WORK AND WELL-BEING
Exotic observations of the Katwijk fishers

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PROLOGUE: the cast, the script and the performance

The central theme of this text is describing the contributions of work to well-being as taken from the stories of several fishers of Katwijk, a village in the Netherlands. The nature of ‘work’ and ‘well-being’ will be further expanded on below. The second central theme is the ethnographer’s struggle in the exotism of the foreign field. The nature of the ‘struggle’ and the ‘exotism’ will also receive due attention in the following pages. Either theme would have presented extensive material to write a paper. Yet, to separate the researcher-person from the research-topic seemed difficult if not impossible, like a separation of the means from the end. Similarly, to separate the findings from the research context seemed as debatable. On the other hand, should not observations be objective enough to generate some statements that are valid beyond the specific situation? What otherwise is the objective of cultural research, be it familiar or unfamiliar? And what then are the possible contributions of this study, if any, to the topic, the discipline, and people in general? This question will also be addressed towards the very end of the manuscript. Due to the limited scope of this manuscript, each theme is only dealt with scantily, and the whole is to be regarded as a first encounter, an initiation attempt, by the benevolent reader.

Exotic work

The issue of work lends itself well for the purpose of cultural and other comparison. Work is a central issue of every society, and its organisation reflects the integration of society as well as the larger ideology, the reason to be. Some consider work the basis of the human condition, an essential ingredient of life. Depending on the perspective, the individual becomes an animal laborans, who lives, or better, survives only through work and consumption. Work then becomes a matter of survival. Others, consider it a basic ‘technique for the conduct of life’ that offers the ‘possibility of displacing a large amount of libidinal components’, and thus lends a ‘value by no means second to what it enjoys as something indispensable to the preservation and justification of existence in society’. Here, survival as such is not completely
satisfying. The labourer seeks for confirmation from his surrounding society. Work, in this sense, provides an existential apology whose form and content is dependent on the respective social fabric. Religion, from a different standpoint, also cherishes work, *ora et labora*, as a meaningful and rewarding occupation of human life. While the explanations may vary, the quest remains the same. Therefore, the study of work offers a discreet entry into the deeper layers of a given society.

Coming from a southern country myself, the organisation of work in the Netherlands as well as its social implications struck me at once. This must be the so called foreign gaze. Work in the Netherlands seemed to be organised differently, to say the least, than, for example, work in the Egyptian society. My Italian relatives often said: 'We work to live, but they live to work.' The pronoun 'they' concerned 'them Northerners'. I always wondered where the border between us and them was located. On the one hand, higher temperatures may actually affect one's level of productivity, no doubt, but there must be other factors involved. On the other hand, it cannot simply be a matter of cultural preference, the Dutch and Germans 'like' to work more than the Italians and Egyptians. Or can it? And if so, why? Tales of the famous *dolce vita* corroborate the picture. The South seems to enjoy a different way of life, implying just enough work to survive and lots of free time, the *dolce far niente*. May this just be a popular image, an exotism that does not correspond with reality? How does the Southern mind justify its work ethic? A cultural comparison is embedded in the back of my mind, and contributed to the choice of the topic. Yet, the issue of work and well-being does not seem to fade at cultural borders. What then is the purpose of work, and its different representations? Is work about survival only, or is there more to it?

With the exception of the lucky or ennobled few, most people thus seem to strongly dislike their work, ultimately creating 'social problems'. Their cause is not necessarily to be sought within the individual, yet one's mind set certainly affects and is affected by the larger circumstances. Similarly, personal health, that is social, emotional, physical and psychological well-being, affects and is affected by its surrounding. There seems to be a tension between work and enjoyment, between
necessity and desire, between reason and passion. This paper will further investigate how some Northerners deal with the inherent values and tensions of their work.

The struggle for well-being

Since work is occupying such a large part of a Dutch day, and night, it must have some influence on the overall well-being, for the better or for the worse. Work may be an occupation, a profitable business, a charitable performance, a justification of existence, an adaptation to circumstances, a therapy, or some of the above. The list is by no means exhaustive. While the meaning of work differs with the specific context, it seems to retain its aim to promoting or maintaining well-being of the individual and the larger society. Otherwise, so I assume, human kind would have stopped working altogether a long time ago. The problem of the exact definition of work remains. Well-being, then, depicts a state of being that most, if not all, human beings strive to achieve, its constituencies varying. It may stand for a comfortable life, a carefree existence, independence, authority, or some other good feeling. Not surprisingly, politicians, Dutch and others, explicitly draw the link between work conditions and social well-being. Ideally, the common good is the goal for all individual striving. In a less perfect world, the individual's potential to work may be abused or exploited, and its purpose perverted. Work, therefore, connects to the individual, its society, as well to health and the politics of it. Work, similar to health and well-being, is such a central issue of human life that it affects and reflects on all spheres of existence; macro and micro, body and mind. Starting out with a rather cultural perspective (the Dutch), I mean to focus on prominent topics as encountered in the field (the details of work, the underlying belief, the social fabric) before 'coming home' to the question of relevance and purpose.

Struggling along

I first came to Amsterdam in 1998 for my study. The medical anthropology unit encouraged us foreign students to conduct field work in the Netherlands, a foreign setting, on the one hand to expose us to a different kind of research, and on the other hand to obtain more descriptions on the Dutch culture by non-Dutch observer. Unlike the work done by anthropologists 'at home', we are expected to provide another
angle, a novel insight. During my field work I tried as much as possible to record my personal views on issues encountered, to record the workings of the foreign gaze, of the journey as much as of the destination. The endeavour sounded magical from the start. I had no idea of what would expect me in the field, and how much of it actually was a product of my being an outsider. Experiencing ‘anthropology abroad’ is the other theme of this script. In order to better paint my experience throughout, I tried to retain a form of dialogue juxtaposing or connecting people’s voices with my interpretations of them. Obviously, even the ‘real’ voices represented in the text can only be an interpretation, an approximation of an ever-changing reality. The choice of different anthropological, historical, psycho-social explanations of work, fishery, Katwijk, and its people, is personal and only serves to support my line of argument. The reader will look in vain for a separate “findings” and “discussion” chapter, they all connect, or are mixed up, depending on your point of view. My personal thoughts are meant to be another emotional link between the voices heard and statements read, siding with one or the other and connecting the text, if not to anything else, to the writer. In other words, the whole story reads like an incomplete personal biography, rather than an objective assessment of a given problem. The answer to the questions of ‘what can (medical) anthropology (abroad) be like?’, ‘what it is about?’ will be connected, in a personal way, with the novel insights made about the Dutch.

Getting started
To learn more of the Dutch, their way of life, their joys and pains, their relation to their work, I chose to conduct field work in a rather traditional, ‘pure’ Dutch setting, outside the cosmopolitan surrounding of Amsterdam. Once you leave the busy and colourful city life, the Netherlands are dominated by land and water. Lots of agricultural land and lots of water surrounding it. Respectively, you find lots of farmers and fishers, those who live off the land, and those who live off the sea. Fishery still contributes significantly to the Dutch economy; as an occupation it remains a meaningful one in the national context. Fishers represent an enticing case study, a limitation, a coherent occupational target group, or so I thought. At second glance, I had to learn that fishermen do not form a coherent group at all. They come in
many shapes, sizes, constitutions, specialisations, and representations. Fishers are found all over the coastal areas, as well as the in-land shores, hunting different kinds of fish, with different techniques, at different times, for different reasons. I may as well have looked at work in general, across different occupational sectors, to make my point. Still, any other entry to the Dutch society may not have been so tasty.

In order to better get a picture of the nature of work and its relation to well-being, I intended to focus on members of a closed occupational group. Eventually, the dices fell for the fishers of Katwijk. Specifically, I wondered how work affects the person, in this case: the fisher, and his surrounding. I also wondered what his work means to him. For this end, I conducted several interviews in the community of Katwijk with retired fishermen, their wives, and other community members, and I embarked twice, each time for a week, to observe life at sea. At land and aboard the ships, I took note of people's perceptions concerning their work and its implications. Retired fishermen have the advantage to be accessible and usually very willing to talk about their work and lives. Fisher's wives filled in the family perspective of what 'being a fisher' means. Other key informants, such as a local physician, and a former director of the fishery school, contributed other insights.

Going local

The locality was chosen due to convenient contacts. I was introduced to the place and some of its people by a university professor of mine, Corlien Varkevisser, originating from Katwijk herself. Her father used to be the director of the local fishery school and a popular figure, so that the mere mentioning of his name opened many a door in the fishing community. My hosts in Katwijk turned out to be an invaluable source of information, and a dream for every foreign anthropologist. They not only provided me with a home in the sense of shelter, but also with a new identity that would soon prove very useful. There is no need to keep the locality anonymously, yet any personal names mentioned are invented. It is not my aim to tell somebody's story in detail but rather to describe and understand the wider picture through the many episodes heard and seen. All conversations were held in the Dutch language without the help of an
additional interpreter to blame. Sometimes, however, some simplifying, paraphrasing, illustrating, or translating into 'proper Dutch' was necessary for me to understand. The helpful and talkative locals promptly forwarded this type of assistance as soon as they noticed a shade of a question on my face. All the people of Katwijk I have met have been incredibly friendly, patient and willing to share their views with an outsider. Their generous attitude was essential in allowing me to gain some understanding of their lives. In other moments, the roles were reversed and I became an informant myself telling about my work and life, my ideas and experiences. Their curiosity and open-mindedness certainly helped to make this study a mutual one. Through our communication the artificial boundaries faded and what at first appeared to be different worlds soon became two pieces of the same cake. After a few encounters I felt so involved in certain stories, so attached to certain people that I am afraid to have lost my initial distance, my relative advantage. Involvement, apparently, is not a biological given, neither a simple function of 'home', origin, familiarity, but rather a relationship that is conceivable for anyone. So much to the exclusivity of the anthropological experience. The initially exotic research transformed into a human encounter producing a universal rather than cultural script. While I cannot claim to produce ever-valid statements about anything, I hope to have captured a transitory picture of the human experience that some participants may well recognise as such.
LOCATING FISHERY: getting the taste

At the beginning of my field work, all I knew about fish is that it lives in the water and tastes deliciously. I thought of fishing as yet another activity done at sea, its outcome as yet another resource to be extracted from nature. The strong link of the seafaring image and the Dutch expansionism with fishing in particular was not salient in my mind. I was surprised to read that ‘we’ Dutch ‘as a matter of fact owe our country’s development, our seafaring, our colonies, in short, all our success, aside from the favourable position of our country, to our fishery [...]’. Later, in my conversations with fishers and other members of the society, I learned that fish also is a commodity, a valuable exchange, and a good reason to be at sea. Time changed the outlook and the methods of the profession but fishing retained its importance, in the spheres of history, economy, food culture, and national representation. The strong image of the profession is a source of pride and satisfaction for the individual fisher.

Imagery

‘There is no aspect of the history of the Netherlands in which the relation between humans and water, particularly the big water, the sea, can be ignored.’ Even nowadays, the traveller cannot but notice the conspicuous presence of water all around the country. The Netherlands are bordered by the North Sea to its west and north, and the remaining land is filled with numerous water ways leading to the big water. By others, the Dutch are renown for their connection with the sea. The Flying Dutchman, the East Indian Trade Company, the land reclamation and dam construction, the (imported) legend of the little boy preventing a flood by sticking his thumb into the dike, are only some of the associations that come to one’s mind when thinking about the low lands. The 31 maritime musea currently in the Netherlands, many of which host a special section on fishery, reflect the genuine interest in preserving this national heritage.
The theme of fishery is a historical one for the Netherlands. The exact date of its beginning is unknown. Records show 1163 as the first time herring is brought to land. Later, we find chronicles of international regulations around fishing, such as, King Edward I of England granting permission to fish herring at Yarmouth in 1295, and King Waldemar of Denmark allowing fishing along the coast of Schoonen in 1326, the capital of herring trade since the 13th century. This marked the official beginning of a communal enterprise that much later would require restrictions in order to prevent over-fishing. Documentation of fishing mostly include historical accounts, only recently more ethnographic and medical information is available. There is information on fishers by type of fish, fishing technology, by time and place. In fact, a whole sub-discipline emerged as the ‘anthropology of fishing’, or maritime anthropology, that focuses on ‘the way that human beings have adapted to earning a living in the marine environment’. Maritime anthropology also concerns itself with the every-day life of members of the profession, their rewards and discontents. In this sense, this study could be located within the maritime sub-discipline, although its methodological findings reject the overall tendency of categorisation.

