

Textile Meanings in a Global Capital: Fabric and Fashion in 18th c. Amsterdam

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Abstract

This paper explores the multiple meanings attached to ordinary people's dress and household textiles in Amsterdam across the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Special consideration is paid to the complicated and multi-directional interactions between the quantity of clothing owned by a household, the variety of fashion styles they partook of, the inherent quality of the different fabric types available to them, and the place of origin of those fabrics, including traditional European textiles, those of Asiatic origin, and those produced in imitation of the latter by European manufacture. It also considers the implications of the new consumer demands on the macroeconomic development of the northwestern European economies at its center. Drawing upon over 900 household inventories of poor and lower middling Amsterdam burghers registered by the Municipal Orphanage between 1740 and 1780, I examine the ability of the ordinary people who lived in this world capital of commerce to participate in the fruits of global trade. I find that even very poor households could be eager to possess the new styles and fabrics of the global textile system despite the limitations imposed on both the quality and quantity of their textiles by their often meager household wealth.

The question of whether economic growth in general, and the rapid expansion of the Industrial Revolution period in particular, is led more by the forces of production or those of consumption has a long and distinguished history, going back at least as far as the period of the Industrial Revolution itself with the publication of Say's Law in 1803. Say argued that the burden of growth potential lay on the side of production because, he believed, the very act of producing goods generated the capacity for those goods to be purchased. That is, aggregate

supply should always create its own aggregate demand, thereby guaranteeing that consumption must ever be the tail wagged by the dog of production. He held this to be true regardless of whether output was increased by greater inputs of capital and/or labor, or by the employment of better productive techniques. His analysis of the problem has remained more or less the dominant view ever since with the notable, and relatively short-lived, exception generated by John Maynard Keynes' work in response to the Great Depression -- an especially poignant moment when demand seemed to have failed entirely to follow its natural duty. A similar moment might be at hand in the present, as it remains yet to be seen if the lingering recessionary pressures following the 2008 global financial crisis (and what appears to be a continuing full-scale financial crisis in the Euro-zone) will fully resuscitate the strength of demand-led economic growth theories or not.

But even before the onset of the most recent recession following the near (or total) collapse of numerous financial markets, one important voice was already calling scholars to pay greater attention to the independent force of consumer demand. That is the voice of early modern historians from all parts of the globe. For increasingly historical work on the quantity and quality of people's possessions across the early modern centuries has turned up the anomaly of the expansion and increasing diversification of household possessions even at the same time that real wage series mostly showed no particular improvements, and well in advance of the significant productivity gains we associate with the 19th century Industrial Revolution.

The most ambitious attempt to explain this anomaly has been put forward by Jan de Vries in a series of publications over the last two decades. He first laid out his theory of the 'industrious revolution' in his 1993 contribution to the magisterial collection of Porter and Brewer, Consumption and the World of Goods, and in his Presidential Address to the Economic

History Association of that same year. Most recently he has published an expanded and fully documented book-length treatment.¹ De Vries posits that north-western Europe experienced a radical change in its work habits across the early modern centuries, a change manifested by both longer hours of work per worker and the greatly expanded employment of new (that is mostly child and female) laborers whose market work potential had been previously under-utilized, or at least under-reported and probably under-compensated, in home production. More significantly, he argues that this movement towards increased labor effort for the market occurred *in advance* of its much more famous (or perhaps infamous) cousin the Industrial Revolution. The ‘industrious revolution’, he says, yielded growth along Smithian lines: that is per capita growth was generated from the economies of market expansion and the concomitant increase in the capacity for specialization and a further division of labor. The Industrial Revolution itself, of course, remains largely a story of technical progress in both machinery and energy capture and deployment, as well as what would ultimately be a radical restructuring of the organization of productive processes. But it would not be enough to just call upon an increased extraction of labor from the household to make de Vries’ theory pathbreaking. There is no shortage of historical or sociological theories to explain the myriad ways over the centuries that labor has been extracted (often forcibly) for the expansion of productive enterprises. What is so striking about de Vries’ contribution is that by linking his ‘industrious revolution’ to what was then a still relatively new literature on the ‘consumer revolution(s)’ of the 17th and 18th centuries, he could tell a radically different story about the *voluntary* release of the additional labor effort that was, he says, essential to kick-start modern economic growth. Moreover, as Adam Smith himself so

