

Garments for sail and textiles for slaves: Creation of Cheaper Cloth and Clothing in Cape Town in the 18th century

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I Introduction: Slave Cloth and Clothing as cheaper product invention in 18th century

I-(1) Creating and Sharing of Cheaper Cloth and Clothing in 18th century

One of the still disputable but remarkable features in the global history of cloth and clothing is that they got cheaper since 18th century onwards. Though diversifications of styles never stops, in the global perspective in general, clothing got more standardized, simple, and globally shared (uniformed). This process is assumed to have taken place after the industrial revolution, particularly after 19th century, or even after post-war globalization, and to have proceeded closely linked with “Westernization”, which I define here the process that changes the majority of lifestyles into European originated way.

However, the commencement of creation and sharing of cheaper cloth/clothing could be traced earlier. Participation of Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English into Indian textile markets and succeeding expansion of their trades, is generally associated with the rise of “luxury” consumption in European perspective, but this expanding participation could have played crucial role in making cloth-clothing globally cheaper. G. Riello (2012) points out that major contribution of these newcomer dealers of Indian textile, particularly of English, were to concentrate on the cheaper and coarser range of cloth such as “Guineas” and to expand their markets globally from Africa to America in 18th century. Their craze on the printed cottons (such as “Chintz”, which has diversified meaning according to the location) led quickly to the production of cheaper and simpler versions. Simple readymade clothing they ordered for sailors or slaves, started to circulate globally. Understanding circulation and market formation of these

cheaper types of cloth or clothing centering 18th century are essential in clarifying the process cloth or clothing got cheaper.

The process how cloth or clothing got cheaper in this aspect could be only understood aligning locations, not just centering India or England, as they were formed not through a simple trickle down process from a single center. Moreover, it is important to note that Spanish, Dutch or English homelands were not necessarily the first expansive market for these cheaper products and, moreover, for “Asian Goods” in general. As Gasch-Tomas (2014) and other historians of Latin America recently pointed out, within linkages of “Spanish Empire”, Asian textiles were much more expansively distributed and consumed in Mexico City, who enjoyed easier access to Manila, rather than in Seville, where consumption of Asian Goods in early 17th century were limited to the aristocrats and colonial elites who had direct access to those. In Seville, shop sellers or peddlers seldom dealt with Asian goods. Gasch-Tomas stresses that in global perspective, distribution of Asian Goods happened more in Mexico rather than in Spain.

In such setting, the distinction of “Asian” or “European” also blurs. Lemire (2011) and other scholars have conceptualized global “Asianization” of cloth and clothing starting from 18th century, in stark contrast to more familiar and later “Adoption of European Styles in Cloth and Clothing”. In this case, the gravity point of “Asianization” could be well situated in Mexico. Most probably, considerable part of the Asian textile related fashionable items consumed later by the middle class in Spanish homeland were originally created in Mexico or at least influenced by them. ¹Then we must certainly include element of “Mexicanization” into Spanish (or even global) “Asianization”.

Cape Town, the focus of this paper, is in some aspects comparable to Mexico City in “Spanish” case. It had closer links with Batavia or Indian West Coast cities than Amsterdam had. However, Cape Town was much smaller than Mexico City. Its role in VOC trade network was meager. Quantitatively, Cape Town could never become the gravity center of global consumption. Moreover, its domestic distribution system was far from developed and nor was their consumption encouraged at all. From its foundation in 1652, shops and professional retailing were banned in Cape Colonies under VOC rule. Strict Sumptuary law was introduced in connection to Batavia in the 1750s. Thus, consumption in Dutch Cape Colony has not been until recently highlighted. But vigorous studies by Johan Fourie and others clarified that despite all the limitations and restriction of supply, possession of “luxury products” including “Asian goods” grew rapidly during the 18th century.²

Nevertheless, Cape Town is an attractive model case of study for looking at the local dynamics in the invention of cheaper range of cloth and clothing. Because of their unique

¹ Serge Gruzinski’s works are very stimulating from this aspect.

² Fourie and Lys 2014, Fourie and Luiten van Zanden

setting, it particularly clarifies individual consumer's role more vivid than in other places. First, their fabrics were near completely imported. At the same time they were facing the urgent need to provide cheaper cloth and clothing for their rapidly expanding slaves. Second, because of the shop bans that lasted until British rule since 1808, individual Cape Town inhabitants and households had to face directly with this problem of providing textiles. Cape Town inhabitants were dealing expansively with textiles privately. ³ Average household had piles of textiles stored for three different purposes: for domestic use including those for slaves, for exchanging within Cape Town, for trading in broader regions. Third, minute records of probate inventories and public auctions were kept in Orphan Chambers (TANAP). ⁴ Despite some shortcomings, we can trace slave cloth and slave clothing possessions of relatively broader range of people through these records.⁵

I-(2) Annual Slave Clothing Expenditure increased towards 19th century

To our surprise, Cape Town's slave cloth/clothing did not get cheaper from 18th century towards 19th century, but to the opposite. According to the documents collected from farm houses outside of Cape Town, the annual expenditure cost for providing slave clothing per person increased significantly at the turn of the century. ⁶ Annual expenditure counted by random farm slave owners rose from 5 Rd (Rijksdaalders) in 1740s, 7 Rd in 1789, 15 Rd by the end of the century and 21 Rd in 1827.⁷ Though these records are scarce and not even from the same farm, as there was standard social norm established for how much clothing should be provided for a slave for a year, the figures strongly indicate that slave clothing expenditure increased significantly in the latter half of 18th century, particularly at its end and well into 19th century.

This rise could be partly explained by dramatic political turmoil at the end of 18th century that led to British rule as well as growing inflation trend. ⁸ However, when compared with the trend of average auction price of wheat and white wine in 1716-1800 in probate inventory, cost for slave clothing seems to have grown much steeply. Therefore, inflation and political intervention could not simply account the rise.

³³ Particularly for women, who were deprived of job opportunities by professional retailing and manufacturing, private exchanges were the major way to operate and increase their wealth. Sugiura, 2014.

⁴ See online sources at TANAP MOOC

⁵ Fourie provides a thorough overview of the characteristics of Cape Town probate inventories. Fourie, J. The wealth of the Cape Colony: Measurements from probate inventories

⁶ N. Worden, Slaves in Cape Town p.70

⁷ Add value survey Rijksdaalder Caapse Guilders

⁸ Because of the lack of direct import records in Cape Town, it is not possible yet for the author to directly investigate why slave clothing did not get cheaper but more expensive in 19th century.