**Elements and change**

The modern fisherman stands at the foot of his country’s past glory. Now that the Dutch economy increasingly diversified in comparison with the pre-war years, fishery and the fisherman occupy a relatively low social position. His contribution is no longer necessary to defend trade ships or land barriers, yet, he still provides his country with a large income from the sea. The value of fish is constantly changing as an element of the market economy. Prices, in turn, also influence the supply, and the shrewd fisher tries to catch the most paying fish. Modern technology may be on his side, but international regulations are restricting the enterprise for the ‘common good’. Weather, water currents and other moods of nature also have an effect on the fisherman’s task, even if less than in previous times. Modernity also affected the common spirit, the national flair of the profession. Only at special occasions, like the yearly feast of the new herring that is publicly auctioned for a good cause and presented to the Queen, the spirit of ‘Holland’s glory’ returns. The good old days are
often remembered by the fishers. In my conversations with them, the glorious, even if harsh past was always included in their stories about contemporary fishing. It sounds as if fishing then was ‘the real thing’ while now, with all that new technology and regulations, the work became more of an employment than it ever used to be. Back then, during the days of the fleet, fishing was more than just a job. It was a lifestyle.

Currently, the Netherlands has a fishing fleet of 505 ships. It is commonly divided into Great and Little Fishery, *grote en kleine zeevisserij*. ‘Great’ fishery is said to consist of *trawlers*, those ‘swimming factories’ going as far as the coasts of Canada, Mauritania, or Argentina to help deplete the sea. Their motor capacity can go beyond the 10000 hp, on average they use 6000 hp. Each trawler employs about 30 men, not all of them necessarily fishers as tasks on these ships vary greatly. ‘Small’ fishery consists of *kotters*, that boat type carrying a more intimate crew of five to seven, typically. Some also include mussels fishers in this category. Ships have an average motor capacity of 1000 hp, most have less. Of all the ships currently travelling under the Dutch flag, 416 are kotters, 75 mussels fishers, and 14 trawlers. The distinction of great and small fishery remains confusing. Great fishery also refers to the herring fishers and the great national economic interest in the venture. Small fishery then concerns the kotter fishing flat and round fish. Yet, there are kotters fishing herring. Kotters boast the majority of the Dutch fleet and the kotter fisher best represents the image of the true fisher. Unfortunately, the number of kotters has been notably decreasing over the last five years contributing to an insecure prospect for the profession as a whole. Unlike the old days, the many boats now mostly mind their own business and fish independently. The former fleet enterprise dissolved into more or less co-operative ship units. The former group feeling and achievement had to be redirected. In spite of all the changes in structure, there remains an inherent cohesion among fishers alluding to their dependency of the sea.

*Performance and limitations*

International trade still knows the Dutch colours. Throughout history, the Dutch continue to be renown for their mastery of the water. Fishery statistics support the
Dutch proficiency in the domain. The Netherlands is number 12 in the world of fish exporting countries. With a different lens, we find them holding a third place, right after Denmark and Spain, as the greatest fish exporter of Europe. The average production per ship is highest in the Netherlands of all European countries. Fishermen also know their statistics. They take pride in the national figures of fish trade knowing that their input is an invaluable contribution. In conversations, they often remember the exact size and composition of their recent ventures, those of their competitors, as well as impressive results of past hunts. The boasting goes alongside higher regulations of fishery that delimit the fishing allowance of each boat and fishing association. The Netherlands, like other European countries, is given a yearly restriction, the so-called fish quota, concerning most domestic fish types. The handling of the quota differs from country to country. The Dutch believe in a more individual approach, so every boat has its own quota to reach and respect. Given the insecurities of the business, and the nature of the profession, the Dutch fishers associate with a work group, or Biesheuvelgroep. Within this group they can exchange, lend or sell quota, and make up for one or the other's fishing too little or too much. In a way, the group gives the individual fisher more space. Acheson also describes the advantages of clustering:

"While fishermen cannot control the weather and location of fish, they can reduce some of the uncertainty of fishing by entering into agreements with each other. Some of these fishing institutions and norms reduce risk by insuring fishermen some part of the catch [...], others operate to reduce the costs of fishing, and still others to increase revenues from the sale of fish."  

While all the above mentioned advantages apply to the Dutch situation, existing associations not only help the individual fisherman, they also suit the ways of the authorities. In this sense, clustering allows to meet the national quota, or at least not to recklessly surpass it. 'Due to its flexibility, the group system leads to an optimum use of the quota.' Both the individual and the group are rewarded for this co-operation. The individual's well-being is closely related to that of the larger society.

Fishermen are not very outspoken unless their immediate interests are in danger. Their claims are adhered to in their respective groupings, a total of eight nation-wide, whose
chairpersons forward them to the less frequent meetings of the PV. Since the groupings are institutionalised, the communication channels also serve to get a hold of the individual fisher, and his performance. International management, as well as the behaviour of his fellow-workers affect the individual fisher. Even when out at sea, far way from all land-based regulations and institutions, the fisherman feels the control. He is supposed to register all his doings, routes, crew, detailed catch, in a log book. Every now and then, and mostly when you do not expect them, coastal guards, the police of the water, come by to make sure everything is ‘in order’. The fisherman’s profession is not so free after all.

The fisher’s daily routine is regulated by outsider agreements, rather than the other way around. Themselves, they are not very much at peace with these agreements. The restrictions define the type of fish, including supplement, the bijvangst, and the amount. So, it happens that the right fish are in the net, yet too many, or of too small a size, or that the wrong fish is in the net. In all three cases, the fisherman is better off, in view of current legislation, to dump the fastidious part of the catch back into the deep sea. Ideally, they would like to keep and sell their catch, all of it. Having to throw it back states an absurdity of their work that derives from the macro aspects of fishery. The size and composition of the catch has to match consumer demands. Group fishers pledge to bring all their fish to the fish auction, a general retail place, where quantity and quality is compared and prices are set. Also foreign fishers may sell at Dutch auctions, taking advantage of the price differential. Most complaints of fishermen concern the very existence and the distribution of the quota. They feel unjustly and extraneously restricted in their movements, and taken advantage of by larger fishing entrepreneurs with larger allowances and possibilities. Fishing restrictions are mainly justified on environmental grounds, yet fishers often reprove the underlying assessments of such restrictions. They complain among each other, to their work group and the overarching Productschap Visserij (PV), or Fish Board, that is the national fishery organisation. Fishers, fish breeders, trader, and merchants, anyone who has to do with fish on a professional basis has come across the PV at some point in time. The Fish Board consists of three different commissions, that is, pelagic fish, shrimps, and mussels; each one represented by its constituents, namely,
the supplier, the fish processor, the trader, and the vendor. The organisation mediates between the fishermen and the governmental instances, the Ministries, the Parliament, and Brussels, and has a say in setting regulations concerning fishery. Its main occupation is research and fish promotion. The Stichting Nederlands Visbureau, a foundation that is in charge of promoting fish and fish products within the country and on the foreign market is co-financed by them. The person interested in anything about fish is welcome to call in or go by their main office in Rijswijk, close by the country’s administrative capital The Hague. There, helpful employees serve carefully collected and skilfully organised information. Obviously, the PV is not simply a fishermen’s organisation, much more is at stake. It represents the interests of the whole fish sector, of which the fisherman only is a modest, even if basic element.

A good fisherman also is a business man. He has to constantly calculate the expected returns, to make his journey worthwhile. The unit of fish is sold at different prices, at different auctions depending on supply and demand, and other regulations, that the shrewd fisherman has to be constantly aware of. His interest is closely connected to meeting the professional demands, and being rewarded accordingly. This however implies dealing with an unpredictable environment, and outdoing his competitors. Occasionally, fishermen sell their catch outside the auctions on the ‘black market’. In these cases, they also circumvent what they believe to be erratic regulations. They blame the studied experts, the researcher, politicians, economists, and biologists, for setting up these ambiguous laws, that are incoherent with their reality. For the fisherman, reality is what happens at sea. In order to know what happens, you have to be there. Hypothetical situations, generalisations, always differ from ‘what really is’ and can only serve a limited purpose, says the fisher. While the individual fisher knows his art, he is forced to abide by larger regulations that not always appear to be for the common good but only for the good of some big traders. Whenever he talks about international relations concerning fishing, he feels abused and taken advantage of. He then realises that his efforts only are the ‘dirty work’ for the many traders that market the product with increased interest. While the fisherman’s work is well remunerated, he does not feel properly rewarded by the larger society. His profession continues to have a rather low standing on the social ladder. He becomes the arm of a
body, an extension far way from the mind. The fishermen's considerations regarding 'how to fish', 'where to fish', and 'when to fish' are rarely, if ever, listened to. Others, that are closer to the mind, but farther away from life at sea, decide on these issues. The fisherman is left in the void between the inconsistency of regulations as well as the unpredictability of the marine environment. Nevertheless, over the years, he managed to fill this void in a pleasant way, defending his contribution to society.

Constant struggle

Van Haersolte, former director of the seafaring institute and museum of Rotterdam, and a Dutchman himself, poetically captures the country's maritime history as follows:

'Homer called the sea infertile, we now know better, and, while in one instant the sea is our greatest fiend, and we therefore lead a continuous struggle against her in order to protect our land against her assaults, in another does she overwhelm us, like a capricious woman, with her generosity.'

When talking about generosity, he particularly refers to 'her fish bounty'. It strikes the outsider curiously that a reference to a 'female', sea is made, and a 'capricious woman' at that, whom, throughout history, and up to now, is taken advantage of, or fought with, by mostly men. The predominant male cast of the fishers and seafarers and their relation with an unpredictable sea environment certainly influences the work ideology, and the social organisation around it.

He always thought of the sea as la mar, which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her. Sometimes those who love her say bad things of her but they are always said as though she were a woman. Some of the young fishermen, those who used buoys as floats for their lines and had motorboats, bought when the shark livers had brought much money, spoke of her as el mar which is masculine. They spoke of her as a contestant or a place or even an enemy. But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favours, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them. The moon affects her as it does a woman, he thought.

In the fishermen's society, women and men have different roles and responsibilities. The firm structure helps to support the profession as well as to deal with the inherent insecurities of the business. A few fisher women voiced their opinions. It became
clear that their contribution is vital for the continuation of this male profession. The women, the families, are the balance and the necessary rest for the fisherman. Images of luck or faith and a constant struggle further describe the fishing metaphor, as well as life at sea in general.
KATWIJK: cradle of fishermen

Whenever I mentioned my research site I encountered surprise, at times admiration on Dutch faces. The local people, Katwijkers, are considered difficult, rather closed, also in Dutch terms. They wondered how a foreigner, and one that is not at home in the local dialect can communicate at all with those people. Overall, I have to say that it went quite well. Every so often, I had unavailing conversations, in the sense that my informant, in the heat of the story, forgot all about my being a foreigner and overwhelmed me with exotic expressions at incredible pace. I then interrupted the amazing flow to ask for an explanation or to guide the conversation to a for me more comprehensible domain. It did not always work. However, from these conversations I learned, if nothing else, how enthusiastic people are to talk about their life as a fisher, their knowledge, their work, and how things have changed over time. All the warnings about the 'closed culture', the exclusiveness of the locals when dealing with outsiders did not actualise during my time there. I then wondered how diversified Dutch society was in itself. The differences between life in Amsterdam and in Katwijk were significant. Many aspects of life in the village reminded me of Egypt, the social control, the religiosity, but also the generosity and the young age at marriage.

Exploring the field

The bond between Katwijk and fishery remained a strong one up to now. Various local festivities around fish are still common in that fishing village. The first such event is reported of the year 1902, inspired by the artist community, among which the Dutch painter Jan Toorop. Katwijk, the locality and the lives of fisher people, remained an attractive motif for various artists up until the Second World War and the German demontage. Lots of features remind of Katwijk’s past as a fishing village. First and foremost, the omnipresent sea. Katwijk lies in a long stretch along the North Sea coast. On the ‘boulevard’, this is how the street following the beach line is called, it is not uncommon to meet old fishermen taking a stroll and carefully watching the sea. They are easily recognisable by their weathered faces and hands, their attire, and
when coming closer one overhears pieces of conversations revolving around the sea. Some even wear the traditional wooden shoes. When walking through the streets of Katwijk one cannot fail but notice the miniature ship models decorating many windows. Most are sailing boats reminding of the former fishing fleet. By now, these boats have become a coveted object of decoration, but they also remind of Katwijk’s affiliation to fishing and the sea. They specifically connect the fisher families with the glorious past, and mark their professional identity over the years. Throughout the village, one also comes across various characteristic sculptures and figures of fishers, their activities, their families. A local bakery advertises with their speciality 'zeekaken', a dry cookie that used to be taken to the long sea voyages in times gone by. Several fish stands prepare and sell fresh fish for a quick bite. The lighthouse on the boulevard is accessible for everybody and allows for a good glance over the sea. Another place of encounter for fishers, other villagers, as well as foreign visitors, is the Katwijk museum. There, the fishing history of the village is documented, and well explained by the many friendly volunteers. Many of the people working there are retired fishers, only too willing to provide answers to all my questions. The museum ended up being a fine place for exchange of information.

