

““The *confreres* [...] are all sons (already married) or married to daughters of *confreres*:
Social Capital in the Guild of Maritime Porters of Barcelona (c. 1692-1902)”¹

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Abstract

In this communication, I make an approximation of the relationship between the social capital produced in social networks in the recruitment of new masters in the Guild of Maritime Porters and Maritime Horsecart Operators. The objective of this study is to understand the importance of social networks and family relationships in the construction and family-based monopolization of the labor market by this service-sector guild. As a theoretical framework, I consider the concept of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Smart, 1993; Portes, 1998; Lin, 1999), and its construction in the world of labor in the early phases of guild liberalization and industrialization (Rosenband, 1999; von Briesen, 2016b). For the case, the study is based principally on a quantitative analysis of the registry of inscriptions of members of the guild, in which every new master was recorded by name, and after a certain point, the amount paid was also noted. Through this analysis, I study the relationship between new masters and existing masters during the period. With this important primary source, one can determine with precision the practices and compare this result with others done by investigations based solely on the last names of masters. By the same measure, this study includes an analysis of the guild ordinances and some judicial cases in which the customs related to various forms of social qualifications for admitting new masters (beyond family relationships) were relevant. With the passage of time, these qualifications were reduced, basically, to the practice of admitting only sons and sons-in-law of existing masters.

JEL Codes: J08; J40; J51; I14; L91; N13; N33; N43; N73; P49

¹ Arxiu General del Museu Marítim de Barcelona, *fons del Gremi de bastaixos, macips de ribera i carreters de mar de Barcelona* [Hereafter AGMMB], “El Gremio de Faquines de la Aduana de Barcelona”, Caja 1, carpeta 10 (2358). Original: “Los *confreres* [...] son todos o hijos (ya casados) o casados con hijas de *confreres*”.

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Resumen

En esta comunicación hago un acercamiento a la relación entre el capital social producido a través de redes sociales en el reclutamiento de nuevos maestros del Gremio de Bastaixos de Barcelona. El objetivo del estudio es comprender la importancia de las redes sociales y los vínculos familiares en la construcción y monopolización familiar del mercado laboral por parte de este gremio de servicios. Como marco teórico, considero el concepto de capital social (Bourdieu, 1986; Smart, 1993; Portes, 1998; Lin, 1999), y su construcción en el mundo obrero en primeras fases de la liberalización de los gremios e la industrialización (Rosenband, 1999; von Briesen, 2016b). Para el caso, el estudio se base principalmente en un análisis cuantitativo del libro de inscripciones de maestros del gremio, en el cual se anotaban cada nuevo maestro y después de cierto momento, también se notaba la cantidad pagada, se puede estudiar la relación entre nuevos maestros y existentes maestros desde 1692 hasta 1902. Con esta valiosa fuente primaria, se puede precisar la práctica y comparar este resultado con otros hechos por investigaciones que parten solamente de apellidos. De la misma forma, el estudio incluye un análisis de las ordenanzas gremiales y algunos casos jurídicos donde era relevante los costumbres relacionados a las diversas cualificaciones sociales a la hora de admitir un nuevo maestro (más allá de sus relaciones familiares). Con el paso del tiempo, estas cualificaciones se redujeron, básicamente, a la práctica de admitir solamente hijos y yernos de maestros.

The cargo-handling labor market: determination and monopolistic privileges

The maritime cargo-handling labor force was responsible for loading and unloading seaborne cargo and transporting it through Barcelona and beyond. Barcelona was a trade hub for local, Mediterranean, regional, and colonial traffic: importation, exportation, and re-exportation all represented a share of traffic. The goods passing through the port of Barcelona for export included bulk and processed agricultural products (especially wine and aguardiente), general merchandise, and stamped textiles (the product par excellence of proto-industrialization and industrialization in Catalonia) (Sánchez, 2015). Likewise, there was a considerable variety of imported goods, which differed with each arrival: lumber; metal bars; foodstuffs including fish, sugar, cocoa, coffee, and grains; raw cotton and silk for transformation; and miscellaneous goods represented the majority at the turn of the nineteenth century (Vilar, 1962).