¹ Jan de Vries, “Between purchasing power and the world of goods: understanding the household economy in early modern Europe,” in Roy Porter and J. Brewer (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (Routledge: London. 1993); “The Industrial Revolution and the industrious revolution,” in *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 54, no. 2 (1994): 249-70; and *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. 2008).

presciently suggested already in the later 18th century, the resulting increase in the capacity for the further specialization of labor would prove to greatly facilitate the technical advances that were to become the cornerstone of 19th century economic growth. Finally, this theory of an ‘industrious revolution’ could account for the hitherto yawning theoretical gap between the seemingly prolific expansion of the ‘world of goods’ as revealed in household accounts and probate inventories (not to mention in moral diatribes against the consumption vices of the middling and poor), and the economic historians’ carefully constructed evidence of only slowly rising, if at all, real wages of adult male workers (largely drawn from the construction trades) before the second half of the 19th century. It was not wage power that made possible the feverish progress of ever more, and more varied, items of personal and household adornment so lovingly reconstructed by the art and cultural historians of this period. Rather it was the transfer of leisure time, however happily or uselessly (depending on your politics) it might have been employed in the pre-industrious past, first to the rigors of proto-industrial time and then to the even more rigid strictures of factory time. As Maxine Berg argued so persuasively already in the early stages of this research agenda, it was women, along with many of their children, who were in the vanguard of this labor migration.² But why would anyone voluntarily trade in their Saint Monday’s, their multiple religious feast days, and the autonomy of the household rhythm for the foreman’s clock and the ‘dark Satanic mill’? If we are to believe that the allure of consumer goods was sufficient to effect such a startling transformation in the preferred work habits of humankind, as they have been made manifest across the long period documented by the historical record, we have to demonstrate that the new consumer goods were plausibly within reach of those members of society who stood to lose the most from the new labor regime. If the colonial groceries of tea,

² Maxine Berg, “What difference did women’s work make to the Industrial Revolution?” in Pamela Sharpe (ed.), *Women’s Work: the English Experience 1650-1914*. (Arnold: London. 1998): 149 -171.

coffee, sugar and tobacco; dish wares and wall tiles made of porcelain and its many imitations; buttons, baubles and metal ‘toys’ of all varieties; and dress accessories and expanded wardrobes of new fibers and weaves, not to mention new dye colors and prints, were in fact all luxury goods, accessible to elites but not to those below them in station and resources, then de Vries’ theory has no legs, and the mechanism of voluntary change must be found wanting. Given the weight of contemporary commentary that fought to preserve ‘luxury’ as a meaningful descriptor of goods only available to those of appropriate rank, coupled with the verdict of most economic historians that the early modern trading companies dealt largely in ephemera (although I have argued otherwise³), it is on the consumer side of de Vries’ formulation where we will need to secure the strongest evidence. Work I have been engaged in for more than a decade coding and analyzing a remarkable collection of 18th century household inventories from Amsterdam has been devoted to just this purpose.

The *Burgerweeshuis* Inventories:

I have described this collection of inventories, drawn up by the Regents of the Municipal Orphanage (the Amsterdam *Burgerweeshuis* hereafter referred to as BWH) in great detail elsewhere, but a brief overview of their origin and characteristics is provided here for those not familiar with that work.⁴ Following the model set forth by the so-called Orphan Chambers that had been an important social institution in medieval cities in the Low Countries for managing the property of parentless children, the Dutch orphanages that were established as a response to the

³ Anne McCants, “Exotic Goods, Popular Consumption, and the Standard of Living: Thinking about Globalization in the Early Modern World.” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 18, no. 4 (2007):433- 62.

⁴ All of the inventories consulted for this paper can be found at, G.A.A. p.a. 367, oud archief #652-688. These records are the source for all of the tables as well.

rapid urban growth of the early modern period⁵ likewise managed the property of their charges. They did this with the dual intention of both preserving some patrimony (if at all possible) for the benefit of children graduating out of the orphanage into adulthood, as well as assessing the ability of the parental estates to contribute to the maintenance costs incurred by the orphaned children while living in the institution. Hence, the Regents of Dutch orphanages were of necessity deeply implicated in the property assessment and management businesses. They were expert at collecting comprehensive inventories of households upon the death of a parent, and remarkably persistent in tracking down the assets that were justifiably accreditable to their charges, whether they were directly from parents or from other more distantly related relatives.⁶ Thus, even deceased parents heading very poor households were evaluated by the Regents and their bookkeeper, so long as they had been citizens of the city for a sufficient number of years that their children were eligible for residence in the BWH. As a result the inventories associated with the BWH represent an unusually broad spectrum of the citizen working poor, as well as petty shopkeepers and craftsmen of the city. Moreover, their economic reach is not the only way in which this source is unique. These inventories also represent a most unusual opportunity to evaluate households headed by women and those of unmarried individuals of both sexes. Probate inventories are usually limited in their research usefulness by the common feature of having been drafted more or less exclusively for those with property worth fighting about, and

⁵ The Amsterdam BWH was founded in 1526, for example.