This year, the national celebration of fishery (De Dag van de Nederlandse Zeevisserij, August 7) was held in Katwijk for the third time in history. In 1963, there took place a six-day National Fishery Exhibition which counted about 24000 visitors. During that time Katwijk harboured the biggest fleet of the Netherlands. This now is part of its past glory. The fleet comprised 192 boats altogether; 52 loggers, 27 trawlers, two of which heck trawlers, and 113 kotters, of which 99 with a motor of 150 to 600 hp. Of the total supply of fish of the year 1962, amounting to 162 million Guilders, the Katwijks ships brought in about 37 million Guilders. Of the 3122 Dutch fishers, 839 originated from Katwijk, and of the 1083 operating kotters, 556 were of Katwijk. The earnest bond among the fishers of Katwijk, along with their courage and entrepreneurship was a major impelling force for the Dutch fishery after the Second World War. Most fishers know all about the boats of their home port. They seem to learn all the details by heart, and alternatively they look them up in records at hand. The name of a vessel consists of a two letter combination indicating the home port,
and a number. KW stands for Katwijk, although most boats harbour in the nearby port of Ijmuiden. In spite of their yearlong demands, Katwijk never had a port of its own, but the fishers of Katwijk succeeded to get their proper initials. Names of boats often decorate the travel bags of fishers, as well as toilet walls, café tables and body parts. The abbreviation reveals to them information about the size of the vessel, the skipper, the type of fishing, and the reputation. Fishers identify with their boats. ‘In Katwijk, fishers are not made, they are born there’, said the former mayor H. Duiker in 1963 when commenting on the strongest fishery community of the North sea coast.21

I was curious about the special features of a fisher. Why did you become a fisher? What does it take to be a fisher? And how did you become a fisher? I collected some answers among the retired fishermen.

‘Fisher..., it is in one’s blood, that is what they say, if you are a fisher. [...] Everybody can become a fisher. If you are not, it’s for other reasons. Then you are either disqualified (afgekeurd), your eyes are not good enough, or your ears..., or you want to study.’ Others factors mentioned were ‘tradition’, ‘income’, ‘peer pressure’, or ‘the sea calls’. It seems that both is possible, being born to be a fisher, or being socialised into it. The two complement each other. The long-standing tradition of fishery in Katwijk is encouraged by the individual families as well as the larger social structure. And if this is not enough, the sea will exert its magic powers on you. Most fishers gave several motifs. Some say that work at sea actually is paid better. Others contend that you may earn the same rate on land, but that you do not manage to work that many hours for it. For some reason or another, ‘you feel better at sea, and work is easier on you’. Life at sea also if more ‘free’ than life and work on land. ‘It’s the nature out there.’ Comparatively, there are less restrictions and work relations are more casual, most activities are outdoors. Only one fisherman tried to convince me that ‘there is no such thing as fishers’ blood. It’s all romantic talk. Nonsense. Fishers do it for the money, only for the money. You could as well work on land. You go to sea because you earn better.’ This statement unleashed an extensive discussion among the fishermen. None of the others agreed. Days later, this answer was remembered and the discussion flared up once more. Retired fishers can be quite passionate.
"Then he is possessed like the first Christians were possessed who left father and mother, sister and brother, wife and children to follow Him. Childhood visions of future sea men are about dreams, in contrast to those of other boys that are about uniforms, speeding about, red firemen's cars and jet planes. Parents knowing that becoming a sea man is as bad as going bankrupt or marrying one's own aunt, have to realise that life at sea nowadays is psychologically the healthiest life that a man can lead. If a lad wants to go to sea, let him go, otherwise he will become a stranger at your table." [...] since to drive them away from water, is to drive them away from life."

_What is it like to be a fisher?_ "Freedom. It’s a free life. Also for your wife... Fishers are healthy. They live healthy, all the fresh air. They eat lots of fish. I was never sick when at sea. Only had a little cold, some tooth pain... But that does not count, no real sickness. I simply dealt with it. Also, you mustn’t be sick, you had to be healthy to work. ... But when I came home, after my retirement, that is when I started to be sick more often. ... A sea woman’ is bred into the same culture. She knows what to expect, and what not to expect. Many [fishers] stop when the kids are out of the house, and the property is paid off. There is no need to power on then ("druk maken"). What for? Then you return to land." Working in general thus serves to fulfil one’s expectations of life: to buy a house, to support a family. Fishing in particular was a good means to fulfil these expectations fast. Not surprisingly, fishers tend to marry at an early age. Wives of fishermen are as young, or younger. It is not unusual for a man to be married by the age of 24, and for a woman by the age of 20. At sea, children seem to grow up earlier, and life gets serious much sooner. Physical health is a prerequisite to meet social and personal expectations. Typically, fisher managed to maintain their health as long as it serves their purpose. After retiring, ailments become more common. The local physician, as well as the retired fishermen themselves, report of many health complaints as soon as they stopped going to sea.

_The days of the fleet_

The fisherman’s life starts early. Two retired fishermen remembered how and why they began, and about life on board of the ship. Back then, at the time of the fleet, things were tough, the income meagre, and people hungry. There was not much of a
choice in Katwijk. Yet, the fisher always think back with a tear in their eyes and a
smile on their lips as if they remember some sentimental journey:

'I started 1950, I was then 16 years old. Before that, I have been on a maiden voyage
(prenter-reisje), just for fun, that is how I got to know a little about fishery. Yes, if
you talk about the youngest on board (afhouder), he usually is about 14.'
'I went to sea with 13. In April I left school, and in May I was at sea.'
'Yes, I started as the youngest [on board]. First I was at my father’s fish stand. My
father used to be a fisher, but after the war he started the stand. After the second world
war. That is where I worked for a year, but that was not so…'
'Foreign eyes persuade better!' (vreemde ogen dwingen beter)
'He did not listen, was naughty (ondeugend).'
'Well, that was in fact sort of a tradition in Katwijk, when you finished elementary
school and you did not have the ambition to continue studying, you basically ended
up in fishery. It so happened that my father was working on land (aan de wal), and he
earned at that time 30 a week. And me, with 16 years, I was in fishery, I earned 253 a
week. That is of course a great draw. And when you were at sea then in Katwijk you
belonged to the tough guys, for you were a sea man. And whenever you went to a pub
you could put the beer on your bill. When you work on land, you thought...
'Dammie! …will I ever be part of that group? I can also go to sea. So, all that is
Katwijk and not into studies, you can definitely say, that a very big percentage went to
sea because they could be a fisherman. And I stayed free of it but most had to have
tattoos. That was all part of it. I luckily remained free from it. [How come?] I never
wanted to do it. I think I have been well formed, I didn’t want to spoil that myself.'
'No, my parents did not say anything about my decision [to become a fisher]. It was
up to me. I could have worked on land, had to know myself, it was my own decision. I
said that you had a few cents more than your comrades on land, and so somehow you
were a tough guy.'
'I worked before the war on land for 2.50 a week., and when I went to sea I made
seven and a half Guilders, minimum wage, and food for free.'
'[…] To stay away for long was possible before, now they don’t want to anymore, or
not so long. […] One has a girlfriend, the other is engaged, the third is married, you
name it. When you are young then you can leave for six weeks, but when you find a
girl you don’t like it anymore, and the girl even less. For sure.'
'But before there was no alternative, it had to be because money had to come in.'
'Well, yes, you could have worked on land.'

'Well, back then, when you went out with the fleet, you got vegetables for about five
days. Longer they did not last because there was no cooling or anything. Otherwise
potatoes, brown beans, peas, and speck. And capuciner (peas), we called them
rasdonders. They really made you fart. The stuurman was in charge of the speck. You
were with 16 heads, that was the normal crew of the fleet, so you cut 48 such thin
stripes, and each guy got three stripes of speck. That was your share of meat. … Fish?
You only fished herring. You ate it at night, fried. Rice with fried herring. And if there
were leftovers for lunch, we called that pan fish (pannenvis). Cause you fried the
herring, the oil that remained was tran, and that smelled from here until tomorrow.
Then you put the leftovers in the oil pan, warm it up, and then the pan right on the table, and everybody eating out of it with his fork. As a young man you are terribly hungry of course (je had de huperkolubus van de hanger) and after a while there also was no bread anymore. Then you got the zeekaken, that were very hard cakes... without salt. You ate those, in the morning you get a cup of tea, very hot, and you throw in a piece of that cake. That's how you make them soft, otherwise they were hard as a stone. And once a week the stuurman came, there was a herring ton full of kaken, that was opened and made into 16 portions. So, say there were 100 whole cakes in there, so you got six whole ones, and there were some broken ones, so everybody another handful crumbs! Everybody got the same [laughing]... Once in a week, there came the stuurman again, out of the sugar ton, in a cup, he went over it with his hand, that was your ratio of sugar. Then he came with butter... and there were (and there still are) five lines on the package. So the chunk of butter was made into five pieces, 50 grams a week, that was your butter. And for the rest, you live of herring. Every now and then you caught a little cod... but else it was herring.

Fruit? Yeah, if you took it along yourself... if you only had that You got coffee though. That yes. And there were three bottles of milk per day for the ship. That was specially treated milk, pasteurised, that was a good one. But the milk went into a pan for 16 guys, such a pan fitted 15 litres, and there went the three litre milk and the rest was water (pompslag). Try to eat that! [all laughing]

And we all had... since we came from the war, we did not have any reserves. So, we all got the waterpuiste. Everywhere, on the lips, you can still see it here on my hands. That is a sort of wound... salt made it. You had no resistance to fight against it, so the people had SUCH hands, and fever from the blisters, cause that were SUCH big things. Hard ones. Now you have got good gloves, you have resistance in your body, vitamins, and what have you. Yeah, nobody had that back then.

You had no penny. Nothing. We just came out of the war. Nobody had a table, cause you burned it to have some warmth. You sat on boxes.... there were no chairs anymore. The Netherlands was really poor then, after the war.... But in spite of the sombre food we had, we all were quite big guys. You ate 10 or 12, nobody cared, you ate until the pan was empty.... You also had ships that were so badly maintained, that if you threw a crumb on the ground, then you saw after half an hour a rat that ate it up... (We always had a cat on board, luckily.)'

Times have changed, and things along with them. The modern fisherman can rely on more social provisions and other arrangements. A ship featuring a trained physician and treatment facilities usually accompanied a fleet. Alongside, the medical provisions, a dominee would be available for religious support. On Sundays, he would visit the various boats and hold church services. Nowadays, these features are obsolete. There remains the first-aid box, and a copy of the Bible on every boat.

[Now,] 'food is perfect. You can eat as much as you want. Not a steak every day, of course not. But it is good food, someone is cooking on board. Hecktrollers and kotters, yes, the food is just fine. The bad food was back in the fifties and sixties, at
the time of the fleet fishery... afterwards, it all improved. ...Before, you had to see what to wear, now it is arranged that you get work clothing. All the medicines on board, all is taken care of, and the food is good. ... Before there was the hospital-church ship, now you are taken to the hospital by helicopter. ... Downstairs, we have the [treatment] box. The same system like before is still in use. If it is empty, it will be re-filled. But the same system, the same illnesses, the little bottles with numbers. Yes, you learn that on the fishery school what you have to use it for. ...*Haarlemmer olie* is good for everything.'

Tradition, mixed with peer pressure, and income, in relation with the economic situation at that time seem to be the main motifs for going to sea. Another older fisher agrees: 'I then heard my father talking about fishery. I don't think you are really born with it. Then, it was like that. Maybe there were less other things then. And the money was better. But you have to like it, otherwise you stop.' Once you have started, a different motif catches on: the love for the sea. While fishery can be regarded as a profession like any other, it does carry a bigger toil. Justifications of choosing for the life as a fisher often claim a considerable income and lack of professional alternatives due to a limited economy. Possible disadvantages are typically disregarded. The question whether staying away from home for a long time was a problem is solved by saying: 'My sons did not know better.' The question of the inherent dangers of life at sea is retorted: 'Things happen, and on land they are not less.' 'No, when do we know what is going to happen? We just don't know.' Life at sea is even praised by most, and if they had a choice they would do it all over again. 'On land... traffic jams, one after the other, stress, stress, stress ... look, I have the experience of going away for six weeks at a piece, I never look back at that as something negative. I always look back with pleasure. ...If it was not for the new regulations [he lost his ship due to governmental cuts] I would still be going. You can count on that.' A fisher's wife also voiced an enthusiastic opinion. 'I also joined for a maiden voyage. Such bad weather. We left Tuesday, for ten days. But it was wonderful. If I were a man, I would go to sea. I understand my husband. [...] My father also went to sea at 11. He became captain and continued until his 67. It simply is in them.' By now, I started doubting the information received. Most talked so positively about being a fisher, or being married to a fisher, that I suspected them of not telling me the whole truth. Can people truly be so contented? Every now and then, both men and women admitted for some
drawbacks of the profession. 'When a child was sick, you had to go anyway.' Another fisher regretted to have been absent at the births of his three children. 'What can you do? If you do not go to work, you were not paid then.' The price of being a fisher was paid for by the whole society.