Table 1 Price for Wheat, White Wine and Clothing for Slaves compared 1716-1800

Year	Wheat (per mud)	White Wine (per league)	Slave Clothing Expenditure,(per (annum, per person)
1716	2.0	21	
1720	2.2	22	
1730	2.4	26	
1740	2.4	28	5 Rd
1750	1.6	30	
1760	1.5	38	
1770	1.0	22	
1780	2.4	38	
1790	2.6	35	7 Rd
1800	2.8	30	15 Rd
1827	-	-	21 Rd

Source: quoted from N. Worden 2007, p. 60; MOOC 10/1-10/8 Vendurollen (Auction Records) 1716-1800,

Slave Clothing cost quoted from N. Worden 2007.

Note: Official price for wheat until 1741 was 2.6, and Company price after 1741 2.5

Official price for white wine until 1741 was 27.

Another reason for this rise could be growing demand caused by the increase in the slave population in the first half of 19th century. However, their population was already increasing significantly during 18th century. As Fourie and Luiten van Zanden recently calculated, total slave population in Cape grew from roughly 6,000 in mid 18th century to 20,000 in 1791.⁹ We should be also reminded that Slave Owners in North American Colonies at this period suffered the same problem.¹⁰ Nevertheless, what struck us here is the relatively low and stable expenditure for slave clothing during 18th century, and increasingly sharp rise after British rule after the turn of the century. It leads to following questions: why was slave clothing so cheap in the 18th century at its starting point, compared to the 19th century? How did they manage to invent such cheaper range of clothing in the 18th century?

To answer these questions, this paper investigates how slave cloth and clothing, the new cheaper cloth and clothing range was invented within the dynamics of one location, 18th century Cape Town. In the following sections, first we will look briefly how slave cloth and clothing were defined and regulated through looking at categorization of slaves and situations they were in and sumptuary laws towards them. Next we will analyze available channels for slave owners to acquire cloth and clothing in 18th century Cape Town. As shops were banned, the supplies by other channels must be investigated. The last section then will suggest several considerable backgrounds why 18th century Slave Clothing could be supplied cheaper than in 19th century.

⁹ Fourie and Luiten van Zanden, 2012

¹⁰ 黒人奴隷衣装文献、竹田

II Slave, Slave Cloth and Clothing regulations

II-(1) Company Slaves, Urban Slaves, Farm Slaves

In the first place, I attempt to define very briefly slaves, slave clothing and slave cloth in Cape Town respectively. Slaves were so extensively used in Cape Town in all segments of the society that Fourie and Luiten van Zanden recently called there as “Slave based society”.¹¹ As Fourie notes, in average only 34% of the population had no slaves during 1696-1805. The percentage was lowest in the first half of 18th century. Be it VOC companies’ operation, households in urban settlement (Town Erven in Fig 1), or those in farmlands, the need for slaves were same. It could be said that more than 60% of the inhabitants were slave owners who had to manage cloth/clothing supply for slaves. Moreover, According to Fourie, Cape Town inhabitants’ income groups can be divided by the numbers of slaves. The highest 10% households were those who had more than 16 slaves at home.¹²

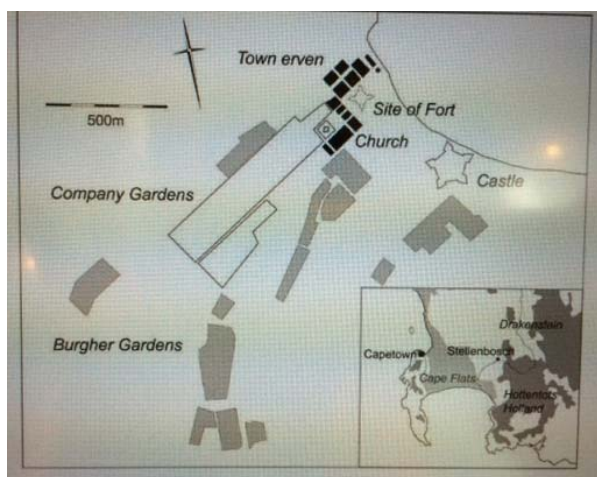


Figure 1 Map of Cape Town Source: N.Worden

Naturally, definition and categorization of these massive slaves are extremely complicated, as their origins also varied from Bengal, Coromandel, locations along Eastern coast of Africa and Madagascar. Nevertheless, slaves in Cape Town could be roughly divided in three categories: Company Slaves, Urban Slaves, and Farm Slaves. Company Slaves were those owned by VOC, and living collectively in either with in the Fortress (Castle) or Slave Loge (opposite building of the Church in the

map) in Cape Town. Urban Slaves were those owned personally by Free Burghers or Company

officials’ households located in the settlement (Town Erven) of Cape Town. Farm slaves were those working in Burgher Gardens or Table Valley situated at the outskirts of Cape Town in Cape Flats as wheat fields and wineries developed. Further outside of Cape Town, Stellenbosch or Drakenstein started also to develop wineries, but probate inventories of living there is not dealt expansively in this survey.

II-(2) Regulatory Supply of slave clothing

¹¹ Fourie and Luiten van Zanden 2012

¹² Fourie and Uys ,2014, p.11

Overall reputation for the slave attire in Cape Town was not high. Contemporary observers noted that they were “poorly dressed and wearing rags”.¹³ Compared to other Dutch colonies, there was no official regulation for slave owners to provide sufficient clothing for slaves. It was only under British rule, the obligation for slave owners were officially declared. However, there are plenty of records that slaves were given annually clothing, and it did not differ too much according to which slaves they were. Clothing of each categories of slaves differed slightly but they crossed over.

First, Company slaves as well as officials were supplied annually sets of clothing from the VOC. There are different description left for what were provided, but generally, it seems men were provided trousers and shirt material, women skirts or smocks. They were sometimes supplied with fabric itself, but it is worthy to note it was standard to be supplied with readymade clothing. One record says Company slave men were annually provided with a doublet and trousers tailored by Garrison tailors and for women “smocks were imported from Batavia”.¹⁴ Whereas, Valentijn, a contemporary later manumitted Company slave referred to cloth distributed twice annually of sailcloth and blue linen.¹⁵ The average cost for feeding and clothing slaves in the company were 15-16 Rd (45-46 Cape Guilders) per annum, in the mid 18th century, thus approximately same or slightly higher than what a farm slave owners noted in above Table 1.¹⁶ We must note that the provision differed significantly according to the ranks.¹⁷

Urban Slaves or Farm Slaves, though not connected directly to VOC company did get somewhat simpler, but quite similar attire provided from their masters as the Company Slaves. One record says annually slave women were given *skirts (rocken)*, *two jackets (baatjes or kabaaijen)*, *or half shirts*, and slave men unlined pilot cloth jacket (*rok*, or *casjack*), besides which a pair of sail cloth breeches¹⁸. Another record says for slave men of “receiving only pilot cloth (pije) jacket and some coarse “Vaderlandsche (homeland)” shirts a year, and they were promised two new clothing a year.¹⁹

¹³ Russian observant [Quote]

¹⁴ N. Worden, 92

¹⁵ Schoeman 2007 145

¹⁶ Elphick, Giliomee, and others eds., *The Shaping of South African Society*, p.128

¹⁷ Female officials were given length of photas for four dressing or skirts (kleetjes), pieces of geras and baftas, and 2 pieces of sailcloth (presumably for lining). Shell noted “Like her male counterpart she received more clothing than her fellows. The women slave officers however also received bolts of linen. Each officer, male and female, received a length of cotton cloth, presumably as part of the overall incentive scheme of the lodge.