⁶ Each inventory includes the date of death and street location of the decedent's household, his or her surviving heirs (either a second or higher order spouse, children or both), the names and ages of the children being left to the BWH, a listing and evaluation of all movable property and some real property as well, the credits and debts left outstanding either from or to the decedent, and a list of unredeemed pawnshop tickets if there were any. In almost all cases the inventories could be linked to the city marriage registers allowing for the calculation of the age at death for the decedent, an occupation if given in the marriage registers, as well as the marital history of the decedent, and the funding or not of child support payments in the name of previously deceased spouses. A complete description of the data set can be found in, Anne McCants, "After-Death Inventories as a Source for the Study of Material Culture, Economic Well-Being, and Household Formation Among the Poor of 18th c. Amsterdam," *Historical Methods*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Winter (2006): 10-23.

also primarily for married male heads of household. But in the case of the BWH the situation is very different. Because an inventory was drawn up at whatever point the second parent came to die, the decedent population includes (re)married men and women, as well as widows and widowers. Moreover, because one could fall under the scrutiny of the BWH both as a relative of a current orphan to whom you left property, or as a now grown-up former orphan (without heirs of your own), the sample also includes 87 inventories of a mix of men and women who had never married. Some of these individuals were living in rented rooms, some as servants in the households of non-relations, and some, as we might expect, with members of their extended families. But in all cases, their estates have been evaluated independently of the households in which they resided.

The archives of the orphanage suggest that such inventory making had enjoyed a long history among the activities of the institution's resident bookkeeper. However, the earliest extant inventory records date only from the latter seventeenth century, and these appear not to have been generated systematically. That is, there are many fewer surviving inventories than there were children entering into the institution, even when the inventories have been collected in a single volume suggesting that loss of individual records is not the problem. Rather it seems most likely that in this earlier period the bookkeeper restricted his inventory making to only the most prosperous households, much as the Orphan Chambers had only managed the property of those children with assets substantial enough to be worth managing. However, in May of 1740 this practice seems to have changed radically. A new format of inventory book can be found in which a comprehensive record was made of every household leaving behind either orphans eligible for the BWH, assets for those orphans, or assets of former orphans now deceased who

did not themselves leave behind direct heirs with claims on those assets.⁷ These inventories survive in a continuous line from their inception in 1740 until the end of the first decade of the 19th century, at which point the institution lost its financial independence and its corporate urban status at the time of the political and fiscal collapse of the Republic under Napoleon. The total collection includes approximately 1,500 household inventories. However, the results presented here are based on only the 913 inventories recorded from the point of inception in 1740 through April 1782.⁸

Admittance into the BWH was open to all fully orphaned children whose parents (both of them individually) had held citizenship in the city of Amsterdam for at least seven years. There is, however, reason to believe that, as with many early modern social welfare institutions, the more substantial members of society did not avail themselves of such publicly provided services for their children. They seem instead to have found adequate ways to care for their orphans within their own kin networks, thereby keeping assets well within familial rather than public control. Likewise, the immigrant underclass is also missing from the BWH population. They were excluded by the combined rules of citizenship and longevity. So it was that the BWH functioned primarily as an institution catering to those of the middling sort, a fact that is readily attested by the inventories themselves.

⁷ The BWH did not have the right to make claims on the property of former orphans if they had their own children who required those resources. The guiding principle seems to have been the logical one of preserving the capacity to care for surviving children with family resources whenever possible.

⁸ After this date the proportion of the total inventories drawn up *per memorie* increases dramatically. These inventories include only the statement about the deceased and the composition of claimants on the estate, but no listing of either the specific assets or the debts. It seems that when the bookkeeper encountered a household in which the debts clearly exceeded any and all assets he increasingly saved himself the trouble of making lists and indicated only that the household had been noted just for the memory of it. While this is interesting information about the increasingly weak financial profile of the households associated with the BWH, it is not at all useful for my purposes here which are to look at the specific goods owned by these households. Some of these greatly truncated 'inventories' exist for the middle decades of the 18th century as well, but they form a much smaller percentage of the total.