The family

Fishing is a particularly male adventure. While the men are out hunting fish, the women take care of all the rest.23 'On land the women, at sea the men.' Not surprisingly, fishermen's wives are strong, outstanding figures. They manage the household, the children, and all other tasks of life on land by themselves, and they do so in a rather successful way. 'A sea man does not raise the children.' Fishers' wives are known to be 'unusually independent, resourceful and generally well able to cope with operating the household single-handedly'.24

Women-headed households are quite unique when compared to the Dutch norm. In spite of the Netherlands being a female constitutional monarchy, unbroken for almost a century, the position of the ordinary woman until recently remained behind her husband or father. Until about the late 1960's, it was men earning the family's living and women taking care of the household and the children. The Netherlands, along with Italy a.o. have been among those European countries where a relatively small amount of women have paid jobs.25 The Church certainly is one of the forces supporting the traditional distribution of tasks. The standard 'My wife does not need to work', affected women's public participation, as well as the development of child care centres for working mothers. The Dutch attach great importance to family life and ties. A 'happy marriage' means a tender, caring wife and a husband who comes home directly from work and doesn't drink too much.26 In fishing families, happy marriages are as valued but the definition varies slightly. Overall, fishers' wives retain many a traditional features. They tend to marry at young age, and agree to take care of house and children. Since their husbands earn enough to support the family well, they indeed do not need to work for money. He continues to be the main provider and the ultimate authority of the family. The fisher's wife and children are often separated from their husband and father, at times for weeks on a row. This professional given has to be justified in one way or another, if the situation is to persist.
A particularity of separation is that the woman tends to make decisions about expenditures, be it for the daily or the more exceptional procurements. This differentiates her from the woman whose husband comes home every day, and usually decides on such matters. The fisher’s wife also enjoys more freedom when compared to the wives of other professionals. The organisation of the day is in her hands, she often visits other family members and other fishers’ wives. ‘You know what helps is that my girlfriends, her men also were at sea. So, whenever something was the matter, we could talk about it.’ She can arrange and make appointments without co-ordinating with her husband. However, the fisher’s woman autonomy is a tricky one. She only is in charge because the man is absent, just like a vice-director. Her authority is temporary until her husband retires. At that point, rights and responsibilities have to be re-assessed. When on leave, the sea man feels more like a visitor, and is treated as such. When at home in between fishing trips, the family lives an interim period of unusual tolerance, and ambiguous liabilities often described as a ‘holiday feeling’ by the fishermen themselves. On the other hand, going to sea is also often associated with it: ‘When you go to sea, then you are busy with it, a couple of days before you get sort of a holiday feeling.’

‘If your wife is a real sea man’s wife she will have no trouble managing the children while you are at sea. In moments of tension she may use your name like conservative parents use that of Black Piet or the police, but you shall never notice when you are home,’ says a former sea man. Unfortunately those sea women are getting increasingly harder to find. The younger generation already portrays changes in what work means to them, and how it relates to life, happiness and well-being. The men do not anticipate to be a fisher all their lives, but take advantage of the work’s returns to plan for a happy life the way they define it. The women prefer their men closer by, and for a longer time. They often seek part-time employment for personal fulfilment. In spite of their appreciation of material goods, they do not like to trade closeness for money, but then, they do not have to either. The work situation changed as compared with that of the previous generation. There are lots of opportunities, well-paying ones on land. Moreover, with the current education, a modern fisher has little problems in
stepping back to land, again very different from the traditional fisher. Work, as such, is not a state of being for them, but a mere tool for happiness, a means to provide for the desired commodities of a pleasant life. In Katwijk, tradition still plays a role in the search for work, it facilitates the initial choices. The outcome often is a compromise between the love for the sea, the love for a woman, and the family.

In general, the couple manages to overcome the burden of separation well, and to form stable relationships, or business agreements, that are meant to counter-balance the inherent instability of the fisherman's work. All participants agreed that the family situation is far from perfect, yet, it provides a suitable frame for the fishing profession. 'You know, when the boys get older, they very soon take on the role of the father. Very strange. They play the man in the house. Get responsibility.' In this sense, fisher families can be compared to other families in which the male bread winner is absent for longer time periods. However, little or no evidence is given concerning fishermen's families, their pathology, or abnormalities.28 Obviously, things work out just fine for the people involved, or at least they say so. In spite of the particular family life of fishers, they succeed in deriving stability and rest from it. Acheson mentions the fisherman's tendency towards institution-building and clustering as a response to job uncertainty.29 Co-operation and the resulting feeling of security also applies to the fisher's private life. In this sense, a marriage co-operation increases the fisher's well-being by adding emotional and social satisfaction to his life. As the decision to become a fisher usually occurs at young age, early marriages are only in the interest of the fisher as it allows him to 'have something to look forward to when coming home'. A family renders his efforts worthwhile.

Work and belief
Fishers are considered particularly conservative when compared to other Dutch, and the link between work and belief is a strong one among them. Not accidentally do we find in front of the old white church, by now a symbol of Katwijk, the statue of a fisher’s wife with a child looking at the sea, awaiting the return of her husband and father. It represents a common theme of earlier times. When I first saw the old white
church standing against the boulevard in Katwijk, it looked quite familiar. I had seen it before in the various paintings, and pictures of tourist pamphlets. Built around 1480, the church not only changed denominations a few times but was also used as a storage place for salt. That decision was driven by the fact that it became too small to host all the believers, and a new church was built. The old church was thus sold to a shipping trade for about thirty years, until it was decided in 1920 to repurchase it and to restore its original function.30

When taking the bus from Leyden station to Katwijk aan Zee the visitor passes a large board at the entry of the village reading Welcome in the church. Katwijk has many churches of different denominations. The local weeklies give a detailed list of service by church and village. Katwijk aan Zee enumerates about twelve churches, of eight denominations, as well as a Sufi temple.31 The predominant group is the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk. An old fisher tells proudly that ‘now Katwijk is still known as a predominant Christian community. In the reformed (hervormde) church you can still count on a 10000 visitors on Sundays, young and old.’ In earlier times, followers lived close to their church and walked to the services. In fact, everything was in walking distance. Family and neighbours were of the same church, and the weekly congregation also served as a place of private exchange. Nowadays, with the expansion of the village and the influx of many foreigners, going to church becomes more of a journey, and often people take the car to reach their preferred place of prayer. The church in Katwijk is a place of encounter, social, personal and spiritual. Young and old mingle there on Sundays, the day of the week in which ‘thou shall not work’. On Sunday, most churches still offer two services, one in the morning, one in the evening. People adhering to the principle of the ‘rest day’ indeed visit the Sunday service, although only a fraction actually makes the pilgrimage twice that day. Nevertheless, Katwijkers consider themselves a conservative community. Going to church is one of the many facets of keeping up a long-standing tradition, and many elderly people lament the recent changes in this tradition. They acknowledge that the churches are not as saturated as they once used to be, and not adhering to the Sunday limitation of work is one of the reasons for it. Nowadays, even some fisher boats work over Sunday. ‘What can you do, if you have to work, you have to work’, a Sunday
fisher puts it simply. ‘The work does not wait, it does not care for Sunday’, says another. The principles of market economy come to the fore. Capitalism seems to contradict the autonomy to ‘live the way you like’, or the way you are used to, at least for those who need the earnings. Sunday observance then becomes a luxury or an indication of a strict adherence to dogma.

Once I joined my hosts to church. That night, a local male choir had a concert in the old white church of the village inviting openly for singing and reading together. ‘Do you hear these strange vibrations?’, asked my host. ‘These are the black socks who do not sing the flat keys, it is against their religion.’ The black socks is a nick name for the most conservative group who ‘read the Bible in a very pessimistic way’. I could not make out any vibrations, as I was concentrating on the Dutch text of the praise songs. The minister exclaimed that only real belief makes you sing a praise; I wondered what he meant. Under the surface of communality, apparently many differences remain. Looking around I noticed that everybody, except myself, was blond and of fair complexion. When walking to the streets of Katwijk these features did not strike me as much, let alone in Amsterdam. Here, in a closed environment, it was rather special to see such an accumulation of blond. I also noticed that women preferred short hair cuts, and in general the local fashion was very sober and adjusted to the conditions of the sea. I searched for familiar faces, and found two in the choir. Meanwhile, the minister criticised the modern way of life, the belief that ‘life is short, and soon its all over’, the vain attempt to make ‘the most out of this life’. He went on pondering about what we can do with our lives, and how a ‘good life’ is to be lived. ‘Praising the Lord’ is one aspect, ‘working hard’ another, that was the core of his sermon. Laziness, boredom, degeneration are all children of the same devil. Later, I would have more of these conversations with the local people.

Op hoop van zegen

Katwijkers consider themselves a conservative, yet open society. In this sense, rigidly clinging to traditions has an outmoded, obsolete tint on others, they say. Many a comparison is drawn to the villagers of Urk, another traditional fishing village yet
situated on the inside, that is on the *Ijsselmeer*. The people of Urk are renown for their observance, even the Katwijkers speak with a certain admiration of them. They do not fish on Sundays, 'that day is for the Lord and the work has to rest'. The principle is still adhered to but its interpretation differs between the fishing villages. 'Urkers leave Sunday evening, they go *maatschap*, that means Saturdays for the ship. They have to work on the ship then; cleaning, fixing the nets... that is *maatschap*. We did not fish on Sundays, we also did not go out [to sea; *stoomen*]. Sunday is at home. Nowadays, most come home on Fridays. Sundays you cannot fish because of religion, but you can go out [to sea], that is the same for me. If you clean the ship, you also work. That is the same for me. Now, they do not care so much anymore. Before, you lived closer to the religion, let’s put it this way.'

At other occasions, the example of Urk is used in a less commendable way. There is general talk of strangeness, closed-mindedness, incest among families. Yet, the biggest point of defamation as far as concerns fishers is that the Urkers work *op maatschap*, that is, they form fishing associations. This is a feature most Katwijk fishers reproach, for several reasons. A few boats in Katwijk work in such associations, the majority however, work along the lines of *CAO*, the communal work agreement. 'CAO means that you work for a salary, even if you do not catch any fish, you have the right to a minimum salary. You are insured for illness and death, and you even build up a pension fund. The Urkers do not have these advantages, they may go out empty in the worst case.' The *maatschap* agreement considers all participants co-owners. This means that 'your earnings are used to pay for the maintenance of the boat, the running costs, as well as, major repairs and investments. You also have to take care of your insurance yourself, and your pension. It’s a headache.' In spite of their debatable system, most Urkers are quite well off. 'If you keep all your earnings for yourself, than you make quite some money of course. In the CAO, a big share of your income goes into insurance, but at least you get it back in the case of need. People choosing for *maatschap* are gamblers, unless they actually arrange for all their insurance by themselves, and that costs them more money. Mostly, they rely too much on God’s benevolence.' In the case of the Urkers it seems to pay off. Most fishers there are said to be insured as well, so that in reality the gambling part is
significantly reduced. Nevertheless, the *maatschap* system is looked upon suspiciously. Success and well-being in that system can only be a matter of fortune, so it seems. 'If you have a good owner, it's no problem. Then the system is all right,' concluded a Katwijker who had made some good experiences in associations. 'But if you have a bad owner...'

The consequences remained unspoken, the message was clear. There are so many bad owners that it is not worth waiting for a good one to come by. You better take precautions. This is what most Katwijkers do when they argue in favour of the CAO: taking precautions, or at least not taking any risks. Older fishermen in particular like to stay in the familiar system. They appreciate receiving money when ill, or out of the job. Changing work agreements at an advanced age would forfeit all the benefits they have worked for and accumulated over the years. The only positive remark about the different arrangement of fishery was blamed on fortune again. 'Of course...they may have some good days as well, in which they catch a lot, and if they do not have to pay for any repairs, then they are lucky.' The issue of luck, risk, and the fishermen resurfaces at a later point.