¹⁸ *Schoeman, Early Slavery at the Cape Town 2007, p.148]*

¹⁹ *Schoeman ibid., 2007, 146*

It was at farmhouses where shortage of slave clothing is most often noted. Many farms often stored piles of “slave clothing”, “slave trousers” or “slave frocks”. In addition they are said to have ordered to make slave clothing such as leather trousers collectively to the Cape Town tailors or bought secondhand clothing when they came to Cape Town. One record said annually, men slaves were provided “*Two pairs of trousers and a coat or a camisool (short workman’s jacket)*” and women skirt and some fabrics for shirts.²⁰

In the probate inventories of 1761 Table Valley household we see some examples, where several cloth and clothing were left for domestic slaves. The household had 14 slaves, and 4 related slave children. Two male slaves got 6 blue and 6 white slave shirts respectively to be divided among the slaves. One female Slave called Liesje, was provided 2 pieces of printed chintz, 1 piece of striped gingham, chintz and white linen.

Table 2 Cloth and Clothing left for Slaves in Joachim Nicholaus van Dessin’s Probate inventory in 1761 Source: MOOC8/10.76

15 p:s various “ <i>voerchitsen</i> ”	Of these upon testament 2 pieces were given to slave (maiden) Liesje
3 p:s striped gingham	Of these upon testament 1 piece were given to slave (maiden) Liesje
4 p:s normal chintz	Of these upon testament 1 piece were given to slave (maiden) Liesje
4 white linen	Of these upon testament 1 piece were given to slave (maiden) Liesje
24 blue slave shirts	Upon testament 6 blue and 6 white shirts were given to slave Fortuin. The same also to Leander and the rest were divided among slaves.
18 white slave shirts	

N. Worden, K. Schoeman and other scholars generally evaluates these cloth and clothing provisions, no matter for company, urban, or farm slaves, as “not enough”, and that provision of one set of clothing could easily have worn out in a year²¹. However they at the same time do wonder why in several contemporary paintings, slaves depicted at urban streets and markets particularly were particularly underdressed. It is beyond reach for this paper to solve this mystery, but we should take into an account that clothing provisions were not necessarily used by themselves, particularly in the case of urban slaves. Though households needed quite a number of slaves just to keep the basic household activities going, households were not making enough profits themselves to keep the ends met for the number of slaves they own. Thus in-house slaves often went outside to work. Though operating shops were prohibited, it was still legal to let in-house slaves hawk or peddle around Cape Town. As a result, quite a few urban slaves went on hawking and peddling on streets and to ships. In return they would pay “*coeliegeld*” to their masters, but they could keep some part for themselves. Further, some slaves acquired skills as artisans. Therefore, there were considerable opportunity for slaves to trade their items, or to find some rags for exchange. Though no direct documents were left that they exchanged their annual provisions into other things, urban slaves most likely thought their

²⁰ Schoeman *ibid.*, p.218

²¹ And moreover of the possibility that slaves were provided with worn-out secondhand clothing.

clothing not only as attire but also as trading goods. Furthermore, if slaves had regular access to rags, they would utilize the opportunity. Farm slaves, on the other hand would have had fewer chance, but they were given chance to peddle their products in Cape Town. Although in principle slave owners had the fullest agency in providing cloth and clothing for slaves, we should not omit the possible capacity slaves might had.

II-(3) Sumptuary Law for Slave's Clothing

Slaves' clothing were regulated by sumptuary laws. Existing regulations were summed up and synthesized in the sumptuary law in 1755, closely following the Batavian code in 1752 and 1755.²² Though multiple sumptuary laws were introduced into the direction to restrict slave clothing into simpler forms, ironically, as we have seen, it did not help slave clothing to get cheaper. Sumptuary law for slave clothing was not meant to keep them simple, but had complicated function to allow the clothing to be stratified according to the ranks as well as to let the clothing underline that slaves were different from the others. Thus, it is no wonder that sumptuary setting for slave clothing got specified and detailed in the end.

Table below summarizes how slaves were supposed to dress according to the ranks. Only the highest rank officers of VOC or their wives were allowed to dress their slavery in "livery".²³ Lower rank officers were allowed to dress up to third servants in livery. However to distinguish slaves from the others, it was custom not to allow shoes and mostly hats to the slaves.²⁴ Coachmen were only exception for it.

Table 3 Sumptuary Law for slaves

High Rank VOC Officials	Livery (without shoes but possibly hats) Or "Malay Style"
Low Rank VOC Officials	Livery up to third slaves allowed
Merchants and below	Blue or red linen, striped or checked upon desire No hats or coats except for Coachmen No shoes in general Woolen possible, but totally plain, without any color in collars or cuffs.

Other slaves, which means slaves in general, were determined what fabrics they should wear in detail. The overall principle was that the fabrics slaves wore should be "coarse, cheap and strong". In one record it was written "Blue or red linen, striped or checked upon desire", It is obvious here, that the term linen here is not about the fiber of linen, but coarser fabrics, including Indian printed cottons, as well as blue coarser linen or woolen from the Netherlands. The blue or red "linen" mentioned, could be "vaderlandsche (homeland)" linen half-bleached or

²² Du Plessis, Sumptuary Law.

²³ Livery is the servants' wear for aristocracies. VOC official's ones had rather outdated extravagance as well as hybridized elements in ornamentation.

