, “whether the aims of each belligerent, [the first war] had little to do with the general European balance.” The negotiated settlements that ended the first two naval wars, however, were influenced by broader balance of power calculations. The political outcomes of the peace treaties did not directly reflect the military outcomes of the wars; in each case the military victor was willing to make concessions in order to meet a new threat or induce its former rival into a coalition against that threat.

24. I think William Thompson’s (private correspondence) suggestion of this line of argument.

25. De la Court had written (1662) that the only thing worse than war for Holland, and the only basis for war, was “the intolerable slavery of being governed by the will of a single person,” such as that of Philip II (Wilson 1978: 17).

26. The absence of a hegemonic threat did provide the conditions that allowed the English and the Dutch to focus on each other.

27. On the general historical importance of domestic factors in commercial rivalries see Risse (1994).

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