In former times, the fisher's life was more dramatic. While nowadays the catch is an unpredictable affair, back then, around the turn of last century, you were lucky if you returned home safely. Ships of that time were not made to fight heavy tempests, and nature appeared even more powerful. 'The sea gives and the sea takes' goes a popular saying referring to the inherent fatality of the fisher's profession. Apparently, the common man was more in need of God's mercy as he exposed himself more to the dangers of life. The human drama was further exploited by selfish individuals as depicted in the narrative by Heyermans. The evil ship owner knew of the ship's inadequacies, yet deliberately risked the men's lives in order to recover the insurance money. All men end up 'staying' at sea. The story shows the general dependence of the fisherman on his employer, on nature, and last but not least, God's will. Nowadays, fishermen are in a much better position. They are organised in and represented by a co-operative, and they enjoy the benefits of modern social security system, that is, health insurance and a pension fund. They mostly work for more benevolent owners who let them participate in the decision-making process, at least to a certain extent. Along with the technological innovations, the discourse of the
fisher's dependency on God's mercy, *op hoop van zegen*, is being replaced by the concept of luck and the other.

Going fishing
As an anthropologist, I was dying to get a first hand impression about the fisherman's reality. Since he spends most of his time at sea, fishing, it is very inconvenient to plan for conversations with fishers on land. Their time is limited and precious. In Katwijk, I talked to retired fishers who were free and eager to convey their experiences to an ignorant outsider. We talked for hours, or better: they talked, I mostly listened. I was shown pictures, newspaper clippings, movies supporting their stories. Yet, always did they apologise for not being able to explain what fishery was all about. Perhaps it was my many question, perhaps it was the fact of being a stranger but eventually, they themselves suggested that I should join life at sea, and see for myself. Only then would I truly understand. Fishery also is about a certain feeling that must have to do with the sea, with the very work out there. I very much value that I was invited to experience life at sea twice during my stay in Katwijk. Fishers and their families are fond of action, and not too many words. I must have expected more difficulties, or resistance this is why I was surprised each time a voyage was suggested, and immediately arranged for.

The meeting point for my second voyage was at the vegetable shop of Tante Riek in Katwijk where the fishermen picked up their provisions for the week at sea. I used to buy my yoghurt there when coming home in the afternoon, the shop being just next door to my field home. Our talking never went beyond the necessary. 'Just the yoghurt', I said with my foreign accent and looks. I could see the curiosity on her face. Katwijk is a tourist paradise in summer, but this part of town, and this grocery shop in particular serves more of the local population. Then one day, I entered the shop with my large bag pack, ready to leave for Amsterdam again, my other home. 'May I have an apple for the road?', I asked. 'That is quite a hand bag', she pried. We first had a long talk about the different tastes of apples, then it shifted to my reason of being here. The unavoidable question, the understandable curiosity. I briefly identified
myself, the why and how I came to study fishery in Katwijk. My story must have made some sense, as her face immediately lighted up. ‘Fishery!', she said, ‘my nephews have two boats. They always go out fishing together. That is what they call spanvisserij. You have to go along one day. That will show you what fishery really is about.’ I was amazed. I only came in to buy an apple, my mind was already sitting in the bus to the train station, leaving the field. I learned my lesson: The field is everywhere, you cannot escape. Does she really mean it? She does not even know me!, I thought to myself. I should have known better by now. Katwijkers are mostly straightforward, they mean what they say, otherwise they do not say it. ‘That would be wonderful’, I quickly replied. ‘Fine then’, she said, all business woman, ‘I’ll ask them when they come home this weekend. If you come by early next week, I’ll tell you, and you can join them the week after. You would have to be here on Sunday at midnight. Is that possible for you?’ I was speechless for a moment. What a woman, what an arrangement! ‘Yes, yes,’ I hurried, ‘no problem, midnight then. And I’ll come to see you first thing next week.’ I paid for my apple. ‘Don’t forget to come by next week!’, she called after me. ‘You will like it. I’ll ask them when they come.’ ‘Yes, next week!’, I said, ‘and... thank you!’ I walked out of the shop. Other customers had been listening to our conversation patiently. Tante Riek did not seem to mind them waiting. I caught a last glimpse of her through the shop window, she smiled and waved back at me.

On the way to the bus station, I felt a slight bewilderment. Am I really going to sea? How did this happen? I bit into my apple. Midnight, not a minute later. The fairy godmother. The female anthropologist in small-sized rubber boots. The spontaneous arrangement was confirmed early next week, Tante Riek never had a doubt about it. She told me what to bring along, and not to worry, after all, ‘they are all nice guys and happily married’. I do not remember if she actually said ‘happily’, but I was not worried either. Cinderella also went to live with seven unfamiliar males in a house. And these four males were family of Tante Riek. She was the wife of the brother of the father of the skipper, and a neighbour of my local family.
It was the night of our departure. I first passed by my hosts in Katwijk who waited up for me to give me the traditional farewell. ‘It is a custom’, said my host, ‘all families greet the ones going to sea.’ Indeed, I was going to sea, and I had a family. I did not expect field work abroad to be so emotional. In the meantime, midnight had passed and Monday had started. The bus picking up the crew members was expected any minute. In Katwijk, the Sunday is still kept for church and family, at least among the more conservative folks. My fishers are conservative, I remember thinking. How exceptional must then this whole experience be for them as well, after all, women do not usually go fishing. Sometimes they join for a day or two, as passengers, or wife of a fisher. Non-related women certainly do not go fishing. I wondered how much of an issue this was for the people. Or was it only me, the foreign anthropologist, projecting a non-existent problem into their minds. As soon as the bus took off towards another week of work, the skipper broke the silence by saying: ‘I find it quite courageous of you to join four unknown men on a week at sea.’ I knew it. Later, I was told that the men’s wives inquired about my person with Tante Riek, and whether she would sanction my company. It was an issue after all. Yet, the fairy godmother simply remarked: ‘I know people when I see them. I told them you were all right.’ It is that simple. Amazing, I thought. What does she know about me after all? What did she see? How much can you see when looking at a person? I thought about my own observation efforts. If you only see what you want to see, then the people of Katwijk are very good-hearted. I wondered whether being an outsider facilitated these arrangements. While local women could certainly have done the same, it is unusual for them to go along fishing. At the same time, the males do not usually suggest this possibility. When inquiring about the reasons for this obvious line of separation, most fishermen said: ‘Yes, my wife joined for a day, once. The sea was clam then. If she would come along now... at the slightest wave she gets terribly sea sick and then, nobody enjoys it anymore. Most women cannot stand the sea, they prefer to stay on land. And anyway, there is nothing for them to do here, so they get bored.’ I am glad that cultural laws allow for exceptions.
THE NORTHEAST: men at work

"Rust roest."
Dutch proverb

'The North sea stands for sea sickness, wet clothes, coldness, blistering hands, home sickness.' Except for the blistering hands, I am proud to have experienced all of the above. When they say 'sea sickness and home sickness go together', they must mean that intense desire to get off board, away from that constant swaying, onto solid ground, home or not home. The North sea also is famous for its bad weather, the winds: the expression 'noordwester rotweer' captures the feeling well. Luckily, my sea sickness lasted only for a day after which I was actually able to live and document life on board. Going to sea with 'the guys' helped me get a better picture of what work is all about. Joining a fisher boat gave me the necessary intimacy to try to view life at sea from the viewpoint of a fisher. This was as close as I could get to my informants. Since my sea journey I could join insider conversations, always making sure to drop the name of the boat every now and then. Talking about 'my' boat not only gave me some essential information, it also gave me an identity in the world of fishers. I feel that the fact of my 'being there' substantiated my very person towards fishermen, as well as anybody else. The fishermen appreciated my interest and presence with a remarkable hospitality. Male as well as female 'land rats' remarked my venture into the extraneous world of fishery with a commendable look. I will try to lead the uninitiated into life on a kotter, the intimate details of work of a contemporary fisherman, and the meaning of it all.

Departure

'The North sea belongs to the fishers of which most are Dutch.' In this sense, going to sea is another coming home for the Dutch fisher. His departure is emotional, yet since Katwijk has no harbour he is spared the ritual farewell at the last moment. The fisher greets his family at home in Katwijk, and makes his way to the harbour in Ijmuiden, and to his boat, with a 'holiday feeling'. It is a similar feeling when driving back home to Katwijk, and his family. De Hartog, having been a captain himself, only looks at one side of the issue: 'The departure of a ship, except for ferry boats, is
always sad (triest). [...] The only ones who enjoy this situation are the crew members without home, or family." Elsewhere, the former captain reveals the ambiguous position of sea farers: 'Every boy who wants to become a sea man does it to see the world; but his first land holidays will make him discover that his ship is his world and his real home.' The kotter fisher of Katwijk has, in fact, two 'homes'. He is an eternal traveller who feels at ease in either place, yet he keeps longing for the other. Departure then marks the passage from one to the other, the moment of leaving that is already surpassed by the feeling of arriving somewhere else. The passage itself also marks a certain uneasiness, as the traveller only feels at rest when at home, either one.

Life at sea
At sea, there are always people working, and people sleeping. Days and nights are not defined by light and darkness but by alternating shifts of working and sleeping. It could be said that for the working it is day, and for the sleeping it is night, regardless of the hour and regardless of one's age. A sea man's life entails a completely different rhythm than the life of a land rat. A sea man, as well as any foreign passenger on board, does well to adapt to this new sleeping pattern, the earlier the better. Resisting it does not make much sense if one wants to be functional, and on board of a fisher's boat being functional is the only reason to be. Even me, I soon learned to enjoy the occasional naps. They say, the sea breeze that makes you tired. Possibly, the uncompromising waking hours also play a role. Most fishers agree that on land they would not be able to work as many hours, per week, per month, continuously. There is 'something about the sea that makes work easier on you'. When listening to the stories of old fishermen, work almost sounds pleasurable. Yet, the working hours were many, at a relentless rhythm, away from home.

Officially, a day at sea is divided in six shifts or guards (wachten) of four hours each. Having guard entails being on the bridge, in the control room, watching the screens, and the sea. On a kotter, any member of the team becomes a watchman, every so often. The role of guardian bears great responsibilities which everybody learns to take a share. The rotational system clearly supports the feeling of unity among the
crew. During most of the day, the skipper is the main guardian. He is on duty all the time, except for when he sleeps or eats. Then, someone else takes his place. Nevertheless, the person of the skipper always retains his de facto superiority, that is to say, even if the watchman may decide on minor issues during his guard he is well advised to call the skipper for bigger ones. Taking on more than your allocated share of responsibility is not regarded as a plus among fishermen. True co-operation means doing your work, and relying on others doing theirs. Of course, if necessary the invisible boundaries are crossed and the work is re-distributed according to the situation. This, however, only happens in exceptional situations. Work on board is a limited resource, and for the sake of harmony the individual worker sticks to his duties. On larger vessels, the shifts follow the strict schedule giving everybody their due responsibilities and rest. Yet, control room duties only rotate among a few people. The captain represents an additional guardian; he has no regular watch hours, but is omnipresent. Unlike on a kotter, where he could be seen as primus inter pares, the captain of a larger vessel is a more paternal, outstanding figure. If he does not happen to be on the bridge, he usually is under deck, but he can resurface at any moment, at any place. The only rest room on board, in the real sense of the word, is the toilet. This is the only place where one could be all by himself, or herself, and out of the public gaze and the captain’s scrutiny.

Structure

Time at sea is apportioned into various shares that are referred to by more or less curious names. To start with, there is the achtermiddagwacht, the afternoon watch. It is a rather quiet, pleasant watch since it takes place right after lunch time. In fact, the others who are off-guard take advantage of the siesta time, unless of course, the captain decides to go fishing. Then follows the platvoetwacht, the flatfoot watch, which is split in two, from 4-6, and 6-8, so that everybody gets a chance to watch over the less pleasant hours of the night. Dinner time lies in between these watch times, moreover, in northern regions sunset may fall into the second watch which makes it particularly pleasant. The softer light and colourful reflections of the sea seem to have an effect also on the rough, insensitive sea man during that hour. The watch of 8 to
midnight is called *eerste wacht*, first watch. This is quite a social gathering, most people do not go to sleep right after dinner. They may watch TV, if the boat is close enough to the shore to receive the broadcast. Otherwise, they may play cards in the mess room, or join the watchman on the bridge to discuss the important events of the day. After midnight, the watchman is mostly left alone to do his job. The remainder sleep the sleep of the just, and dream of a bigger catch the following day. Maybe this is why the shift of midnight to 4 am is called the *hondewacht*, the dog watch. On the other hand, for the foreign researcher, this was the best time to get to know the different crew members and have a more intimate conversation. Since our nights were not interrupted by fishing or other activities, the watchman provided an excellent subject for observation. The fact that he is to remain on the bridge for the duration of his watch, and that he has to keep himself awake, certainly was of advantage. However, considering that I lived according to the same rhythm on board, and that my body never got completely used to it, I had difficulties myself of keeping up a meaningful conversation longer than a couple of minutes. A mug of coffee every now and then helped to stay awake, and to brake and replenish the intimacy. Night watch entailed travelling to the next fish grounds, or simply drifting along, keeping an eye on the blinking screens, and staying awake. For this end, the night watchman occasionally switches on the radio, or converses with other watchmen on other boats. The night also makes time for contemplation, for those who stay awake. The darkness, loneliness and spaciousness allow the mind to dwell on issues that is impossible during the daily business. It added an unknown feature to the life of the modern fisher that I imagined to be rather void of contemplation. Travelling through the night indeed feels special. The sea reflected our ship lights, green at starboard, red at backboard. In spite of the complete darkness around, and the unknown waters, it also felt safe. And while the rest sleeps, the watchman guards over them.