Indeed, despite the BWH Regent's own conception of their charitable mission to the *burgerij*, that is to the respectable middle class of their city, the actual population that found its way through the doors of the institution was by any absolute measure a poor one. During a period in which the BWH estimated that it spent about 150 guilders per annum to care for each resident child, the median household associated with the institution had total assets at death amounting to only 69 guilders. (This drops to only 52 guilders if we include the 133 inventories recording no possessions and value them at zero guilders, which cannot be too far from a correct assessment of the reality.) Moreover, once the outstanding debts of the deceased are accounted for, the vast majority of households actually had a negative net worth. It was a scant 28% of the decedents who managed to leave property of enough value to more than cover their unpaid debts.

Not surprisingly then, given the general poverty of the orphanage population, many of the inventories record only minimal material possessions. Nearly 30% of the inventories do not even record the presence of so much as a bed, or a piece of storage furniture, indeed not even something as simple as a basket. Indeed, nearly 15% of the inventories record no possessions of any kind; this despite the fact that the pathetic descriptions of some of the enumerated inventories suggest that the quality threshold for non-reporting on the part of the bookkeeper was very low indeed. What might we expect then in the way of consumer goods from a population that could barely support its children in life, let alone after death? How could such a group be expected to have participated in any meaningful way in the new consumer culture of the 18th century? What place would dress accessories and new fabrics, both imported from afar and locally produced in imitation of those, have occupied in their seemingly meager lives? Could the homes (cellars and single rooms as they often were) of such people possibly provide us with the evidence we need if we are to document the economic depth and importance of the new

consumer behavior? After all, such documentation depends on finding consumption of the new ‘luxury’ items widely spread across the social spectrum, as consumer goods which were exclusively limited to elite lifestyles might legitimately be dismissed as trivial when they are not overlooked altogether. For de Vries’ industrious revolution theory to have traction we need to find evidence that the new consumer goods enjoyed a broad geographic reach as well as a wide price and quality spectrum. Only these features could produce the necessary conditions for the kinds of social differentiation that in turn might stimulate the willingness to work longer and less autonomous hours, especially on the part of women and their children.

Textiles in the *Burgerweeshuis* Inventories:

Work I have published elsewhere using the orphanage inventory data, in conjunction with a wide variety of other sources, argues that these conditions were indeed met already in the 18th century for tea, coffee, sugar, and tobacco, and the new vessels in which they were prepared and served.⁹ In this talk I would like to focus my attention more closely on textiles and the expansion of clothing options which are an especially suitable commodity for testing some of the broader implications of a theory of consumer behavior that can be fully linked to the world of production and prices. The possibilities for using the BWH inventory data to test broader theories about the role played by the diversification of textiles and clothing on the development of consumer culture, or for stimulating macroeconomic demand, are particularly promising because the Dutch Republic never placed any legal restrictions on either the import of Asiatic textiles or on modes of dress allowable to the common person. As a result, neither the Amsterdam cloth nor clothing markets were skewed by the regulatory environment, and likewise

⁹ Anne McCants, “Exotic Goods”; and “Poor Consumers as Global Consumers: the Diffusion of Tea and Coffee Drinking in the 18th century,” *Economic History Review*, Vol. 61, No. S1 (2008): 172-200.

individual consumer choices were not constrained by fear of policing. In contrast, both England and France did impose important restrictions in the 18th century on the import of cotton cloth and the wearing of cotton clothing, even if their policing may not have been especially effective as has been convincingly argued.¹⁰ Giorgio Riello reminds us that Indian cottons were not just legally restricted but also became more expensive over the course of the 18th century in western Europe. While they still remained cheaper than locally produced linens, the price gap between the two fabrics narrowed considerably. Thus, he suggests that prices may have been even more important than prohibitions in dictating the level of consumer demand for cottons.¹¹ Without the confound of any legal restrictions, the Dutch data allows us to confront the question of affordability directly.