A complex and highly regulated market developed to handle these variously packaged and presented goods. This regulation was based on the monopolistic privileges of designated guilds to handle certain goods in specific areas. These privileges encapsulated customs and practices, which were enshrined in ordinances extended by different royal and local administrations over the centuries. Within this regulated system, the various maritime-cargo handling guilds had monopolies over the handling of certain types of goods in defined areas of Barcelona (von Briesen, 2014c).

Besides the operational privileges, the guilds were charged with auto-regulating the labor market by determining the entrance of new applicants. The reforms of the guild system included attempts by the government to reduce or remove this privilege. As we will see, the Guild of Maritime Porters developed a mechanism for maintaining their power based on family-based social networks.

The Spanish Enlightenment (*la Ilustración*) included a number of important reforms of the socio-political institutions of Spain, including: the end of the colonial trade monopoly of Cádiz; the creation of local economic-improvement groups; and, the reforms of monopolistic guild privileges (Ruiz Torres, 2007). While there were some differences between the economic policies of the Borbón kings, the approach to the guild question was effectively based on

maintaining the existence of these important ancien régime institutions while reforming their more monopolistic privileges (von Briesen, 2014d). However, some moderately liberal elements of society (and of the court) were gaining economic and political strength towards the end of the eighteenth century. In the matter of port labor, some merchants in Barcelona petitioned for the abolition of the two-trade Guild of Maritime Porters and Maritime Horsecart Operators in 1778:

[S]uch communes, or colleges are detrimental to the common good, for the idea of monopolies which they contain; it seems that they can only justify the immeasurable ambition of the individuals of the Guild of Maritime Porters and Maritime Horsecart Operators.²

While their request was not successful, this clearly establishes an effort to radically alter the maritime-cargo handling labor market by expanding the liberties of the merchants and ending guild-specific monopolies over transporting cargo or abolishing the guilds. In general terms, over time, a radical, abolitionist approach would come to define the liberals' policy on labor, clearly tied to their economic interest in advancing the freedoms of industry (Sánchez, 2011).

The invasion and occupation of important parts of Spain (including Barcelona) by Napoleon's troops created an opportunity for liberals gathered in the Cortes de Cádiz legislative body to abolish guilds throughout Spain on 8 June 1813 (de Cadiz, 1813; Carrau, 2012). While this was short-lasting, it would again be re-applied during the more revolutionary Trienio Liberal, initiated by popular revolt in the port-centered Palau del Palacio in Barcelona and the declaration of a Constitution in 1820. What is more, the militarized political conflicts created a backdrop of economic difficulty, as commerce was affected by the wars and revolutions. As if this were not bad enough, yellow fever struck the city (via the port) in August 1821, with the black vomit killing between eight and ten thousand Barcelonans (perhaps 8-10% of the total population, in the worst case) by the time it subsided in January 1822. The fever also necessitated the isolation (enforced by military blockade) of the inhabitants and merchandise of Barcelona from the rest of Spain. The crisis was further worsened by poor agricultural production in the harvests of 1821 and 1822 (Arnabat Mata, 2001).

² Biblioteca de Catalunya [hereafter, BC], *Colección de papeles políticos y curiosos*, Anon. "Els Comerciants de Barcelona fan una sol·licitud en què demanen l'abolició de restriccions en el transport de gèneres i mercaderies fins aleshores restringides als 'Faquines de Capçana' en pro de mesures comercials més lliberals [Manuscrit]" 1778, Ms.3668/24 (fos 239-247r., 247r. and 239). The two-trade guild would split into two in 1796, although the specific reasons remain unknown.

Thus, it is evident that the first quarter of the nineteenth century was riddled with multiple, inter-related crises in the spheres of war, revolution, politics, health and nutrition, the economy, and labor-market regulation. In most cases, these crises directly and indirectly affected the maritime-cargo handlers.

Social capital, social networks, and family relationships

The concept of social capital still suffers from a universally accepted and utilized definition. A product of this vacuum, different authors have identified lines or tendencies in the use of the concept. Robison, Schmid, and Siles (2002) underscores the fact that social capital has very different and sometimes contradictory definitions, as well as remaining a paradigm useful in various disciplines. Ostrom and Ahn (2003) present a state of the art and discuss the difference and usages. They note minimalist and expansionist versions of social capital. Nezhad, Zadeh, and Godzari (2007) present a very broad review of the primary and secondary literature, summarizing the different versions in sociology and political science.