The *dagwacht*, daywatch, from 4-8 am is a tough one. The infrequent naps during the day, and the latest one after dinner cannot make up for the feeling of fatigue that identifies this watch. Passionate believers of the Islamic faith awake and rise at that time of the day, as regular as the resolute fisherman. I wondered about the fisherman's passion. Their faces did not look very enthusiastic in the morning. In fact, I soon
learned to refrain from any conversation before the second cup of coffee. The sunrise offers a wonderful distraction, each time again. 'The young sea man may be home sick, sea sick or just sleepy, but he will forget all about it for a few moments when he sees the sun rise above the sea for the first time.' Even the weathered sea man seems to enjoy this special moment of the day, no matter how short the night. Coffee at that time tastes lousy for it has been sitting all night on the heating plate. The first fresh brew is done just before work picks up on the fishing boat. Usually, a first trekje is done at around 6am, before having breakfast. The last watch is the voormiddagwacht, the morning or antemeridian watch, from 8 to noon. This time is filled with bustling activities, throwing the net, waiting, hoisting the net, sorting, gutting and cleaning the fish, and preparing lunch.

Content
The work rhythm at sea is continuous. Usually, the work is scheduled around meal times, but if necessary the stomach has to wait for the work to be done. A fishing passage, the actual purpose of being there, is introduced and concluded by a rather inhuman, irresistible alarm signal. At the sound of it all team players are up and around, not that you had much of a choice. Everybody knows what to do, tasks are distributed and completed without much talking.

Basically, the duties on board involve navigation, machinery, general maintenance, and food preparation. Apprentices of the profession have to learn about all these duties even if they decide to become captain. 'To be a good captain', says a trainee of the Maritime Officer Institution, 'is to know about all tasks on board. Only then you can give sensible orders.' Their learning experience comprises a sea voyage on the designated school ship at sea during their first year of school on which they are supposed to get acquainted with work at sea. 'For many students it is their first ever trip to sea, and depending on the weather, some may get terribly sea sick. Some also change their minds about going to sea afterwards,' remarked a training officer. 'It is not as romantic as it seems'. Overall, youngsters are more interested to become
maritime officers and travel the seven seas for trade and tourism rather than work as a fisher.

Fishing, especially on a kotter, is a joint venture that requires all hands available. At the sound of the alarm, everybody goes to perform his task, the crew on deck, the skipper on the bridge. No matter whose guard it was, when the sign for setting out, or pulling in of the nets is given, the captain takes over the guardian’s role and the watchman becomes a regular crew member again. The sound of the alarm siren still rings in my head, it could awaken the dead in no time. These were the most cruel moments on board. In former times, the pre-alarm era, the watchman used to go under deck to inform his fellows in person. Since everybody sleeps in one room, a well pronounced cry from the staircase leading down under had the same effect, yet more humanely, than the modern-day alarm. Or so I thought, but my male peers did not mind the siren as much. ‘It works, it wakes us up, that is all that counts.’ Mine must have been some fuzzy, female thought. I wondered how a female crew would handle certain matters on board. To start with, I would abolish the siren for fishing matters. Then, I would have tackled the kitchen.

The ship’s kitchen is the realm of the youngest on board. Kitchen duty implies preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner, and the secret potion, filter coffee. All these tasks are to be done in between the actual fishing tasks, which led me to the conclusion the newcomer’s life on board is the most miserable. On the other hand, due to his continuous activities during daytime he gets to sleep longest at night. While he may still have the watch until midnight, the others take over as of then, and share the night duties among them. The newcomer’s day begins again around 6 in the morning when the alarm for the first fishing resounds.

As for the crew members, their tasks are, the menial and manual activities of fishing. They connect and disconnect lines, maintain the nets, sort, gut, clean and freeze the fish. They also are in charge of the upkeep of the machine room. The machinist used to be a sea man with a particular training, yet modern instruction incorporates machinery with knowledge of navigation and fishing, so that all future sea men will
be able to both steer a boat and control the machine room. After return to the home port, it is the crew's task to clean up the whole boat, while the captain calculates, for the tenth time, the expected returns. Calculating the earnings is a favourite pastime for everybody in between fishing rounds. In the end, a boat's harvest is attributed to the skill of the skipper but while fishing at sea, the watchman has a share in this luck as well. The watch while fishing, that is, while the net is in the water, or just before it is hoisted, is called viswacht, the fish guard. The guardian assumes all responsibility for the resulting harvest. It is a rather figurehead type of responsibility, more like a godfather for a godchild, yet the honour is great if the catch is worthwhile. In this case, so-and-so's guarding will be remembered throughout the whole journey, and beyond. If however, the catch in insubstantial, the guardian of the fish is made subject of general laughter.

Another common activity is waiting. A lot of time is spent waiting for the fish to bite, so to speak, for the boat to reach the next fish ground, for the day to begin. Most of the waiting time is used for short naps, whenever possible. If the waiting time is too short, the choice falls for a cup of coffee, reading, watching TV or having a chat. Otherwise, maintenance activities are done as they befall, as repairing the nets or pecking rust. The watchman on the bridge also converses with other boats and the coast guards. Giving away one's exact catch, or the location of the fish grounds is tricky. Every now and then the frequency is switched to avoid too many listeners when giving away valuable information. At the same time, the ether is monitored by every watchman at sea trying to catch one or the other promising detail.

The ship's 'kitchen' is the most familiar place on board. Cooking utensils and provisions are stacked away in the cupboards that are provided with special locks in case of rough weather. The cooking is basic, it is for the stomach and not for the eye at all. Design and equipment is all very functional and does not resemble a cosy home. The only items that remind of some personal touch are a picture tucked into a window frame of the former skipper who died of a brain stroke, a stereo recorder carefully attached above the stove, and the Bible peaking out of a specially marked wooden pocket on the wall. And yet, the combuis or mess room, as it is also called, is the most
lively room aboard as this where people meet at regular intervals to share food, have a coffee, talk, watch TV, and thank the Lord.

Before and after every meal, God’s mercy is remembered. And every night after dinner, the skipper reads a piece of the Bible out loud, the others listening heedfully. This holy ritual, this silent agreement was striking to the onlooker. It portrayed a feeling of intimacy, of civilisation. William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* comes to my mind where he described some boys stranded on a savage island, all by themselves, trying to keep up civilisation, human culture, by keeping up rules and rituals. In a way, the Bible reading after dinner convokes an attempt to preserve what is already established, and found good. ‘In reality, the sea man looks for familiar things when away from home [...]’. And what is more familiar then to refer to an ever-present God connecting both worlds, the sea and the land.

*Leadership*

On board, the skipper has the absolute authority. He is the *schipper naast God*, his position is right next to God’s in the fisher’s hierarchy. The captain’s place is the command room where he is usually found, unless he is eating in the kitchen, sleeping in the dormitory, or visiting the toilet. He hardly inspects the machine room, neither does he assist on-deck fishing activities, or the subsequent cleaning and storing of the fish. These are the tasks of the other crew members. From the bridge, the captain can oversee all activities on deck. Switch boards and computer screens allow him to see further into the machine room and below the sea level. Moreover, communication equipment connects the boat with other vessels and coastal stations, and the knob of the alarm siren connecting to the crew is at his arm length. When fishing, the captain controls the net roll, depending on the immediate instructions of a sea man on deck. In spite of the clear hierarchy on board, fishing is a highly co-operative enterprise.

The distribution of tasks on board is not egalitarian, or at least not in the sense that everybody does the same. Every member of the team has his duties and responsibilities, some more than others, but the joy and the reward is common
property. On board, "egalitarianism is a moral principle," all for one and one for all. *Spanvisserij* in particular, pair trawling, is very co-operative in nature. Both efforts and earnings are shared. The assumption is that all do their job, and do their best. Bad performance is of course a matter of criticism. If people shun their duties, or do them badly, they will be discharged, in one way or another. The silent agreement of efficiency motivates the individual to work up to the invisible standard. At the same time, the group measures itself by the performance of other groups, fishing boats. Associations of fishers compare their returns, and eventually national statistics are exchanged and compensated. Yet, the basis for all comparison is to be found in the motivation of the individual worker at sea. To meet the larger societies objectives of well-being, the fisherman contributes his skills and efforts. He believes in an unequal distribution of tasks, reflecting the differences in all human communities, and the individual striving for the common good. For this end, there needs to be a strong leader, a person that knows how to steer and motivate this zeal, without taking too much personal advantage of it.

The captain always is an outstanding figure, no matter how small the boat. "The first man who sailed the sea, alone, in a carved tree trunk was a sea man. The first man who took along a boy was a captain." The Dutch word *gezagvoerder* better describes the meaning of being a captain, a leader, a commander-in-chief. To be a captain is to have the first and the last word. His position requires self-confidence, bordering with arrogance, a strong sense of responsibility, leadership qualities, as well as profound knowledge of all duties and all characters on board. To become the captain is what every young sea man dreams about. Yet, not everybody is made to become a leader, moreover, too many leaders defy the purpose. Deep inside, the captain is afraid, after all he is in charge of the boat and the people. Yet, hardly ever does he admit his fear. Neither does he admit that he is wrong. A feeling, as well as a matching attitude of superiority belongs to the position of the skipper. He "has to solve the dilemma of direction and leadership versus teamwork and voluntary cooperation, especially so since leadership is often met with suspicion." Especially on a larger ship the captain may feel very lonely, once he becomes the captain. "His colleagues, that are no longer colleagues but lower ranked colleagues, disappeared
behind an invisible wall of fellowship.46 The captain often is made fun about by the rest of the crew. In a way, he serves as a scapegoat for people’s emotions. This is part of his job. ‘I know what they say about me,’ told me a commander of a vessel, ‘I also know they sometimes disagree with my decisions, but someone has to decide. On board, I am in charge. If they do not like it, they can file a complaint to the pertinent office, when we are back on land.’ There are organisations dealing with the sea men’s claims and rights, and if everything fails, there always is the last instance of Judgement that even the skipper has to obey. This belief assures that justice is done, sooner or later. A good skipper tries to act just while on duty. The common belief assures him his crew’s co-operation and loyalty. The bigger the boat the more specialised the tasks. Large vessels, feature officers, machinists, boatsmen, fish workers, and even a maitre, who only shift within their specialisation. On smaller ships, the tasks are divided similarly, but the lines are not drawn that sharply. So, it happens that on a small boat the skipper makes himself useful in the kitchen, even if rarely. In terms of status and responsibilities, the skipper and the youngster stand out. Similarly, both are victims of jokes and abuses. While the youngster is abused in public, the skipper is laughed at more secretly.

When back in the home port, the hierarchy of the captain blends in with the pride and fatigue of all other fishers of the boat. At this time, all crew members including the captain, help to unload the fish and bring it into the big halls where it is weighed and sorted, once again, for the ensuing auction. He is seen carrying heavy boxes, measuring the fish, packing it once again, wearing the same clothes as all other workers. His looks are casual, his movements are swift. Nothing points to the fact that he is the captain except for people’s intimate knowledge of the fact. At the end of a week’s work, when the group’s common effort is to be evaluated in terms of money, the skipper cedes his authority to the quality controller and the fish merchant.

Knowledge and achievement
The evaluation of the fishermen’s work is based primarily on the content of the net. The catch determines the earnings. It also is a matter of honour, of prestige. The name
the boat pushes it further back into the net which is shaped like a huge shopping bag. The idea also is that the fish feels the trembling of the net lines in the water and tries to stay in between them which again would lead it right into the shopping bag.

Other fish, however, like the tasty cod we were after, is not swimming in clearly demarcated schools. In spite of some spots on the screen, his whereabouts are more of a riddle to the fisher. Reliance is mostly extended to fish grounds, discoveries of others, as well as maritime research information. The latter is taken cautiously, since they have found out that the fisher’s reality does not correspond with the researched reality. One day, after dumping a large amount of fish back into the sea, a fisher explained: ‘Research says that there is no such fish here, but we know better. On the other hand, we are not allowed to sell this fish, so we throw it back.’ If the fish had not died by then, all would be well. Yet, most fish cannot survive the peer pressure in the net, the handling, the time spent outside water, before being sorted, found inappropriate, and thrown back into the water. You could blame the fish for its stupidity, or the humans for theirs. The fisher only does his job. He fishes in unrestricted areas with standard equipment. Due to the insecurity involved fishing remains an adventure. Yet, it also becomes more and more a burden to nature as humans look upon the sea as a tax-free shopping zone. The way it is, the relation between man and animal, or between man and nature, leaves indeed ‘much to be desired’.