²⁴ Clothing was one of the symbol for the slaves to show themselves. It is well known that manumitted slaves bought hats, stockings and shoes to show they are free.

dyed mostly in blue, but at the same time striped or checked patterned blue or red printed cotton were “gingham” , “chintz” and others. No specific place names were noted as major suppliers. There are many fabrics named by a place names or named with place names (e.g. Chinese Linnen) . Those ranged from Middle and Far East (Armoesijn =Ormuz (Persia), Gilang = Gilan (Persia), West Africa(Guinees = Guinea), Thailand(Salempoeris/ Salemporis/ Serampore Zalemporis/ Siamoes) , and different locations in India : Coast (=Coromandel Coast), Surat, Bengal, Malay, Tutucorin, Chinese and Japanese. The linen could be textile supplied from any regions. At the same time it was noted there that they could wear “woolen, but totally plain, without any color in collars or cuffs”.²⁵

It is worthy to remind here that slave clothing were in “Mixed Style” in both the lower, standard cluster as well as in the higher cluster. This means, fabric wise, European and Asian textiles intertwine. In addition, style they could be also mixed: Among the slaves for higher rank officials, opposite to the trend to wear “livery”, there was growing trend to costume their slaves in “Malay” style.

III Slave owners’ Channels for acquiring cloth and clothing

Before discussing how cheaper Slave cloth and clothing were coordinated in Cape Town, this section investigates how much direct access and manageability slave owners had for acquiring cloth or clothing. It testifies that despite of the lack of shops, inhabitants of Cape Town had ample access to the variety of cloth.

Cape Town was near completely reliant on imported textiles. Only one record of weaving loom appears and nine records of spinning wheels appear in the entire probate inventories of 1700-1834. ²⁶We can assume homespun or home woven textiles were rare. It was different story with tailoring or clothing making. Not only were there professional tailors, but considerable in-house slaves had skills for making clothing. We find many remarks of “unfinished” or “make in progress” skirts or jackets in inventories, and these items were sold as such at the auctions. While finished personal clothing was the last item to be sold in auction, the ability to produce clothing home led to household’s high stocks of textiles at home. (Tailor’s textile possession were less than average household)

Because of the lack of shops, households became the center of cloth-clothing distribution. Household needed to have large amount of textiles and clothing for slaves. Moreover, household’s clothing and textile possession became even larger, because there was custom for the parents to provide clothing for their children’s future. As I have written elsewhere, Deborah Koning, the so called “the richest inhabitant in Cape Town”, who left the longest and multiple

²⁵ [Schoeman 2007 p.218]

²⁶ During this period, only one record of weave appears and 9 records of spinning wheel

inventory and auction records in Cape Town, left similar extensive sets of cloth and clothing for all her children respectively. ²⁷

Because of the absence of the shops, the distinction between domestic use and (commercial) exchanges was extremely vague. However, a difference could be depicted from the fact that Cape Town houses began to develop a specialized room, “Voorkamer”, right next to the entrance for restoring and exchanges their merchandises. What distinguished these rooms from other rooms in the house was their absence of beds, or “bedesteden”(bed frames). Cape Town Houses did not have specialized rooms for sleeping, but household members including usually considerable number of slaves slept everywhere, and each room usually had furniture used for sleeping. However, “Voorkamer”’s furniture was restricted to fancy furniture, characterized of elegant chairs small chairs, paintings and almost always mirrors. In addition, they had chests and decorated boxes with textiles and other consumable goods. This is the reason “voorkamer” are considered now as a room specialized for housewives to entertain their guests and do her exchanges. We can distinguish the textiles and garments dedicated for exchanges from those for family use by looking at the location those were restored: Those listed for “voorkamer” were more for exchange and those listed at the other rooms’ chests were for family use. As noted above Slave clothing were stored not in this voorkamer, but in attics, corridors and pantries.

We could partly prove that goods restored at the “voorkamer” had considerable turn over, from comparing the goods of three generations of wives lived in the same house. ²⁸

Auction was a regular point of exchanges in a settlement without shops. As Tracy Randle notes, it was also a major entertainment for the inhabitants.²⁹ It was so popular, she notes, that in one case more than half of the population participated. From the obligatory auction records in the latter half of the 18th century, we know that 3-4 auctions were held annually in average.³⁰ When there was a number of heirs, auctions were obligatorily held after the probate inventories

²⁷ Deborah left for her small youngest 2 year old daughter a collection of clothing and fabrics as hers, that ranged from 7 *japon* (kimono type overcoat), 10 skirts, 5 over skirts, 3 night caps, 20 sheets, 34 napkins, 11 handkerchiefs to more than ten various different sorts of fabrics that amounted to 321Rd, an amount that equaled one tenth of the price of a standard house in Cape Town. Similar collection were left for 10 year old Debora Margaretha. For the youngest 13 year old son, she left simpler collection that consisted of 20 different sheets, 34 serviettes, 12 handkerchiefs and 29 man’s shirts. Instead, a gold sacked clock, valued 125Rd occupied more than half of the 211 Rd movables left to him.

²⁸ Despite the fact that both the first and second wives died shortly after marriages carrying newborns and infants, the storages they had for voorkamers were completely different. No public auctions were held after the first wife’s death. This means, within about 4 years when the second wife died tragically right after giving birth to second child, the goods at storage could completely be alternated. From the inventory of the third wife, we can see that the exchange at voorkamer developed even more, as she introduced a small upper storage and backward office surrounding the room. Antonia Malan; Sugiura, *Material Affluence* 2014.

²⁹ Trace Randle, 2010

³⁰ Randle, *ibid.*

were taken. I once compared elsewhere items listed in inventories with items sold at auctions.³¹ Although there were minor “sorting out” of the items and “editing” of how they were called, to be sold at very public auctions, surprisingly most items, having clothing as sole exception, were sold directly at auctions.³² Even heirs needed to buy the items they want to keep at the auctions. Clothing were the only exception, which means that in one in about seven cases they were noted apart that they were split within family members.

Generally it is understood that auctions different from these obligatory ones connected to inheritance were frequently held. There is an indirect evidence for this in Deborah Koning’s inventories, which was picked above. The reason why Debora Koning’s post-mortem auctions took several years and also spectacular, was because they were not only massive but held separately according to the types of fabrics or garments. Despite all these collections reserved for children and customers, Debora still had a large collection herself, in the boxes or casts that were filled with fabrics and garments in her 12 room house. These items were sorted out carefully and auction were held according to the item. On 5th September auction for “coast guineas (Guinees) from the Coast of Malabar (Southwestern India coast) ” were held and 17 people bought a roll each at the price range of 14 Rd to 15Rd (total sum 231Rd). In the afternoon of the same day, an auction for “voerchitsen (pieces of chints)” were held and 13 persons bought in the unit of 4 pieces ranging from 10.02-10.05Rd. On 27 December 1748, 25 red “mantel (overcoats)” were sold to over 20 people each at the price range of 3.01-3.03 Rd. At the same day, more than 18 embroidered shoe blades were sold to more than 15 people. There were another similar auction for ribbons. What was striking in these auction is the stable pricing. There was clear mutual intention and agreement between the supplier’s side and buyer’s side as to what value to cast on several types of clothing. What we associate here is regular wholesale market with standardized pricing rather than a private auction with arbitrary price setting. It is unlikely that Deborah only traded for this time only with Batavia and Netherlands. Given the way she ordered standardized items collectively, she probably have held similar auctions, or rather public type of exchanges while she was still arrive. Although this is only one case, we can assume that similar auctions apart from inventory auctions were established by middle 18th century as a channel of textile distribution within Cape Town.³³