It can be argued that social capital is a type of human capital, as was done by Bourdieu (1986). It is important to note that the adjective “social” can mean something like “of social or collective ownership”, or “of a social nature”. As such, I use the terms “social human capital” and “individual human capital” to refer to the two possessive modalities of social or socio-cultural capital.

And, while the *social* characteristic of social capital is not widely debated, there are a number of significant divergences about the conceptualization of *capital*. Portes (1998, p. 2) warns that, “As in the case with those earlier [sociological] concepts, the point is approaching at which social capital is applied to so many events and in so many different contexts as to lose any distinct meaning.” Portes, following the trajectory of Bourdieu (1986), notes that the term is effective for describing the positive outcomes of socialability, an aspect that allows for a bridging of economic and sociological studies. Smart (1993) offers a rich presentation from the field of cultural anthropology full of socio-economic analysis of Bordieu’s conceptualization.

Finally, it is worth considering the vision of Robinson, Schmid, and Silas (2002, p. 1) who promote the idea that ““The capital metaphor should be taken seriously.” That is, it is a type of capital that basically represents one or various non-monetary inputs, produced through certain social

relationships that have not been utilized, but instead have been saved for future use. However, unlike physical capital, social capital may actually be increased in its expenditure, as the use of social capital may, in itself, contribute to the strengthening of social bonds, solidarity, and mutually beneficial behaviors, thus increasing the social capital of both exchanging parties. Likewise, it is difficult to transfer social capital from one party to another, in that the very social nature of the existence of this non-tangible good could make it such that only the original participants would be able to make use of it.

Family networks constitute a very strong, though perhaps small type of social network. The general use of familial strategies in artisan/craft groups (in the secondary sector of the economy) during the nineteenth-century liberalization of the labor market of Barcelona has been noted (Romero Marín, 2001). Likewise, the participation of sons of guild masters in the (proto-) industrialization of the textile industry in Barcelona was highlighted in the ownership structures (Raveux, 2005; Sánchez, 2011). Juan Antonio Rubio (2014) notes the debates surrounding the use of family firms in social network analysis in business, and of the importance of family networks in business development (albeit during a later period). With this in mind, the case of the use of familial strategies by the Guild of Maritime Porters is interesting.

The guilds were structures, *par excellence*, for guaranteeing qualification and work quality. Besides judicial qualification (the official recognition of formality), the ordinances established labor qualifications and organizational qualification, which was necessary for trades monopolized by a guild. While technical qualification in the guilds is much-studied (Epstein, 1998, 2008; Epstein & Prak, 2008; Farr, 1997; Rosenband, 1999), the lack of significant technical qualification in the maritime cargo handling guilds created a need to substitute this with another form of qualification – social qualification. The maritime cargo handling guilds were not justified by their hard skills, but on their soft skills. These included, specifically, honor, the ability to work in teams, the ability to collectively respond for lost or damaged goods, and the willingness to undertake free labor off-set by revenue generated collectively in other areas. Implicitly, the ability to work in teams with collectively earned and distributed income and the solidarity expressed in mutual aid were fundamental for the operation of some of the guilds (including the maritime porters) (von Briesen, 2014a). Additionally, one notes the ability to operate democratically in both formal and informal manners, especially in the guilds whose tasks were undertaken collectively (von Briesen, 2014b). These are important displays of the sympathy and solidarity of social capital (Ostrom & Ahn, 2003).

While there were skill-based work qualifications, the most important requisite for entry (or organizational qualification) became the perceived honor or trustworthiness of the applicant (Romero Marín, 2007; von Briesen, 2013). This state-recognized consideration was used by the guilds to restrict entry, even when the reforms of the guild system had attempted to curtail these controls. Thus, the importance of qualification in the guilds is two-fold – for workers, in their efforts to defend their organization and privileges, and for us, in the analysis of the importance of the use of social qualification in the mechanisms of guild function.