However, before we can do that it is essential to understand more fully a host of other characteristics besides price that factor into setting demand for what were often entirely new fabrics, colored and printed in previously unimaginable ways, and fashioned into equally new forms of attire and household decoration. For a long time, the ubiquity of cotton in the contemporary world, and the inherent comfort we presume it to possess, were considered sufficient to explain its consumer triumph by the end of the early modern period. But more recently John Styles has looked beyond those assumptions and importantly asked, “What were cottons for” anyway? Similarly, Beverly Lemire and others have posed critical questions about the timing of the diffusion of new fabrics (especially the wide variety of cottons ranging from thin and cheap *guinea* cloth to the most expensive and luxurious chintzes) as well as the mechanisms whereby people learned to appreciate them, and finally about the vendors from whom they could purchase them. Lemire has argued that cotton began its consumer conquest

¹⁰ For a useful summary of this literature, see Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World*. Cambridge University Press, 2013: 115-16.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

rather early, as soon as the second half of the 16th century in especially precocious places such as the Iberian Peninsula. Meanwhile Styles has countered with English evidence that cotton only became “truly popular” in the second half of the 18th century. Finally, is it enough to say that something new is “fashionable” (either because of its exotic origins or the imitable practices of elites) and that it thereby promotes its own demand without need for deeper explanation? All of these are questions that the BWH data is uniquely poised to help answer.

Summary of key findings:

- 1) Second half of the 18th century does appear to be a period of rapid expansion in access to new consumer goods. When the BWH inventories are divided into two (roughly) equal periods, 1740-1760 and 1761-1782, the number and diversity of goods and in particular new textiles goes up in time, even as the population appears to be getting poorer overall. See Table 1 Panel A for the total asset valuations as well as the total value of all clothing items. See Table 3 Panel A for the share of households in the two time periods who own at least one item made from various fabrics with notable increases in the share percentage for cotton generally, muslin and printed light cotton (*bont*), and lesser increases for chintz and silk. Furthermore, the total number of cloth-specified pieces of clothing enumerated in the inventories up to 1760 was 1,021, while for the inventories taken from 1761 onwards it was 1,887. This despite the fact that more total inventories exist for the earlier period than the latter, 516 versus 397; and that a greater share of the later inventories were taken *per memorie*, meaning they had no goods remaining to be inventoried at all. Finally, the second half of the inventory sample reveals 73 distinctly named individual items of clothing or household decoration with a specified fabric type, whereas only 60 such distinct items are evidenced in the first half of the inventory sample. (All individual

items which appear in the first half of the sample continue to appear in the second half, so the change in numbers reflects the addition of 13 newly enumerated items over time.)

- 2) As has already been suggested in preliminary work I have done with this data sample, the quality spectrum of fabric types ranges across both traditional European-made fabrics and the new Asiatic imports, or their European-produced imitations. Table 2 selects for three specific clothing items that were the most likely to be associated with a specific fabric type **and** to have received an individual valuation by the orphanage bookkeeper. (This is a critical issue as often times whole blocks of goods listed together would receive only a group valuation, as in “2 rokken en 2 kamizoolen voor 3 guilders.” In such cases the items in question could not be used for the analysis documented in Table 2, even if the fabric type were known.) Yet, even with the necessarily limited remaining sample, a consistent quality hierarchy of fabric types is readily apparent across the three most commonly appearing individually valued goods, jackets (*jak*), robes (*japon*), and skirts or dressing gowns (*rok*). The most valuable individual pieces of clothing were consistently made of either silk or chintz (probably both imports although a small silk weaving industry had already existed in Europe for a number of centuries in imitation of Asiatic imports). Not far behind them in value, however, were several traditional European fabric types, most notably *lakkens* or stuffs, and to a lesser extent damask. Some of the cheapest individually specified fabrics were also Asiatic imports, cottons and striped. This value data (presumably not unrelated to fabric prices on the market) is entirely consistent with the wealth (and total clothing assets) sorting of the households in the inventory sample when grouped by the types of fabric that they had in their possession, as depicted in Tables 4 and 5. In general, households that possessed the most valuable

fabrics (Bengal or Coromandel silks or chintz) enjoyed a median total wealth and clothing wealth value four to five times greater than households that possessed only the cheapest fabrics. Households that had no items of clothing or decoration with a specified fabric content were yet vastly poorer still. One final note of interest in Table 2 is that the item of clothing most likely to have its fabric content specified as well as to have been individually valued is the *japon*. Nearly 38% of all the inventory entries for *japons* marked off their special character by both valuing them and carefully describing them. As is evidenced already by its very name, this type of robe or dressing gown was in direct imitation of exotic clothing types brought back from East Asia.