³¹ Miki Sugiua,2014

³² Shaping of South African Society

³³ We see also from Company officer J.N.Dessin’s inventory that he was trading with one person (Burgert Rugner) different sort of cloth. The order concentrates much on different colors of silk. In addition, yarn and 4 pieces of “white guinees” were ordered. Werd alhier volg:s resolutie van heeren Weesmeesteren de dato 7 X:br 1761 nog bekend gestelt de volgende aan deesen boedel gehoorende goederen door Burgert Rugner over restanten van de sodanige als hij om te verkoopen onder sig heeft gehad, ingebracht mitsg:s soo veel denselven Rugner over ’t reets verkogte nog debet is, als

Another aspect we should look into is the private merchandize, in other words “smuggling”, of the VOC employees. Usually, we put more attention on the private trades of VOC employees who went to Asia. However, Cape Town’s VOC employees, too, are said, without almost no exception were accustomed to pile up their private collection. They were known for collecting items of superb qualities for selling or using it themselves upon their return or move. Many of them had themselves had chance to travel Batavia and direct ordering of items as one see from Deborah’s case was quite easy. Randle speculates that VOC high ranking merchants checked regularly the auctions to gain items.

When one looks at the household of upper/undermerchants of VOC, they indeed stocked up distinguished piles of probably Asian textiles compared to other households. However, not only Asian. Their inventory suggests, they not only had Indian fabrics, but massive collection of both European and Indian as well as Chinese fabrics and accessories. Indeed two inventories directly related to *Opperkoopman* listed a categories that says “*Koopmanschap* (merchandize)” and a “*Winkel* (Shop)” in the early phases of 18th century. This might suggest these VOC officers did not collect items just for waiting them till they were sold in homelands but also for exchanging in Cape Town itself.

As a summary, through Household exchanges in Cape Town developed so much that it had high turnovers. Upper households had direct access of multiple textile production areas to order in a pile, and they did not just keep it for their own consumption, but for supplying the others. Some kind of cloth or clothing were always circulating. Although one could not rely to acquire the precise items they had in their mind (as in shops), they could still find out something, and more importantly cheap. Price formation and value evaluation were immediate and spontaneous at their main distribution channels of auctions and household exchanges. The price was not arbitrary set and usually did not necessarily fluctuate among same items if the quality was similar. However, items with some inferiority were severely judged and immediately devalued. Then there occurred spaces for cheaper items to be invented.

1 swart gewerkte rol sijde
1 groene rol sijde
1 bruijne rol sijde
1 groen gebloemd rol sijde
1 rol pelang
7 pakjes wit fijn gaaren
20 pakjes ruuw blaauw en rood gaaren
4 stucken wit guinees
22 klosjes swarte sijde
Burgert Rugner soo veel denselven volg:s reek:g de dato 17: 9:br 1761 debet is rd:s198:46

IV The reasons behind the cheapness: Alternatives, Varieties, Readymade and Secondhand Clothing

IV-1 Hunt for the cheaper material

This section analyses reasons behind the cheapness of 18th century Cape Town Slave cloth and clothing. We saw in the former sections that Cape Town was completely reliant on imported cloth. Creation of cheap slave clothing naturally meant the hunt for “coarse, strong cheap clothing”. The hunt was towards both directions: It is symbolic that in 1730s, Company Official J.N. Dessin were ordering “blue coarse cloth for slave clothing” for Netherlands and “fine and common slave cloth” from the East.³⁴

As noted above, it is possible to determine to some extent cloth and clothing used for slaves from probate inventories: first, mostly certain cases, clothing were mentioned with slaves as adjectives: e.g. slave trousers, slave frocks. It is rather tricky in cloth case. There were fabrics with “slaves” attached, such as slave *baaij*, slave *bafta*, slave linen etc. but here we are not completely sure whether there were used for the slaves, it simply had slaves attached as it was already customary to name so (as slaves wore them in Malay) It is sure cloth used for slaves were not always attached with the adjective slaves. Rather, it was more common to name it without. Another example we can be certain that a specific cloth/clothing were used for slaves is when they were notes as left for slaves. It was rare, but not necessarily seldom. I mentioned one of those examples above. An indirect way to discern possible slave cloth or clothing was where they were kept in the house. As I described in Section III, often fabrics which were kept in attics, corridors and pantries, apart from those other stored in “Voorkamer” or one of front rooms. In the analysis of this section, I have determined certain clothes from above reasons to be directed to the slaves.

First, we see from a 1718 inventory record that “blue linen” which was traditionally set as cloth for slaves, was no longer the cheapest cloth in a household by that time. (Below Table). Cheaper than blue linen were 1) Leather 2) Sail Cloth 3) India originated cloth, such as striped *bafta* (bast) from Bengal and inferior gingham. The second” Sail cloth” were supplied both from Netherlands and Bengal. And the latter was slightly cheaper.

Table 4 Textiles listed in the Inventory of 1718 Source MOOC 8/3.93

	Amount	Quantities	Price per Unit	Unit
Leather (Zeemleer)	33	22	1.10	stuk
Hollants zeyldoek (Sail Cloth from Holland)	180	5	36 *4.5 Rd	rol
blauw linnen (Blue linen)	81:--	12	6:15	stuk
Bengaals zeyldoek (Sail Cloth from Bengal)	27:--	4 1/2	6	stuk

³⁴ K. Schoeman, p 218 Same person as inventory of 1761. (Table 4)

trielje	10:--	20	10 stv:rs	elle
Bengaals gestreept bast (Striped bast from Bengal)	26:5	7	f3:15	stuk
Tutucorynsse chitsen	157:10	21	f7:10	stuk
gingam	27:--	3	f9	stuk
Inferior gingam	4:10	1	f 4.10	stuk

Leather

Leather was not specifically mentioned in the sumptuary law, but we can confirm from many probate inventories that they were widely used for slave clothing. Leather was in general broadly used as manual laborers' work attire. Often this leather is noted as "Zeemleer", which can range from skins of deer, dogs, and other cattle. In the probate inventories, leather trousers were listed alongside other slave clothing in both urban settlement and farmland. However, in longer perspective they were more present in the farmlands. Often one person stored a pile of leather trousers or leathers and these were sold in small pieces at auctions. Looking at the price records at auctions, we can hypothetically state that these leathers were getting cheaper in the first half of 18th century.