Auto-regulation of the labor force: the role of family and social networks

It is well-known that the economic functions of the guilds were based largely on their ability to auto-regulate the labor force and aspects of the production or service-provision. Their role was all-encompassing: they established qualifications for entry; they directly and tacitly transmitted necessary skills and know-how; they controlled work processes and quality; they defended their monopolies against intrusion; and they often attempted to protect their members from abject poverty (where feasible) (Epstein & Prak, 2008; Lucassen, De Moor, & van Zanden, 2008). While, in theory, the guilds were open to anyone who met the requirements (especially during the liberalization of the trades in the early nineteenth century), there are two important considerations in the case of the maritime porters: that the applicant received the support of an existing member who could vouch for the applicant's honor and trustworthiness; and, that the son or son-in-law (hereafter simply referred to as "sons") of a master was always allowed to enter and was charged a lesser fee to do so (generally about one-third the full rate).

In the case of the maritime-cargo handlers, trustworthiness was especially relevant.³ There are two particular reasons: the guild was responsible for assuring the integrity of high-value goods and goods stored in the Customs House (Aduanas); and, trust was a subjective means of excluding undesirable applicants.⁴ The ability to determine entry was a way for the guild to

³ For a general treatment of honor in the Spanish ancien régime economy, see Antonio Morales Moya, "Actividades económicas y honor estamental en el siglo XVIII", *Hispania*, 47 (1987), 951-976.; for a consideration of the judicial determination that a particular trade was honorable in Spain, see Francisco Cabrillo, "Industrialización y derecho de daños en la España del siglo XIX", *Revista de Historia Económica/Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History (Second Series)*, 12 (1994), 591–609. Likewise, honor was a common issue of European guilds: see James Farr, *Artisans in Europe, 1300-1914*, p 6.

⁴ For a specific appreciation of honor in the Guild of Maritime Porters, see Juanjo Romero Marín, "Los Faquines de Capçana Y Su Supervivencia En La Era Liberal", *Drassana: Revista Del Museu Marítim*, 2007, pp. 104–114; 108-110.

regulate the labor market by utilizing socio-cultural qualification in the absence of technical qualification.⁵

The Guild of Maritime Porters' archival collection contains a small book (which I call a registry) that records over two hundred years of entries, noting new master maritime porter or horsecart operator by name, their familial relation to other guild members, and the corresponding amount paid for examination to become a master.⁶

While the registry begins in 1692, the quality of the data is irregular for the first three decades. In 1703, the term “fill” (son) appears for one Faquin, noting that this person was the son of an existing master. This is the first reference of this kind. In 1705, a reference is made to the Parish to which the applicant belonged, although this was a rare occurrence, and was not included in other entries. It is noteworthy that there are no entries in 1714, when the city of Barcelona was under siege at the hands of French-backed Borbón troops. The inclusion of exam costs beginning in the early 1730s, albeit in an inconsistent manner. While the entrance exam cost was not systematically noted, the registry sometimes includes descriptive terms intended to differentiate between horsecart operators and maritime porters, noting that the former had a horsecart; whereas the later would work in the “*Coll*” with “the others”. The “*Coll*” was the work-gang in which the maritime porters operated (Romero Marín, 2007).

Two unusual practices were noted in 1735. First, three men were admitted into the guild on 29 February [sic?] “by order of the Audiencia”, which is to say, by court order. Then, on 9 March, the registry notes the entrance of Benet Torras, “who was a brother of Plasa Nova” a clear reference to the much-maligned brotherhood of common porters (“*camàlichs*”) of Plaza Nova. These common porters repeatedly attempted, during decades, to form a legally recognized guild; however, their supplications were continuously rejected by local authorities in legal cases brought by the Guild of Maritime Porters and Maritime Horsecart Operators, which was keen on protecting the monopoly privileges of the maritime porters from labor intromission by the

⁵ For more on qualifications and skills in guilds in general, see Stephan R. Epstein, “Craft Guilds, Apprenticeship, and Technological Change in Preindustrial Europe, *Journal of Economic History*, 58 (1998), 684–713. For examples of this in the maritime-cargo handling guilds (which had neither apprentices or journeymen), see Brendan J. von Briesen, “Guild Democracy, Internal Controls, and Leadership Positions: The Case of the Maritime-Cargo Handlers of Barcelona (1760-1840)”, paper presented to the Maritime Labour History Working Group at the First Conference of the European Labor History Network, Turin, Italy, 2015).