- 3) The demographic composition of the inventoried households shows a clear relationship with clothing assets more generally, and with the acquisition of new kinds of consumer goods, notably fabrics from Asia or in imitation thereof more specifically. Although the 87 inventories drawn up for the former orphanage residents who had never come to marry suggests that they were among the poorest element of the BWH population (with close competition from the widows who had not remarried), they were clearly in the vanguard of new textile consumers. They had the absolutely highest median *guilder* value of clothing assets and nearly the highest mean values as well. (See Table 1 Panel B and Table 3 Panel B.) Even more importantly, a significantly smaller share of singles owned something in a traditional *lakken* than any other demographic group, but held their own with the married couples (the wealthiest group) in cotton and chintz possession, and pulled substantially ahead of everyone else in muslin, *bont* and remarkably even silk possession.

4) Another characteristic that appears to have influenced how open a household would be to consumption of new fabric types is the status of the married couple as natives to the city of Amsterdam or as immigrants to it. Table 1 Panel C shows that Amsterdam natives (at least in the BWH sample) were clearly poorer than their immigrant peers who also left children to the municipal orphanage. (The rules for eligibility to leave your children to the BWH in the event of your premature death required that both parents be citizens of the city for at least seven years and becoming a citizen of the city was expensive. As a result, those households of the BWH sample that had double immigrant heads were substantially wealthier than their 'peers' who had not had to buy their way into citizenship.) Yet this clear wealth advantage only translates into relatively modest increases in possession of new fabric types, as shown in Table 3 Panel C. Remarkably, the most expensive general fabric type, chintz, was just as likely to be found in the homes of the Amsterdam natives as it was in the homes of the double immigrant couples (with even greater shares of possession in those households that held the wealth advantage of one immigrant partner and the nativity advantage of one Amsterdam native). The conflicting pressures however of these two conditions (wealth and nativity) make it difficult to tease out the full impact of nativity on the acquisition of the 'learning' necessary for the consumption of new fabric types. The data presented in Table 6 goes further to show that Asiatic textiles begin to appear in the households of much poorer Amsterdamers than in those with either both or even just one immigrant parent. For example, chintz begins to appear regularly in Amsterdam native households once total asset values reach the level of 58 *guilders*. For immigrant households the corresponding

asset value level is a remarkable 352 *guilders*, with households of mixed parentage falling in between.

A final section of the paper will examine the types of clothing associated with various new fabrics. Damask, linen, silks and velvets are all associated with a relatively small number of individual items of clothing, personal accessories, or household decoration. What is truly remarkable about cotton (in all of its many varieties) is the enormous range of items with which it is associated. As has been argued elsewhere by Riello and Styles in particular, cotton was most notable for its capacity to both absorb roles played previously by other fabrics as well as to promote new items of clothing. Riello argues that “the ultimate success of cotton lay not so much in its fashionability but in its slow but relentless conquering of a variety of garments that were increasingly incorporating what was once an exotic material,” such that it could ultimately “complement rather than replace woolens, worsteds, silks and linens.”¹²

¹² Riello, pp. 133-34.

Table 1

Household Assets & Clothing Values

Burgerweeshuis Inventory Sample, 1740-1782
Total asset and clothing values in guilders

Panel A: by year of inventory.

	# HHs	Mean assets	Median assets	Mean clothing	Median clothing
Period					
1740 - 1760	516	209.5	53.5	34.3	16.3
1761 - 1782	397	237.7	52.0	27.3	12.8

Panel B: by marital status of household head at time of inventory.

	# HHs	Mean assets	Median assets	Mean clothing	Median clothing
HH type					
Married	278	240.7	82.6	39.1	26.8
Widower	202	288.4	52.0	26.9	10.5
Widow	346	187.7	31.0	25.5	7.5
Single	87	142.0	62.9	38.4	33.5

Panel C: by nativity (of married couples linked to the Amsterdam marriage registers).

	# HHs	Mean assets	Median assets	Mean clothing	Median clothing
Nativity					
Amsterdam couple	394	180.3	40.5	27.1	9.0
Immigrant couple	52	402.8	90.8	42.7	29.4
Amsterdam husband	74	291.3	101.3	37.7	17.5
Amsterdam wife	128	217.6	60.5	30.3	13.4

Table 2
Clothing Valuations
 (by fabric types for three specified goods)
 Values in guilders