Navigation, the getting there, used to be a science and an art, just like anthropology. Several utensils were necessary to determine the exact position of a ship at sea. First of all, sea maps and a compass are necessary to steer a desired course. The detailed sea maps indicate coastlines, as well as cliffs, sand banks, light houses, churches and other recognisable features on land. Leaving the port of Ijmuiden in direction of the fish grounds, the boat is likely to travel in Northern direction. To determine one’s exact position, rather intricate calculations were necessary. Alternatively, the length and width co-ordinates were determined by measuring the relative ‘height’ of the sun with an octant, and taking some soil samples. Skippers used to know the various soil types of the North Sea. Nowadays, sea maps, compass, log, and octant are integrated
in functional computer programs. The skipper can get all necessary information, position, speed, direction, distance to destination, and even bottom surface, simply by looking at the screens in the control room. The traditional methods are still taught at school but hardly ever utilised in practice. Nature is condensed to lines and figures on the screen.

He saw the phosphorescence of the Gulf weed in the water as he rowed over the part of the ocean that the fisherman called the great well because there was a sudden deep of seven hundred fathoms where all sorts of fish congregated because of the swirl the current made against the steep walls of the floor of the ocean. Here there were concentrations of shrimp and bait fish and sometimes schools of squid in the deepest holes and these rose close to the surface at night where all the wandering fish fed on them.51

Late fishermen told me about how things used to be in former times:

'Before, there was a very old sea man going with us. And the people then always were looking where the wind comes from, how the sun stands, what the position of the boat is. The man was so old, he could stay sleeping all night, he did not have to come on deck at night. ... And when he came on deck in the morning, he took a look in the basin, and so there was some leftovers like sand and little fish, and he said: Oh, we have been fishing the whole night eastward. He just saw that from the fish on the ground. The people before were used to nature. He stood there looking. What are you looking at, old man? Well, we just passed the 'Dogger'. That is a bank, and after that bank it was about 40m deeper. How do you know? From the colour of the water.'

'Yes, before they could see that from the colour of the water.'

'Did all fishers have this feeling for nature before?, I asked.

'Yes, people then lived with nature.'

'Not everybody. It's a gift.'

'Well, a fisher is more aware of these things than a sailor (matroos).'

'Before that happened more than once. There was a steamship, and the captains have learned all right, but they came to ask the fisherman where they were.'

'That is true! You had to 'shoot the sun' then.' This is what they call the procedure of determining the ship's position.

'I can do that, too.'

'You did that with a sextant or an octant, with a meter until it was on the level of the water, 'andriodemeter', then you read it. You have a table for that. Yes, we did that, too.'

'Is it still done nowadays?', I asked.

'No, not anymore. Nowadays, the push a button. Boom! 137 Ijmuiden NNW. They have to learn how to read satellites and computer now...but learning of the 'high rhythm' as you had to before, that does not exist anymore. Now it all changed.'
'Before... you looked at the colour of the water. Was it green? You looked at the plankton, that is what makes the water green.'

Back then, skippers, and most of the fishermen relied on their experience, their “cognitive map of good fishing locations, wrecks, treacherous rocks, currents, depths, breeding habits and migration patterns of fish, the behaviour of other fishers and so on”52. Some of this knowledge is passed on over generations, and every boat has a secret record in which the information is kept out of sight of other boats.

The elements of luck

Fishing is not a matter of luck, or not completely. It takes some cleverness to fish.

But, he thought, I keep them [the lines] with precision. Only I have no luck anymore. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready.53

First of all, you have to know the fish grounds. Some are known because they are in every map, in every mouth, and even in the newspapers write about them. These are the popular fish grounds that even the fishing novice has an idea about. But there are more places where to find good fish. Their names and exact locations are literally handed over from generation to generation, from one skipper to the other. These are the traditional fish grounds most of which became popular by now. Some however still retain their customary flair, determining the whereabouts of most fishing boats. Every now and then, a ‘new’ spot is sought. This is initiated by some promising report of another skipper, who happened to fish there, or some late information of, for example, changes in fish movements by the maritime institute. Overall, however, fishers are quite conservative in their choice of fish grounds. ‘It is known where the fish is’, they say. Too many experiments only cost time and effort, that could be spent better.

Yet, often fishing at traditional grounds does not deliver what it promised. When the net is lifted out of sea and makes its way to the fish basin up front, ‘that is the moment
when you know for sure what is and what is not in the net'. Usually bets are made a few moments beforehand, just after the order is given for *Haaaleeeen!,* the siren, and the net is towed back to the ship. 'If there is lots of fish, you will see something like a white foam floating on the water. That is the air escaping from inside the fish.' And the escaping air is a sign of a good catch. When the net is hauled back to the boat and rolled up mechanically, the fishers all stand on deck staring at the submerged end of the rope and asking each other: *'Drift het? Does it float?''* Their usually calm, imperturbable faces then reveal a slight tension, a hint of apprehension. If it floats, the fisher's expression clears up, he silently nods, smiling, as if he approved with some inaudible discourse. His innermost expectations have been met, his desires fulfilled, his prayers heard. In fact, he knew it all in advance. He never gave up the good faith, and he has been rewarded. Praise be to the Lord who extended his mercy. Praise also to the man on fish guard. He keeps nodding until his duties call him back to work.

There is still much to be done. To start with, each fisher comments on the size of the catch in terms of boxes, the units of market transactions. Later, while processing the fish, he sings or whistles. If it does not float, the fisher shakes his head in disappointment. His face shows no signs of anger or sadness, he rather looks like a defeated warrior, like a hunter whose prey managed to elope, once again. His innermost fears and doubts have been confirmed. Luck was not on his side this time. It will be next time. He was not really taken by surprise by this defeat, he knows the sea, and its challenge. This is part of the game. He remains silent for a while until he dispatches derogatory remarks on behalf of the fish guardian. Then, work resumes as usual.

*Bad luck*

By the floating indication, the surmised content of the net, and the detailed scrutiny of the individual fish on board, the fisher assesses the value of the booty. Floating or not floating, the booty was always judged as 'bad', or 'could be better'. This could have several reasons that I did not have enough time to uncover. For one, fishers could be notoriously optimistic, their expectations surpassing reality. Secondly, it could be a unspoken law that the catch should never be praised in fear of repercussions. Thirdly,
influencing one's achievement. The fisher of Katwijk strongly believe in self-sacrifice. They also believe that the assiduous ones will reach the happy end, be it a good catch, or a good life. In the end, it all depends on God's mercy.

Concluding the voyage
What is the sense of it all? Hartog's response when addressing all his seafaring colleagues truly is inspiring. He must have written these lines in the few lonely moments on board of a ship, possibly at night: 'Give up the prospect of ever reaching a shore and remember the joy of being alone at sea. You are favoured among the mortals, for only on the bridge on the ocean of the past have you known happiness. Perhaps that same happiness will come upon you on the longest voyage of all. If this is your hope, and not the shore beyond the horizon, then you probably lighted up the darkness of the human desperation with a spark of the light of the sea.' Between the lines there lingers a certain notion of presumptuousness in view of those who have not had the pleasure of knowing 'real happiness' in their lives. His wife, or any woman for that matter, was obviously not 'favoured' to be among the happy few.

The possibility to create and amend one's thoughts and expectations, to justify our existence, and render it worthwhile, this, I believe, is the essence of the human condition, and the utmost extent of human capabilities. No matter the situation. I have to admit, after having been there, that, in spite of everything, I managed to identify for myself the moments that rendered the journey worthwhile. I believe that fishers do the same. Our performance remains a matter of personal evaluation and justification. In this sense, also fishermen's wives can have their own expectations and pleasures filling their days. The particularity of Katwijk is that men and women share similar expectations and explanations creating a rather closed culture of contentment. This is an ideal situation for a human being to thrive and live happily until death takes him or her away.

There also is the notion of continuity, or return. 'No matter how small your contribution is, it is also thanks to you that ships are still travelling. And once you
have discovered this, go to the dunes, climb a hill and look at them travelling. There
goes your immortality. '57 This is, in fact, what many retired fishermen do. They walk
the dunes or the seaside carefully studying the ships in the distance, the waves, the
clouds, the birds. Work also is about leaving something behind, about making your
contribution count. To accept that we are replaceable, and that there are others doing a
better job may be quite a painful discovery. 'To retire is, if you look upon it soberly, a
natural course. For the seafaring profession you need sharp eyes, good ears, patience
for the weaknesses of others, and a good sense of your own weaknesses. These
abilities diminish over the years [...] and the moment of retirement arrived when your
self-confidence yields to the feeling that others become indispensable.'58 It is not
always that easy. This attitude would make the worker vacate his place, but it would
not make him look forward to his retirement. In a society that values production so
much, the unproductive is looked down at. Stepping back, retiring, can also be
explained as giving others a chance, ignoring your own deficiencies for a moment. 'If
seafaring is meaningful for the continuation of the creation (as you once declared
proudly to your girlfriend) then the moment of truth now arrived, the moment to
accomplish your high principle.'59 The sentiment of self-sacrifice is important, a
conscious effort in 'accomplishing the principle', another contribution to your society
up until the very last moment. Only then does the conscientious worker derive a sense
of pleasure when resting from his life of hard work.
COMING HOME: achievement and restlessness

"Na gedane arbeid is het goed rusten."
Dutch proverb

I am back in Amsterdam. Gone are the seagulls, the sea breeze, the smell of oil and fish, the salt in the air and on my skin. Looking back I feel the intimacy of certain moments of my fieldwork. I was there, I was part of it. Simply being there, the physical aspect of it, is certainly not enough to make a claim for closeness. Katwijk is a rather large village and my presence was surely not noticed by everyone, neither did I care to get involved with everyone. In this regard, I cannot claim to really have ‘been there’. The closer the community, the stronger the involvement. My asylums were the Katwijk museum, my Katwijk ‘family’, the two fishing boats, with increasing involvement respectively. In these places, my presence was not only noticed but through our interactions, our communication, did we become a close, intimate, familiar group. The museum is a rather large project, with numerous volunteers working in shifts to make things possible. There I had informal conversations with several volunteers, most of them former fishermen, about their past work and present outlook. The meeting was usually joined in by other former fishermen and volunteers, and visitors of the museum who contributed to the lively and autonomous discussions. Apart from the many information learned, some personal contacts emanated that were to reveal its usefulness later. The degree of closeness is less in the case of the museum if compared with the other two places, the hosts, and the fisher boats. The latter were places of more personal exchanges, both ways. I always was a guest in the house of my hosts, in spite of their friendly and generous efforts to make me feel ‘at home’. And I was a visitor on the fisher boats, in spite of my attempts to do as the fishers do and to inconspicuously merge with the crowd. I did stick out, for better or for worse, but after all, I learned that integration in the sense of assimilation is not a basic ingredient for ‘being at home’. The inter-relationship is what really made me feel ‘at home’, the mutual involvement, not the space available, or the time spent together. In this sense, ‘home’ can characterise a moment in time, a particular situation, or interaction, as well as a familiar place. Still, I admit that time and space do affect the property of a relationship. The more time I spent with a person in the field, the more I felt a certain familiarity that in turn influenced the way we communicated. In this
sense, my relationship to my hosts changed into a particular friendly, homely bond among people who knew close to nothing about each other. This, I also, but not only, ascribe to the fact that our relationship evolved in the intimacy of their home, and so the barrier between public and private was abandoned from the start. Similarly, the boat (even more than a house) confined our freedom of movement and, in a way, forced us to relate which affected the closeness of our relationship. Time, that is repeated encounters or a prolonged stay, leaves its imprints. After a week aboard the fisher boat I felt the impact of time and space on issues of familiarity, proximity and the feeling of 'home'. No wonder that the boat is a second, if not first, home for the fisherman, and his colleagues are his second, if not first, family. Nevertheless, all of the colleagues declared to spend their free time, that is to say, the weekend, with their respective kin and friends. In fact, they hardly see their colleagues outside the work context, unless they happen to be real family, that is blood ties and relatives, or in the same church. In the former case, they may meet at important social events, such as birthdays, weddings, funerals, and other festivities. The definition of family is brought into question again. Obviously, blood ties cannot compete with work relations for authenticity, but the feeling may be the same or even in favour for the more 'distant' one.