Moreover, leather stayed stably cheap after this. In 1719, the inventory of late Hans Geringer who lived within Cape Town settlement, listed 8 zeemleer trousers and 2 slave trousers, and at his succeeding auction of him, 46 zeemleer and 9 trousers were sold at once.³⁵ This means 2 pairs of zeemleer sold at 1.3- 1.45 Rd, Trousers were sold at 1-1.1Rd per piece. This price got even cheaper for the record in the farm house outside of Cape Town 30 years later. In 1739, a house at table valley had 36 zeemleer in their attic. Furthermore, at an auction in 1748, 2 pairs of zeemleer were sold at 1.1, and 3 pairs 1.6 Rd. [MOOC 10/575] Despite its cheapness, leather trousers were not used as the main material or completely cover the whole of slave clothing. Particularly women needed other fabrics to wear.

Sail Cloth

In 1718 record, price of sail cloth were slightly cheaper than the blue linen. Sail Cloth were in the long run cheaper as they were strong and durable. By around 1730s, "sail cloth (*Zijldoeken*)" were playing central role. Shirts, skirts and trousers were made from sail cloth, often using sail-yarn for sewing. Sail Cloth was not only produced in the Netherlands, but also extensively in Bengal. As the table suggests, Bengali sail cloth were slightly cheaper than the Dutch ones.

IV-(2) Variety of Indian Cloth and and sorting "Slave Cloth" thereof

Strikingly broad range of Indian or Asian originated fabrics used as "slave cloth" in the 18th century, particularly in early 18th century. After all, Indian cloth in general was the most popular cloth slaves would wear. It is well known, that in the course of 18th century, Gingham, more

³⁵ [MOOC 8/3.95] [MOOC/10.12] It is interesting

than Guineas, were associated with cloth for slaves in Cape Town. Gingham is defined “fine, checked or striped colored cotton fabric, probably from Indonesia ” in the Glossaries of TANAP. However, one record says : “*Bafta (rough cotton woven cloth from East india), bouling, chintz, geras, nequainias, photas*” which were naturally cheap and strong clothes, often striped or checked in bright colors such as red or blue, were meant for slave cloths.³⁶ Another mentions further textile names of chelas or celas (red cotton), mourin (muslins) as popular slave cloth. In addition to these, “baijs (baai)”, the originally woolen word “baj (or baai) “ equivalent to baize in English were used extensively, often , with the combination as “slave baai”. The word is quite confusing as a striped cotton, named after the city Cambay (Khambhat) in Gujarati were called cambaja or cambaij, and possibly sometimes abbreviated to baai. Cambaja is also associated with what they call “negros kleed (negro’s clothing)” because “they were worn by black people”. Thus, summing up :

1.)The Asian cloth range used for slave cloth was broad
- 2.) Some slave cloth were called so because they were worn in other areas particularly India, Malay and along eastern coast³⁷,
- 3)Cloth names do not suggest where they are from but one textile name could be both applied for several locations in India and Malay and even China.

Now let’s see how these fabrics were positioned in Amsterdam at the same period. Thanks to the fabulous series of works by Anne McCants, we could see how Amsterdam inhabitants possessed Asian items.³⁸ In her work of 2007, she made what is called “Textile Hierarchy”, in which major 22 textiles names listed in the probate inventories of (1730s- 1780s)were ordered upon the means and average of their incomes. Thus, we could see from here, which textiles were owned more by upper income clusters and which textiles were owned more by lower cluster. This insightful analysis stresses that one could find intertwining of “Asian” and “European” textiles at both higher and lower categories in Amsterdam, which can also be generally applied for Cape Town. This table is also great in terms of connecting the results together, as the probate inventories sources I use for Cape Town are also made for the same purpose, under the Orphan Chambers, and the periods correspond perfectly.

Table 5 Textile Hierarchy by Anne McCant for 1730s-1780s Amsterdam Inhabitants Compared

		Usage Cape Town Slaves	Trend Picked up
lakens	Woolen		
cottons			
woolens		○	
baai	Woolen flannel	○	
gingham	Cotton print	○	●
bont	Cotton print		

³⁶ Schoeman, 2007, p.218.

³⁷ Whether these were worn by slaves there needs further investigations. ,

³⁸ Anne McCants, see reference list

cambai	Cotton print	○	
muslin	Fine Cotton	○	
bombazijn	Heavy cotton		
camelotten	Camelhair mix		
grij	Dutch woolen		
serge	Dutch woolen		
Coleurde	Dutch woolen		
damask			
linen		○	
Stofjes	Dutch worsted		
trijp	Dutch velvet		
silk			
velvet	Fulweel?		
Gestikte	Embroidered		
Caleminke	Dutch Woolen		●
chintz		○	
armosijn	Bengal Silk		●
Seras	Coromandel Silk	△	

Source McCants 2010

As we see from the table, the cloth used for slave clothing in Cape Town were seemingly concentrated in the lower segment. However, it must be emphasized, that quantitatively the foremost fabric used for slaves in 18th century Cape Town, if put into the category of this hierarchy, was “chintz”. Thus, in reality, the cloth for slaves in Cape Town would be categorized in lower as well as quite higher segments of textile hierarchy in Amsterdam.

To testify this further, I had investigated how one unit (stuk) of Gingham, Guinea, and Armozijn were evaluated for the 18th century. Armozijn, which is positioned as the highest in the textile hierarchy of Amsterdam, were defined “Bengal silk” there. However, in Cape Town, it was possibly looked as both silk and silk-like cotton. There were also expression such as “Chinese Armozijn”. Apart from auctions, there were 42 entries found for Armozijn in the probate inventories of 1703-1804. The characteristic of Armozijn was its color: In the mid 18th century, green starts to become their prominent color, followed by red and blue. They were used first for women’s “rok” and later particularly for pleated window curtains. As you can see from the figure, they were positioned in the auctions in the range not very different from Gingham or Guineas. Only later in the century, we can see the evaluation of them became higher.

The evaluation range of the textile Guinea is much broader. From the 19th century we can hardly find traces for Guinea textiles used for clothing in Cape Town.³⁹ Rather fabrics such as Nanking became more prominent for clothing.⁴⁰ There were blue and white guineas. The reason the price range is so broad is simply because what is referred to as “Coast Guineas” are evaluated much more expensive, compared to the ordinary Guinea fabrics.

