Summary

The fashioning of daily life
Consumption in Leeuwarden during the Dutch Golden Age

Over the last two decades many historians have expressed the view that during the early modern period the habits and attitudes of western consumers have been subject to structural transformations. The historiography of this early modern ‘consumer (r)evolution’ is nevertheless still characterized by many disputes on how and when these changes took place and there is even no agreement as to what actually changed. Getting a better grip on these transformations requires first and foremost better data on consumption practices in the early modern period. Reliable data series revealing long-term trends in patterns of consumption, for instance, are still rare and those that are available are at best quirky. But gaining better insight in the early modern ‘consumer (r)evolution’ requires more than empirical investigation alone. On a conceptual level historians have hardly made a distinction between consumption and other uses of goods. However, to understand pre-modern patterns of consumption it is extremely important to distinguish consumption (using up a product) from stockpiling (saving a good for later use) and hoarding (saving a good as an asset). In pre-modern households goods made of durable and refundable materials like copper, pewter, silver and gold did not only serve as utilities but as deposits as well. In this study it is shown that this depository function of household goods steadily declined in Leeuwarden during the seventeenth century.

For this study two data sets were compiled using probate inventories from the municipal archives of Leeuwarden. The first data set contains data on the value of goods possessed by 228 Leeuwarden households from between 1582 and 1707. The data set is divided over three occupational subgroups: 1) brewers and bakers, 2) shoemakers and tailors and 3) merchants and shopkeepers. Brewers and bakers who were of similar wealth and whose crafts had a similar structure were merged into one subgroup to obtain sufficient sample size. Shoemakers and tailors were merged into one subgroup on the same grounds, while shopkeepers and merchants were joined in one group for the practical reason that wholesale and retailing were no distinct branches in seventeenth-century Leeuwarden. Analysis of the data set, however, showed no distinct patterns for any of the three subgroups. A second data set on the number of goods possessed by households was therefore
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confined to one occupational group only: the Leeuwarden bakers. This data set is based on 88 appraised and non-appraised inventories from between 1559 and 1707.

The data were analyzed using regression analysis with the year the inventory was drawn up as independent variable. A significant decline in the possession of goods made of pewter, copper and brass could be observed, especially when the value of these goods was taken relatively to the value of the total bundle of goods represented in the first data set. The possession of fine ceramics on the other hand showed a clear tendency of increase. It could also be shown that the Leeuwarden bakers owned a growing number of paintings and prints during the seventeenth century. These trends were clearly interrelated and further analysis, using polynomial regression as a heuristic, pointed out that these trends manifested themselves most distinctively in the period between roughly 1610 and 1660.

The inhabitants of Leeuwarden were clearly involved in a process of replacing sturdy refundable objects by fancier objects without scrap value. I have called this process a ‘fashioning process’ (fatsoeneringsproces). In this context fashion is defined as the surplus value of a commodity derived from style, design, marketing and workmanship as opposed to the (refundable) value of the raw materials the good is composed of. This definition builds upon the archaic meaning of the English ‘fashion’, which it has in common with the etymologically related Dutch ‘fatsoen’ and French ‘façon’. When sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers wrote about ‘fashion’, ‘fatsoen’ or ‘façon’, they were well aware of this meaning of ‘fashion’; hence reassessing the concept of ‘fashion’ is important for understanding contemporary commentaries on the phenomena under investigation. Besides that, the older and multilingual meaning of ‘fashion’ is to a great extent operational, whereas the multifaceted concepts of ‘fashion’ and ‘fatsoen’ in their colloquial meanings are less applicable within a social scientific framework of analysis.

Instead of keeping their deposits in the form of pewter, brass and copper wares, the inhabitants of Leeuwarden increasingly made use of private debenture bonds to stockpile their wealth. In this study interest rates – that were steadily declining during the seventeenth century – are used as a proxy for this supply-driven expansion of the capital market. Regression analysis shows that interest rates predict the shares of copper/brass, pewter and ceramics in the total bundle of goods as good as time does, or even better. And the number of paintings and prints owned by Leeuwarden bakers can be predicted by interest rates equally well. In all four cases the residuals showed no longer a significant linear correlation with time. This indicates that interest rates can statistically account completely for the time-bound linear trends observed earlier. As regards the ownership of pewter wares, however, a time series of pewter prices had to be added to the regression in order to flatten out a parabolic correlation of the residuals with time. Ownership of pewter wares, as far as measured by value, was nonetheless only moderately affected by the price of pewter. All these analyses show that there was a strong correlation between changes in the possession of consumer goods and an expanding capital market.