Cloth	Type	<i>jak</i> #	<i>jak</i> Mean	<i>japon</i> #	<i>japon</i> Mean	<i>rok</i> #	<i>rok</i> Mean
Not specified		96	1.1	18	3.9	133	2.3
<i>baai</i>	woolen	-		-		4	0.6
<i>gestreepte</i>	striped	-		4	2.3	2	1.3
cotton		28	1.0	1	2.5	6	2.3
<i>serge</i>	woolen	-		-		4	2.5
<i>gestikte</i>	embroidered	-		-		16	2.5
<i>grijn</i>	woolen	-		3	1.1	18	2.6
<i>magaije</i>	unknown	-		-		6	2.8
damask		-		-		34	2.8
<i>caleminke</i>	light worsted	1	1.0	-		7	2.9
stuffs	worsted	1	3.0	2	3.5	5	3.3
<i>coleured</i>	unknown	-		3	10.0	10	3.6
<i>lakken</i>	traditional	-		-		22	4.0
woolen		-		1	4.0	15	4.0
silk		12	2.7	33	8.7	24	5.5
chintz	cotton	44	3.1	5	9.3	27	4.2
Total # w/value		182		70		333	
Share of total entries		16.2%		37.6%		15.1%	

Note: Items of clothing are only included here if they were individually valued by the bookkeeper. The total number of these items (including those not individually valued) in the complete inventory sample is:

jak (jacket) = 3,451 individual items from 1,123 inventory entries

japon (robe or dressing gown) = 221 individual items from 186 inventory entries

rok (skirt or dress coat) = 4,094 individual items from 2,199 inventory entries

Table 3
Distribution of Fabric Types
 (percentage share of households containing each fabric type)

Panel A: by year of inventory.

	<i>lakken</i>	<i>stuffs</i>	<i>cotton</i>	<i>muslin</i>	<i>bont</i>	<i>chintz</i>	<i>silk</i>	<i>bombazijn</i>
	traditional	traditional	cotton	cotton	cotton	cotton	silk	silk
Period								
1740 - 1760	59.3	8.5	10.5	14.0	7.6	12.4	22.1	0.2
1761 - 1782	46.1	2.0	40.1	23.7	24.4	17.4	23.2	2.3

Panel B: by marital status of household head at time of inventory.

	<i>lakken</i>	<i>stuffs</i>	<i>cotton</i>	<i>muslin</i>	<i>bont</i>	<i>chintz</i>	<i>silk</i>	<i>bombazijn</i>
	traditional	traditional	cotton	cotton	cotton	cotton	silk	silk
HH type								
Married	66.2	6.1	28.1	23.4	15.5	17.6	23.0	1.4
Widower	55.0	5.0	18.8	7.4	12.4	10.9	19.3	1.5
Widow	49.4	5.5	21.7	16.5	13.0	14.2	21.4	0.6
Single	26.4	6.9	25.3	33.3	26.4	14.9	33.3	1.2

Panel C: by nativity (of married couples linked to the Amsterdam marriage registers).

	<i>lakken</i>	<i>stuffs</i>	<i>cotton</i>	<i>muslin</i>	<i>bont</i>	<i>chintz</i>	<i>silk</i>	<i>bombazijn</i>
	traditional	traditional	cotton	cotton	cotton	cotton	silk	silk
Nativity								
Amsterdam couple	51.0	5.3	20.8	15.7	10.4	13.5	18.0	0.5
Immigrant couple	67.3	1.9	28.9	23.1	19.2	13.5	28.9	5.8
Amsterdam husband	71.6	5.4	33.8	17.6	18.9	21.6	25.7	1.4
Amsterdam wife	58.6	8.6	28.9	21.1	19.5	16.4	23.4	0.8

Table 4
Household Asset Profiles
(for households grouped by possession of types of fabric)
Total asset values in guilders

Cloth name	Type	# hhs	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3
No cloth specified		298	40.1	0.0	3.0	19.0
<i>rasdemaroke</i>	cotton?	33	166.7	55.0	101.5	222.6
<i>lakken</i>	traditional	487	349.5	53.3	116.0	323.5
cotton		213	415.6	62.0	142.0	332.6
woolen		193	405.2	60.1	146.0	333.6
<i>baai</i>	woolen	54	506.3	72.2	150.0	451.4
gingham	cotton	8	303.5	73.1	152.9	382.0
<i>gestreepte</i>	striped	62	575.2	62.5	153.5	451.4
<i>bont</i>	printed cotton	135	340.7	66.7	154.0	345.1
muslin		165	457.3	79.0	172.1	334.0
<i>bombazijn</i>	silk/cotton	10	372.1	50.6	176.9	849.1
serge	woolen	71	326.3	70.7	182.2	337.0
damask		119	388.0	87.5	190.0	383.6
linen		93	552.4	72.2	208.5	515.8
stuffs	worsted	58	516.9	134.5	217.2	445.5
<i>smirnse</i>	cotton	10	1073.2	101.5	220.3	645.5
silk		206	547.8	110.5	246.5	481.9
<i>magaije</i>	unknown	16	467.3	169.1	247.2	399.0
velvet	traditional	63	576.6	95.0	247.4	548.3
<i>caleminke</i>	light worsted	32	738.6	91.0	254.1	795.0
<i>gestikte</i>	embroidered	54	444.5	103.6	255.3	362.1
chintz	cotton	132	609.6	130.1	272.4	601.3
<i>armosijn</i>	Bengal silk	2	557.6	273.8 (min)	----	841.5 (max)
<i>seras</i>	Coromandel silk	6	609.3	334.0	572.1	841.5