³⁹ They were used more for table cloth.

⁴⁰ Guinea is referred more as Guinea coins

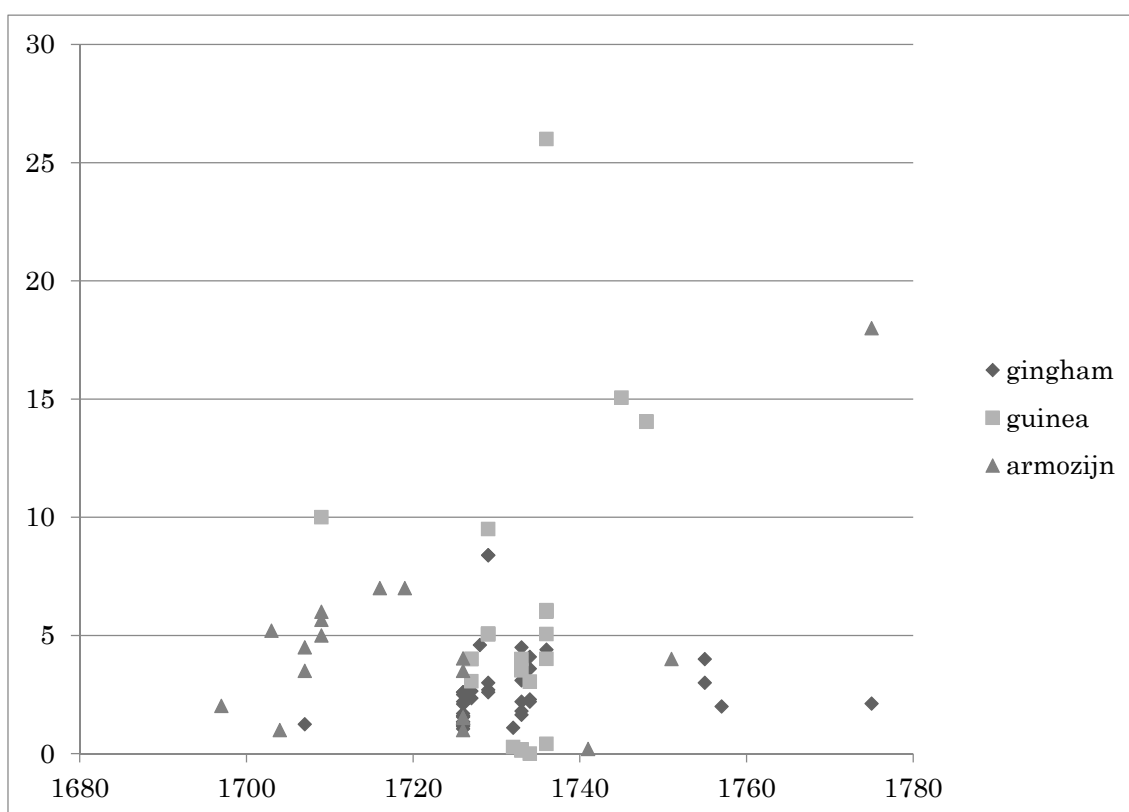


Figure 3 Evaluation of Gingham, Guinea, Armozijn at Auctions and Probate inventories of Cape Town 1697- 1779.

Guinea	46 entries
Gingham	73 entries
Armozijn	21 entries

Finally, let's look at Ginghams, which is generally referred to as the "slave cloth" of Cape Town later in the 18th century. It is true they concentrate at the price range of 1-4 Rd per piece and used sometimes for slave clothing. However, looking at their inventories, one could see that their usage was not solely for it. There were different sorts: striped, checked, blue and red colored fabrics as well as those with fine laces and flower embroideries. There were also distinctions between "fine, rough, and slave" ginghams. From here it can be concluded that gingham were widely used textile for clothing, not only limited for slaves.

To summarize, though tentatively, we could see that Dutch textile price trend do not correspond with that of Cape Town, either in the early 18th century, mid nor end. As for slave clothing, it can be said that once a textile name's price range was set as ginghams, often, that cloth became no longer usable for slave clothing in a mass. Guineas were not meant for slave clothing. Gingham were not distinguished from Chintz as clusters of cheap clothing and not meant solely for slave cloth.

IV- (3) The role of Readymade and Secondhand Clothing

Supply of imported readymade and secondhand clothing played vital role in keeping slave clothing cheap. “Imported readymade clothing” were the clothing that were those made in India and Malay regions and directly imported. We can find ample examples of those in the probate inventories throughout 18th century. We can confirm that these were used and even directed to the slave clothing from contemporary sumptuary records, that women slaves should wear “*Bataafse smocken*”.

What was even more striking is their cheap price. Overall, the clothing sold at auctions, were not very expensive. As I have picked in the former section, Deborah Koning were selling 25 new red coats imported from Batavia. Each of the coat was evaluated around 3 Rd. I will make further assumption here for new items’ price by looking at persons who had piles of them. In a 1751 inventory “14 rough clothing (*groove kleeedjes*)” were evaluated at 30Rd” suggesting 2.1 Rd per clothing, and “ 7 separate coast clothing (*7 enkele kustkleeedjes*)” at 8Rd, thus 1.1 Rd per clothing.⁴¹ The latter could be secondhand (worn out) clothing, given its description as “separate”. However, from the inventories and auction records, we could easily assume secondhand clothing were even cheaper. There is record of 3 pieces of “*gemeene kleeedjes*” evaluated at 2.12, thus price per piece below 1 Rd. Skirts made of chintz or called “*Bengalse rok*” were sold at auctions in average in 2 Rd, but considerable pieces were sold at 0.3- 0.4 Rd. Moreover, in an auction in 1735, the whole fabrics and clothing possessed by the house including 8 shirts, 8 handkerchiefs, 4 shirt-wear, 2 gingham camisoles, 2 blankets, 6 pairs of socks and more were evaluated at the total of 5Rd, the same amount as expected annual expenditure for slave clothing per year.[MOOC 10/4.141] Secondhand slave clothing were evaluated even cheaper at probate inventory in 1775: there 6 normal striped slave trousers and 4 slave “rok” were evaluated at 1.36 Rd.⁴² If these were circulated frequently, preparing cheap clothing would not have been so difficult.

This suggests that depreciation of clothing was much faster than cloth. Fabrics could be stored and expected to be traded in relatively stable price, but once it was made to clothing and worn, the price for it was strictly evaluated. I have argued elsewhere that when one compare the inventories and succeeding auctions from it, clothing were less sold at auction compared to any other items and were more and more divided among household members.