⁶ AGMMB, “Matricula”, 1692/10/29-1902/12/13, Capsa 9, carpeta 5 (2304).

common porters (von Briesen, 2014d, 2016a). 1737 presents a few entries of note. First off, the specific amount of 25# appears. Secondly, two more men entered the guild thanks to a court order.

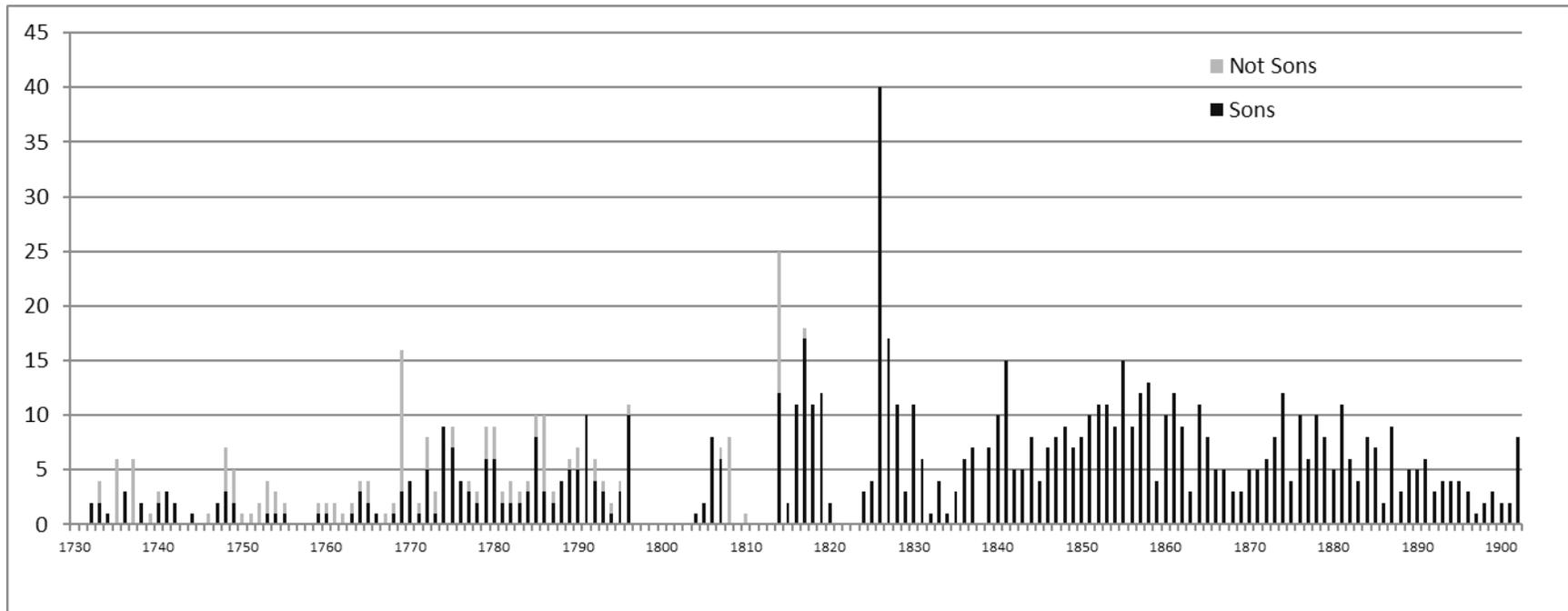
Beginning around 1740, the examination price of every new master was noted. When a new master entered the guild, the price of his entrance examination was contingent on his relationship to an existing master. This makes the calculation very precise, as there were four prices (two for porters, two for horsecart operators; sons and non-sons, respectively). The prices at this point were: porter son, 7#; porter non-son, 25#; horsecart operator son 11#4; horsecart operator non-son 50#. From time to time, the notary recording the examination was also noted; and, the examiners were also noted occasionally.

There were no entries of any type in 1743 (just as occurred in the tumultuous year of 1714). There is no explanation for this in the registry. In other years in which there were no new maritime porters, there were usually new maritime horsecart operators; this shows that the guild was still actively registering new members.