Ratio of lowest median asset value to highest is 1:5.7

Table 5
Valuation of All Clothing
(for households grouped by possession of types of fabric)
Total clothing values in guilders

Cloth name	Type	# hhs	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3
No cloth specified		298	2.4	0.0	0.0	1.0
<i>rasdemaroke</i>	cotton?	33	44.9	21.0	39.5	62.0
<i>lakken</i>	traditional	487	48.4	14.5	36.0	67.0
cotton		213	51.5	16.3	38.5	68.7
woolen		193	49.9	13.5	36.3	68.0
<i>baai</i>	woolen	54	55.5	18.5	38.5	70.5
gingham	cotton	8	64.4	23.5	49.8	106.9
<i>gestreepte</i>	striped	62	60.6	20.5	45.9	91.2
<i>bont</i>	printed cotton	135	58.7	23.5	41.1	70.8
muslin		165	65.0	29.8	53.5	87.5
<i>bombazijn</i>	silk/cotton	10	61.3	17.9	57.0	84.7
serge	woolen	71	60.1	25.5	45.5	91.5
damask		119	69.0	32.8	52.0	91.0
linen		93	64.4	28.5	46.5	89.0
stuffs	worsted	58	90.0	45.5	74.0	110.0
<i>smirnse</i>	cotton	10	73.5	31.0	60.0	102.7
silk		206	79.8	41.0	68.0	104.0
<i>magaije</i>	unsure	16	83.5	58.0	70.1	92.8
velvet	traditional	63	69.9	33.5	61.0	92.8
<i>caleminke</i>	light worsted	32	68.9	22.5	47.5	80.1
<i>gestikte</i>	embroidered	54	67.0	25.5	65.0	104.2
chintz	cotton	132	83.1	41.0	68.7	102.7
<i>armosijn</i>	Bengal silk	2	312.8	142.5 (min)	----	483.0 (max)
<i>seras</i>	Coromandel silk	6	178.6	91.0	147.8	166.5

Ratio of lowest median clothing value to highest is 1:4

Table 6
Asset Thresholds for Possession of Exotic (or imitative) Goods
 Values in guilders

	porcelain	tea&coffee	delftware	silk	chintz	cotton	<i>lakken</i>
VOC/seafarers							
lowest asset value	29.0	29.0	7.0	313.2	107.5	31.9	16.0
**density value	29.0	29.0	7.0	313.2	only 2 total	122.5	16.0
Hansa port origin							
lowest asset value	26.7	14.5	13.0	64.5	273.8	62.5	14.5
density asset value	122.5	14.5	13.0	154.0	only 3 total	237.0	14.5
Both A'dam							
lowest asset value	0.5	5.8	6.0	30.5	12.0	10.8	10.0
density asset value	35.0	13.0	10.8	61.0	58.5	26.0	10.0
Both Immigrant							
lowest asset value	26.7	9.5	14.5	60.1	69.5	31.5	14.5
density asset value	88.0	9.5	14.5	232.8	352.2	31.5	14.5
Man A'dam							
lowest asset value	14.5	14.0	13.0	107.5	95.0	14.5	13.0
density asset value	120.0	22.0	13.0	257.5	243.0	32.0	13.0
Wife A'dam							
lowest asset value	3.5	16.0	9.5	49.5	48.5	25.0	14.0
density asset value	72.0	29.2	9.5	112.5	98.4	58.5	22.8

Notes:

** The asset value at which ownership becomes “dense” is measured separately for each item depending on the density of possession for that item in the total sample. For example, delftware is considered to have reached a density of ownership only when at least half of the households in the given sample possess at least one piece. By contrast, silk is considered to have achieved density when one-third of the households possess at least one item.