It is understandable, that imported readymade clothing were obviously more concentrated to the cheap side, because for luxurious clothing, it was more common to import high quality fabrics and have them tailored in Cape Town. Readymade items were more directed to the lower class or as items that were sold elsewhere. In the course of 18th century, one item

⁴¹ MOOC8/7.18, 1751/6/22

⁴² MOOC/8/15.41

become quite popular also for trading for abroad, which was called “Zeil kleiding (Sail Clothing)” Sail Clothing is described as “a plain clothing popular as trading goods along the coast of Western side of Africa. In one auction of 1745, 2 rough Sail Cloth were sold at 6 Rd and 1 rough and 1 fine Sail Clothing and 4.3 Rd. In 1771, 7 pieces of “Bengal sail clothing were sold at 21 Rd. Thus a new simple sail clothing seemed to be evaluated at 3Rd [MOOC 8/13.65] Deborah Koning, who could be said as the most active person in trading textile items in Cape Town, were trading massively with sail clothing. In her post-mortem auction, 73 sail “fine sail clothing (*“Doesoetjes of fijne zylkleeden”*) were sold at the price of 3.3 Rd to 4.1 Rd per piece to 37 persons.

Thus, there was such ample accessibility to readymade clothing in India that it produces one stable range of item such as sail clothing. Mid 18th century Cape Town could expect to have brand-new “wearable” attire supplied from Bengal in about 3-4 Rd. It is then understandable that slave owners would only expect 5 Rd per annum expenditure for slave clothing.

Hypothetically, I would assume that the supply of readymade clothing from India fluctuated in 19th century Cape Town. There are multiple factors in it. Obviously British policy were to ban export of Indian readymade as well as fabrics and promote the export of their own cotton. Though this, Cape town household, especially farmland houses, deprived of opportunities for using imported readymade or purchasing their cheap secondhand items and instead had to shift for supplying homemade clothing with the cheapest new cloth they could get.

V Conclusive Remarks

This paper saw the creation of Slave Cloth and Clothing in 18th century Cape Town as cheaper product range invention. In a place such as Cape Town, where no fabrics were manufactured and no shops were allowed, individual slave owners, no matter living in Cape Town settlement or farm, had to face themselves arranging cheaper cloth and clothing for their slaves. One could not rely on constant supply of coarse and cheap textiles from homeland or fixed number of production centers. In addition, no professional supplier seemed to have appeared specializing themselves for slave cloth or clothing. The supply and distribution of cloth or clothing were executed through private exchanges centering houses and auctions. And slave cloth clothing were no exception for this. They were arranged by sorting out the lowest possibilities balancing price, durability and also appropriateness among the varieties of arbitrary acquired cloth and clothing.

This paper first pointed out that slave owners expected lower expenditure for annual slave clothing in 18th century than in first half of the 19th century. Expected slave expenditure increased rapidly at the turn of the century, when Dutch rule was taken over by British rule, and

kept increasing. This makes us realize that the global narrative for the period from late 18th century towards first half of the 19th century, when British industrial revolution in cotton cloth were accelerating, was not ubiquitously cheaply manufactured cloth depreciating cloth and clothing everywhere. From local eye, there is even possibility that what were formerly cheap became more expensive or less available and as a result the cheapest range became more expensive. This leads us to question what enabled 18th century Cape Town to arrange cheap slave cloth or clothing.

To answer this, this paper investigated probate inventories and auction records and pointed out the following aspects as the possible conditions that enabled cheaper slave cloth and clothing in the 18th century.

- 1) Newly Using Leather and Sail cloth as coarse basic materials.
- 2) Availability of wide non-branded range of Indian textiles from multiple areas of India, Malay and Indonesian islands.
- 3) Practice of ordering readymade clothing regularly from India
- 4) Cloth-clothing price and depreciation gaps: Because of the availability of these readymade, clothing in general was valued relatively cheaper. Large availability of wearable secondhand clothing.
- 5) Active consumers' exchanges at the very end part of distribution: Private exchanges (Auctions, face to face trade among acquaintance, barter) and dealings for secondhand are normally thought to make prices arbitrary, irregular and thus higher. However, private exchanges and Post mortem auctions at Cape Town seems to have provided platform for pricing reflecting consumers' needs realistically. Non-shop owners wanting cash and not able to keep items in stock, would have sought for immediate sale, and thus the price might become in general cheaper.

This paper could not go so far as to consider the reasons why slave clothing got more expensive in the 19th century. Many other elements must have influenced on the price increase of slave clothing in 19th century. In relations to this article, one could consider the aspects of followings:

- 1) Shift from imported readymade to homemade clothing: We need to see the price gap between making clothing from cloth and readymade/secondhand clothing. In Cape, Cloth was much higher than clothing.
- 2) Change in the secondhand circulation: As farms got larger and isolated, they were deprived of the opportunities to use wearable secondhand items circulated more in densely urban area.
- 3) Shift to the shops in distributing items : Shops start selling slave cloth and clothing as commodities and their transaction fees made cloth and clothing in general

Though this investigation is yet at its starting point and many have to be further testified, tentative findings could indicate followings in the broader context. First, Cheaper items, as luxuries was, was created in local context. Reflecting many global contexts, cheaper range cloth and clothing were made in local dynamics. Looking at Amsterdam and Cape Town briefly, this paper partly testified that though the two location's supply line was directly connected, the price setting for each locations were formed differently.

Second, it also suggests to include more the exchanges made at the very end of distribution, namely private exchanges and secondhand done by consumers in considering how cloth and clothing got cheaper. Once a product was commercially shared, e.g. textile names were established (e.g. gingham, chintz), or become interregional traded products (e.g. sail clothing), it might made the price higher

Finally, the invention of slave cloth and clothing is part of both what we normally assume of the process of "Adoption of European style of dress" or "Asianization" of clothing. However, what is more important is to emphasize, the co-creative aspect of the process. Slave cloth and clothing were arranged, under the situation where "Asian" and "European" cloth as well as clothing (more importantly Asian readymade) circulated, utilizing both of them and mixing and paralleling both styles. Though they were fully aware of the origins of the cloth or clothing, at the same time they do not care if an "Asian" clothing were used for European style dress or vice versa. Homeland suppliers, Indian suppliers, Batavian and other agencies, as well as slave owners, slaves themselves as well as local distributors all were involved in co-creating the Slave Cloth and Clothing under local dynamics. This could be understood more under the terms of "sharing" rather than those of "adoption" or "hybridization". The co-creative processes that were working in the creation of cheaper cloth and clothing in 18th century Cape Town most probably left legacies for later generations. In discovering those, we would be able to see the longer and more globally participated process of share and co-creation of cloth and clothing in this world.

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