The annotation practices established in the 1740s remained in place until the end of the registry in the first years of the twentieth century. In analyzing the entries, we can observe a general tendency to include two to five “sons” each year. This would seem to reflect the inclusion of all of the applicant sons in any given year, underscoring the consideration of entrance as an intangible inheritance, a “right”. This was supplemented by non-sons to meet the expected needs of the guild – the need to repopulate the guild to maintain the functional capacity for service provision.

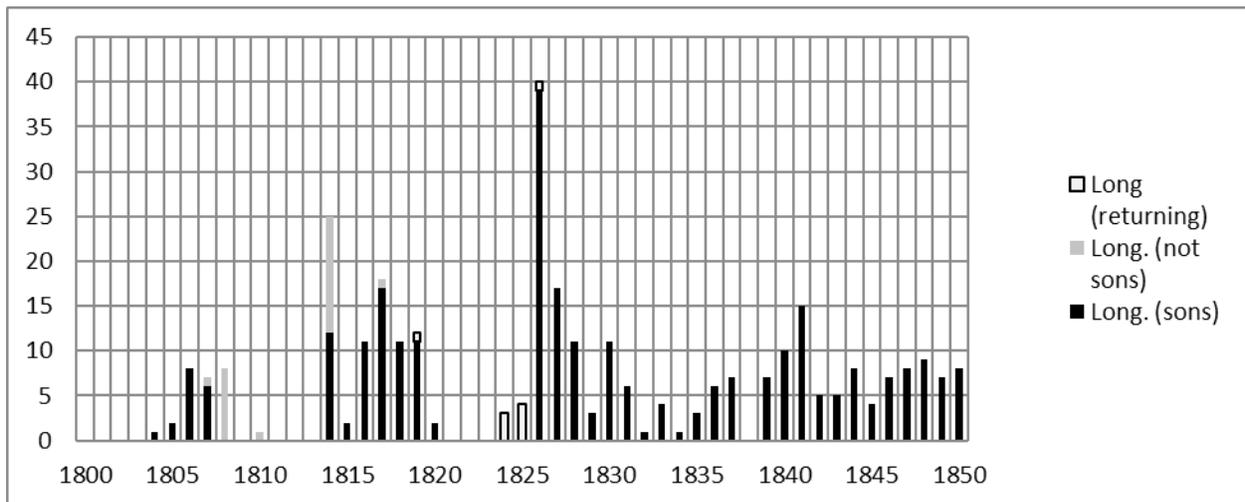
In general, the following decades were normal, in that there were no exceptional occurrences or changes in the annotations. There was a noteworthy spike in 1769, a time when the guild was in conflict with the maritime teamsters and the common porters (mossos de corda, or camàlichs) (von Briesen, 2016a). There may have been other factors that contributed to the relatively large number of new admissions, although there is no corroborating evidence to suggest what these may have been (if any).

Chart 1. Maritime Porters: New Masters per Year (1730-1900)



The 1800-1850 period was noteworthy for the political changes brought about by the occupation of Barcelona by Napoleonic troops, and the advancement of liberalism. With that in mind, it is worthwhile to look at the period in detail.

Chart 2. Maritime Porters: New Masters per Year (1800-1850)



The registry stops recording entries in 1796, only to recommence in 1804. This was a tumultuous period, as the country had gone to war with England and commercial traffic suffered at the hands of the blockade of Spanish maritime trade. Internally, after years of long-standing struggles and conflicts, the horsecart operators had separated from the maritime porters in 1796. It seems as though neither trade accepted new members during this conflictive time.

The occupation of Barcelona by Napoleonic troops (1808-1814) and the Trienio Liberal (1820-1823) are clearly distinguishable by the absence of new entries. These are the most significant periods, as they represent the periods of liberal abolition, a global, external threat to the guild system.