My purpose of ‘being there’, my research, involved the utmost efforts in terms of communication, a feature that strikes rather unnatural, or unusual, to the routine of the fisherman. Let alone my being a woman. The common knowledge that my presence would only last for limited period of time allowed us to interact in a friendly manner without too much intimacy. The time spent aboard was short enough to pretend. Yet, the intimate nature of the place, working, eating, sleeping together, had a rather uniting effect. If I would have stayed longer positions would have had to be clarified, roles defined, regulations set. Just like in a family, or a common work place. The way it was, I took advantage of the unfamiliar situation. Luckily, research is considered an appropriate reason for ‘being there’.

My role as a researcher was clear as I carried the pencil, or the tape recorder. Sometimes, respondents would request specifically that their information was
recorded: ‘Write it down! Are you writing it down?’ Then they would look over my shoulder, or across the table to the sheets of paper I was scribbling on to make sure it happened. Writing is a more conscious way of recording than taping. When there was no table, or conversations had to be held more haphazardly, I used a tape recorder. It runs silently, and during the conversation its presence is almost forgotten until the moment comes of changing the tape. As much as informants reproach the lacking sense of documentation of the note-taking researcher, as much do they reproach the thorough documentation of the tape recorder. ‘Did you tape this now? Is it on the tape? What are you going to do with it?’ The best conversation happened unexpectedly, over dinner with full mouths, or while stripping the fish with bloody hands. Then, I had to rely on my memory to render their voices and meanings. Overall, people liked to be part of the research by telling stories, adding, changing, correcting them, and referring me to other possible story tellers.

Observation was another helpful tool. On the fishery days, I had the opportunity to meet my fishers again, weeks later. This time, they took their wives and extended families to what is called the ‘floatshow’, a day trip at sea. The rusty fishing boats were colourfully decorated, and so were the fishermen. The practical, minimalist impression I got from their work persona was redeemed at last. They wore festive jewellery, clean shirts, had their hair combed, their faces shaved. Altogether, they had a different outlook. This was another part of their selves, even if it was a part that more seldom, in terms of days per year, came to the fore. It was an exceptional day, also for the fisher, as it combined both of their families, the land and the water one. The situation had a strong sense of holiday about it, of liminality. It was a moment out of place for all people involved.

**Good achievement**

It appeared to me that fishing, just like many other activities, consists of a continual, never-ending performance. Such work has an inherent satisfaction, a recurring gratification, as well as an inherent dissatisfaction. In a way, it can be regarded as a basic activity meant to keep the body alive and productive. ‘Work [...] links with the
necessity of providing the means for life. Life has to be provided for, and this occurs through work and consumption. Both belong together; work produces goods for consumption. Work thus makes life possible. In this sense, we, human beings, work to live, as well as live to work. The one is bound by the other, there is no life without work. Or, to put it differently, it is work that allows for life.

Given the means of life, however, there must be other reasons for humans to work. Or for some at least. According to this view, there is no real necessity for all of us to work, as long as some produce enough consumption goods. Work on the whole becomes a matter of organisation. Achterhuis adds another element: ‘[…] work also serves to protect the human world from the natural processes of growth and decay. […] Working is to keep moving in the same circle that is dictated by the biological process of the living organism, and his ‘pain and effort’ is only ended with the death of that organism.’ Work thus is a natural activity; we cannot do otherwise. The southerner inside-me wonders out loud. The question of choice remains. Why would I choose for a particular work if it is just to keep me alive? Why would anyone choose for a tiresome, arduous activity in this regard? Why are there fishers and professional stamp collectors, for example? The little satisfactions we derive from our work, or the fruits of it, help us to bear the absurdity of our existence. The work of Sisyphus describes a worker that does not relent in his efforts to push an enormous piece of rock up a steep mountain. Just before reaching the top, it rolls down again. Camus closes his book by saying: ‘We have to imagine Sisyphus as a happy person.’

Likewise, the fisherman continues to carry his lot with a smile on his face and a ‘curse’ on his lips. Katwijkers do not actually curse, they sometimes shout. But the gate to happiness, satisfaction, or perseverance, for this matter, varies from person to person. Traditional, rather coherent communities, like the retiring generation of fisher in Katwijk share their belief in work and well-being, and the relation between the two. For them, a life of hard work at sea was a necessary, as well as pleasurable activity.

No other technique for the conduct of life attaches the individual so firmly to reality as laying emphasis on work; for his work at least gives him a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community.
Once a fisher, the specificity of the profession begins to affect the worker. He realises, to the very surprise of the outsider, that life at sea and all the pains of it, yield enough little satisfactions to keep doing it. "Fishers derive considerable satisfaction from their work and are extremely proud of their identity as fishers."64 In this sense, I see the human condition not based on work, as Hanna Arendt maintains65, but on the fabrication and fulfilment of desires. And just like Sisyphus, we may apperceive some sense of absurdity of his condition, yet he/ we carry on. Why? Camus maintains 'happiness and absurdity are children of the same earth'.66 Happiness, and therefore well-being, can only exist in contrast to and as a complement for the pains of work. Yet, pain as well as happiness are thoroughly personal sensations, their definition varying with the person. What is work for one, is pleasure for another and pain for a third. Do we all have to feel the pain, the absurdity in order to be happy? Do different professions, activities, works have different levels of pain? Is there a hierarchy of work in terms of producing happiness as Freud contends? And how then does one chose his course in life? Or is well-being not a matter of choice? Is it not a path of life to be pursued?

'(And yet,) as a path to happiness, work is not highly prized by men. They do not strive after it as they strive after other possibilities of satisfaction. The great majority of people only work under the stress of necessity, and this natural human aversion to work raises most difficult social problems.'67

This statement does not hold for the fishers of Katwijk. They do not only work out of necessity, but succeed in incorporating work as a valuable activity which they attend with a certain pleasure. I have to confess that the work as such is not as hard as I imagined it to be. The toughness of the fisherman's work rather lies in its irregular working hours, the insecurity of knowing what is next, the caprices of the weather and the sea, as well as in the necessary flexibility to function on such limited space with a given group of people. At the end of the day, luck, and the belief in it, is not enough to be rewarded with a good catch. The Katwijker fisher always stress the importance of one's own doings. It is as if luck comes to those that work hardest. The combination of belief and hard work is the basic formula for well-being among the fishers of
Katwijk. One part is given, although distribution varies according to merit and God's mercy. The other part has to be achieved, and the industrious are likely to be among the winners. His "existential labour ethos" enhances his adaptive performance.\textsuperscript{68} His firm belief in the necessity of it all, the common interest, make him endure his lot with devotion. Regardless the justification, dedication and enthusiasm seem to generally do the trick. Even if it all is just a mental exercise, or a (self-) deception, the ardent worker succeeds in creating an atmosphere of material and spiritual well-being and satisfaction. Following this line, the material and felt evidence of well-being stimulate his work ethic. For me, the fisher stand for an extraordinary culture well-adapted to the unpredictability of their profession, and in spite of the inherent difficulties of their work, or maybe because of them, they manage to live well, and enjoy their well-being. The secret is to find the pleasure within the apparent displeasure. To find rest in restlessness.

\textit{Anthropology and the fishermen}

Medical anthropologists in general have a critical stance concerning their own culture, their healing system. Their informants, the participants in the research, often look forward to the anthropologist's reminder of 'other ways'. This, after all, is one of the tasks of anthropology; to remind us of the many 'differences within'. While I was a complete novice in the field of fishery, my informants were the experts even beyond the borders of their own culture. Yet, they were not missionary, at the contrary. Sharing information was done, so I believe, out of an honest move of generosity, a compassionate encompassment, rather than calculated arrogance. The fishers did not believe themselves to be in any way superior, or keepers of the one and only method. They even asked 'What about Italian fishers? How do they do? And why did you choose to study us instead?' I have to admit, I was surprised about their interest, as well as their knowledge of fellow workers abroad. I wondered whether studying Italian fishers would have been 'closer to home' for me? I wondered how much they associated or identified with fishers in other countries? How much does a profession unite in spite of other differences? Are the local differences just variations of the same theme? And what then is the theme?
To my very surprise, and in spite of all the cultural relevance, my choice of study topic, fishery, was encountered with elevated eyebrows by the locals. Later, it turned out that two elements contributed to their amazement, namely, my foreign-ness and a general mis-conception of the anthropological discipline. For a foreigner, taking a course in the Northern world is an established matter, not to be questioned except maybe for: why Amsterdam in particular? The student of anthropology is then expected to dissipate to exotic localities and to report back to the academic community. A traditional village in the Netherlands does not necessarily fit the definition of ‘exotic’ that used to be located geographically as ‘far away’ from the Western ‘home’. Mason offers an alternative definition: ‘Exotic is when people and things are taken out of context and therefore become incomprehensible’. It is a matter of perspective then, of relative distance. Only recently do anthropologists exotise their own societies, in the North and South, West and East. While the self-reflective undertaking is becoming more and more common, it still is peculiar for people in the Northern hemisphere to be study objects of Southern researchers. There remains, even if modestly, a sense of overall direction. While we all learn from each other, some seem to have to learn more than others to reach the same understanding.

In his article Acheson summarises the contributions of maritime anthropology or the anthropology of fishing as studying ways of human adaptation and ‘to produce a body of literature and set of concepts on the way people have solved the problems posed by earning a living in this uncertain and risky environment’. Adaptation to uncertainty and changing circumstances is a common theme for research on fishery as well as cultural anthropology in general. Studies on adaptation aim at understanding the ways of fishers, or other human beings, to not only survive, but live well. In doing so, they may shed some light on the underlying concepts and ideas of those people, as well as their specific worries and constraints. This has been my intention in what concerns the fishers of Katwijk.
ENDNOTES

1 Achterhuis, p. 231; my translation, quoting H. Arendt;
2 Freud, p. 30
3 Egypt is a country I have been to for several years and therefore will use as a reference. Other comparisons, if at all, will be drawn with Italy, Germany, and the USA, other countries of my personal frame of reference.
4 Freud, p. 30
5 Van Haersolte, my translation, p.7
6 Prologue in Boscher, p.7
7 Folder depicting all maritime musea in the Netherlands; issued by the section 'maritieme- en scheepvaartmusea van de Nederlandse Museum Vereniging' 1994
8 Van Haersolte, p. 8
9 Acheson's review article, et al.
10 PV, pp. 40-41, all figures are of 1997.
11 De Boer, p. 130
12 PV, p. 9
13 PV, p. 7
14 PV, p. 7/8
15 The total amount of fish marketed at Dutch auctions in 1997 reads 144.807.457 kg with an exchange value of 812.352.198,16 Guilders, PV, p. 51
16 Acheson, p. 277-8
17 PV, p. 37
18 Van Haersolte, p. 7
19 Hemingway, pp. 32-33
21 First recorded as a formal demand in 1864. Genootschap Oud Katwijk, p. 41.
22 De Hartog, p. 13-14
23 Also, Acheson, p. 297.
24 Acheson, p. 298
25 Morgan, p. 469
26 Morgan, p. 470
27 De Hartog, p. 207
28 Acheson, p. 298
29 Acheson, p. 277-8
30 Genootschap Oud Katwijk, p. 66
31 The specifications of the denominations vary slightly in different newspapers. Overall, the following are found in Katwijk aan Zee are the (Nederlands) Hervormde Kerk, and the Hervormde Gemeente, the Gereformeerde Kerk, and the Gereformeerde Gemeente, the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk, the Gereformeerde Kerk Katwijk (Vrijgemaakt), the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk, the Baptisten Gemeente, the Ezra Ministeries, the Evangelische Gemeenschap, and the Universele Eredienst (Sufi). Katwijk aan den Rijn offers comparatively less possibilities: (Nederlands) Hervormde Kerk, Gereformeerde Kerk, the Algemene Christelijke Kerk, and the RK-Kerk.
32 Op hoop van zegen, 1935, based on the novel by H. Heyermans. Recently, a re-make of the story has come out.
33 De Hartog, p. 144
34 De Hartog, p. 21; also listen to Zeilstra on Zeaziik, Heimwee.
35 Zeilstra: Lauwerssoog.
36 De Hartog, p. 144
37 De Hartog, p. 18
I adapted this schedule to my experience on a rather small-sized fishing boat.

Zeilstra captures the feeling in his ‘wachtman’ song, of which I would like to render some lines:

“De nacht ligt als een deken om de boot, de romp verdwijnt, rijst op en daalt [...] Mijn ogen zijn gericht op de piloot, lijnen geven aan waar is gevist; bodemechos leggen stenen bloot, ik heb jou dag en elke nacht gemist. [...] Als een wachtsman in het donker vaart hij mee, en zal er zijn als ieder slaap wil.”

For more information on leadership on board and its effects on the catch, see the study by Van der Vlist.
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