In the above chart, one notes that there were three groups of new Masters in the Guild of Maritime Porters after the periods of abolition: sons/in-laws; not sons; and “returning” masters. The “returning” masters were charged a fee to re-join the guild, having “left” during the abolition of 1813 and that of 1820: one rejoined in 1819; and eight re-joined the three years after 1824. Although there is proof in the membership rolls of maritime porters’ guild’s operation in 1810 (when one new applicant is named as a member), normalcy does not return to the now stand-

alone Guild of Maritime Porters until August 1814 (after the end of the War of Independence against Spain's former ally, France). The maritime porters drafted new ordinances in 1816, as a way of re-confirming their guild in the wake of the War and the abolition of the guilds by the Cortes de Cádiz in 1813 (which was reversed in 1815).⁷

The 1820-1823 Liberal Triennial (*el Trienio Liberal*) – during which no new members were added – is clearly evident. After this, there was a return to the guild by a few masters, who were charged a readmission fee greater than that paid by a son or son-in-law but significantly less than that paid by a non-family applicant.⁸ It is not clear if this was a punitive measure against those who recognized Liberal Triennial abolition or an attempt to replenish the coffers. Based on the relatively low number of returnees in relation to the total work force, it does not seem that the guild ceased to exist during the Liberal Triennial – but it does not appear that it enrolled new members, either.

In the case of the maritime porters, only a few new members were generally admitted per year (except when there was an exceptional need to increase the work force for whatever reason) in addition to an unlimited number of sons of existing members. While the natural reproduction of existing masters seems to have been relatively stable (between two and five sons entered per year), in some years a relatively large number of non-sons were also made masters as a way of increasing or reconstituting the work-force capacity of the guild.

In 1814, twelve sons and thirteen non-sons were made masters, recovering the work-force replacement that did not occur during the occupation of Barcelona and the Cortes de Cádiz-imposed abolition. The same occurred after the Liberal Triennial: in addition to revolution, war, and failed crops, the 1821-1822 were also marked by a devastating endemic of yellow fever, focused on the waterfront (although there is no information about deaths of guild members). Alone or together, these crises would have led to a need to repopulate the guild. Unfortunately, the documentary record does not explain the need for new members. Therefore, it is impossible

⁷ BC, sección de la Junta de Comercio, Leg XXXVI, fol 8 [or 90], “Nuevas Ordenanzas para el regimen y buen gobierno del Gremio de Faquines de Capsana ó Macips de Ribera de la Ciudad de Barcelona”, Barcelona, 18 May 1816.

⁸ In the cases of the three Guilds of Mariners, Unloaders, and Fishermen, the record clearly documents a formal re-establishment of the guilds in 1824. It seems that a similar process was in play in the case of the maritime porters' guild, although there is no mention of new ordinances for them in 1824. See Colldeforns Lladó, Francesc de P., *Historial de los Gremios de Mar de Barcelona, 1750-1865* (Barcelona: Gráficas Marina, 1951), Universitat de Barcelona.

to quantify the importance of the Liberal Triennial abolition in isolation from other factors. It could be that the sharp rise in membership responded to a specific need caused by the absence of previous members, or it could represent a sort of “catching-up” period, in which the low number of admissions in previous periods was met by new recruits who could not join during the previous years. However, we have no qualitative description of the decision to quickly admit a relatively large number of masters. It is most likely that the fifty-six new members admitted in 1826 and 1827 were accepted to even-out the ranks that would have normally been filled during the Liberal Triennial, assuming an average of about ten new admissions per year. That said, it could also reflect an increased demand of cargo-handling services. In either case, this was done entirely with the sons of existing masters.

As can be seen, after the French occupation of Barcelona (1808-1814) there were almost no non-family members admitted as maritime porters. The last non-son entered the guild in 1817; the important trend towards a sons/in-laws-only policy continues after this period. After the Liberal Triennial (1820-1823), the relationship was of absolute importance – only sons and sons-in-law of existing members were permitted to join the guild.

The year of 1838 was another time of uncertainty for the guild, as the 1836 abolition was taking place across Spain. The Guild of Maritime Porters avoided this fate by successfully convincing municipal authorities that the decree was, actually, a call for reforms, not abolition. After the refusal of the municipal authorities to recognize the election of new directors of the Guild of Maritime Porters (citing the fact that the guilds had been abolished), the maritime porters successfully convinced the Ajuntament to continue to recognize the guild.⁹ They also began to use the term “corporation” (at times) to describe their organization.¹⁰

In 1855, the Administrator of the Customs House referred to the organization as a “Guild or Union”.¹¹ Regardless of their name or the judicial legitimacy of their organization, the maritime

⁹ AGMMB, “[Instància del Gremi de Bastaixos]”, 08 January 1840, capsa 7, carpeta 17 (2266); and AGMMB, “[Solicitud per al nomenament de prohoms del Gremi]”, (29 January 1840 – 21 February 1840), Capsa 7, carpeta 9 (2258).

¹⁰ For a comparison in terminology of “guild” or “corporation”, see AGMMB, “[Solicitud a la Comandancia de Marina sobre l’ compliment de la normativa de transport de mercaderies al port]”, 09.01.1839, Capsa 7, carpeta 6 (2255) and AGMMB, *fons del Gremi de bastaixos, macips de ribera i carreters de mar de Barcelona*, “[Solicitud del Gremi de Bastaixos a les autoritats de Barcelona relativa a la pràctica de intursisme professional per part dels mariners o matriculats sobre l’ observancia de normatives i l’ intrusisme professional]”, 21.09.1840, Capsa 7, carpeta 5 (2254).

¹¹ BC, Leg. CXXII, folio 111, “Informe del Adminstrador de Aduanas”, Barcelona, 14 March 1855.

porters continued to function as a guild, strictly controlling the labor market through the subjective determination of new masters based on socio-cultural considerations (and, specifically, that of family relationships).

In any case, the organization only allowed the sons and sons-in-law of existing members to join their cooperative labor organization.

Conclusions

While the framework of social capital remains in need of further specification and definition, one type of social capital is social networking – the product of collective interactions. These networks provided opportunities to reduce information costs and transaction costs. The specific type of social network comprised of family networks were an important mechanism for establishing social qualifications from a functional and organizational-membership basis. As various constitutionalist and absolutist regimes extended increasingly liberal reforms and abolitions of guild membership restrictions, the guilds could use subjectively determined socio-cultural qualifications to limit membership to the sons and sons-in-law of existing members, in this way protecting the intangible inheritance of guild masters.

At a time when, theoretically, the guilds were required by the spirit of liberal reformist laws to open their ranks to any qualified member of society, the ability of the guilds to subjectively determine membership based on the bona fides of an applicant – as attested to by an existing member – meant that a guild could control the composition of the labor force. This underscores the importance of social networks in the guild-entry process. Family relationships represent an important form of social network, one that gained importance during the period studied. The Guild of Maritime Porters used their ability to subjectively determine a prospective member's qualification to promote the family interests of existing masters: guild membership represented an intangible inheritance for sons and a sort of dowry in the case of a daughter. In a collective service-provision system this contributed to greater bonds among members. By the same notion, in competitive systems, these bonds could have been strong, but the result would have been family-based operations with less intra-guild cohesion.

The registry rolls of the maritime porters show that, during times of crises, the guild did not add new members. These periods were followed by a few years of rapid growth, recuperating the

labor capacity of the guild. While in the later eighteenth century, there was a preference for admitting the sons (by birth or as in-laws) of existing guild members, this was not the sole consideration. Before the War of Independence, this reconstitution was done by hiring sons and non-sons alike. It seems reasonable to speculate that sons that wished to join did so; in addition, the work-force replacement targets for the guild were met by allowing the entrance of a number of non-sons. However, after the War and, especially, after the Liberal Triennial, the unwritten sons-only policy became hegemonic: after the 1820 abolition, no non-sons were allowed to join. Thereafter, the Guild of Maritime Porters would strictly be a family affair.

An approximation of surname-based calculations has shown a considerable degree of labor endogamy in the Guild of Maritime Porters. While this surname-based calculation is important for showing over-all inter-relatedness of the work force, the determination of father-son relationships is complicated by the possibility (or, more likely, the probability) that brothers or uncles were in the trade as well. The participation of fathers and sons in the Assembly is only evident if the son has the exact same name as his father. What is more, the variety of last names is not large enough to deduce with any degree of certainty that two or more people with the same surname enjoyed any familial relationship. In addition, since sons-in-law were apparently always treated as sons, there is no way to identify family relationships without consulting marriage records or some other form of census data (which may have indicated the employment of the groom or bride's father).

However, what has remained clearly evident is that social networks and, especially, family networks became extremely important in at least one of the cooperative guilds during and in response to external and existential crises.

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