To some extent, we can call upon the principles of rational calculation to explain fashioning processes. For the bearer debenture bonds had the advantage of returning interest on his savings, whereas hoards were idle in this respect. On a
宏观经济层面，更多使用债务债券的广泛使用可能有一个相当大的财富效应，通过增加资本的流通甚至创造资本。此外，替代铜、黄铜和锡器类的时尚物品其实是被消费掉的。因此，家庭开始更多地在生产上而非原材料上花费。尽管财富效应可轻松理论化，但要证明它们在实践中的存在就困难得多。在本研究中，关于这一话题的数据很少，进一步研究这一问题仍然是必要的。

尽管使用债券而不是物品来储存财富在经济上是有利的，但文艺复兴时期的文学将时尚和契约模式的信用工具都视为道德可疑的。两者通常被描绘成虚假的价值，并与真实的价值如贵金属和荣誉的言辞进行了对比。这种观点在18世纪以前很少见，很难设想这是新思想的结果。然而，不能忽视的是道德主义者对时尚和契约信用的拒绝对这一过程的描述是吸引人的，因为荣誉在17世纪仍然是日常生活中的重要价值观。这种道德主义的拒绝对时尚和债券的吸引力在于它们触及了实用价值。

后中世纪文化在许多方面都可以被称为‘荣誉文化’。在这种类型的文化中，荣誉本质上是与生俱来的，是内在的。荣誉在这些文化中并不局限于高阶层。尽管社会地位可能确实增强了一个人的荣誉感，但普通人的荣誉感也同样重要。荣誉在这个意义上反映了社会身份和骄傲。它在很大程度上就是一个人的本质。

除了这种本质主义之外，荣誉文化还有另一个特征：保护荣誉不受侮辱的必要性。在旁观者看来，荣誉文化似乎是好斗的。这种荣誉文化最初被认为是地中海特有的，但现在已经清楚，这个概念在更广泛的地理范围内是适用的，从解释美国南部的高暴力率，到解释16-17世纪的第戎和荷兰共和国的工匠文化。

荣誉文化是时尚和契约信用的对立环境，原因相当明显。对于契约信用来说，因为荣誉文化中，信用最终被定义为荣誉。在这种情况下，荣誉的言辞是建立信任关系的首要手段，任何依赖于契约的协议最终会否认一方或双方的荣誉。而且，契约的目的是防止在发生争端时，通过武力恢复权利和荣誉。虽然不是那么明显，但荣誉文化同样是一个时尚和债券的对立环境。问题在于时尚总是在解读，时尚并不反映社会‘真正’的世界。那些坚持它的人很容易被指责为社会模仿，即假装自己不是‘真正’的。这一点被16世纪英国英语中‘to fashion’一词的使用所阐明，它经常用于这个意义上。
‘to cheat’ or ‘to trick’. Besides that, toughness is considered virtuous in these environments. Being tough enables a man to defend and uphold his honor. And this emphasis on toughness facilitated a preference for sturdy materials and objects. It is for instance hard to conceive that a ‘man of honor’ would replace his pewter beer mug by a porcelain teacup. Although pewter beer mugs were certainly used for drinking, it is wise not to just to look at them as mere drinking utensils. By their shape and presence, they were perfectly fit to serve as weapons, ready for use in case conflict might arise. Indeed late medieval criminal records reveal that they were often used that way.

Both honor and contract function at the very core of human relationships. They are both instrumental in establishing what is generally referred to as trust, one of the most debated concepts in recent sociology, where the issue was raised by seminal theorists like Luhmann and Fukuyama. Nevertheless few sociologists have attempted to give a more or less operational definition of trust. One of the exceptions is Adam B. Seligman who has called for a clear distinction between confidence and trust. Although both words are often used synonymously in present-day English, the former implies some kind of guarantee whereas in the latter this feature is lacking. This subtle difference is important for understanding to what extent covenantal credit, which is based upon the principles of honor, differs from contractual credit. It is not so much that contracts are more reliable than words of honor. A creditor who borrows money in a covenantal relationship will seek confidence in the person of the creditor. There are penalties for breaking a covenantal agreement: violence, loss of honor and above all shame for the perpetrator. While confidence is established at a personal level, trust on the other hand will be located in the public sphere. In cultures of honor trust is heavily dependent on public reputations. In a contractual situation trust and confidence are located exactly at opposite sites. Because confidence is established by public instruments, trust can become a feature of private, even intimate relationships. It was this ‘privatization’ of trust that enabled the inhabitants of seventeenth-century Leeuwarden to make sense of fashion.

Because trust facilitates transactions it is an important means of production. Over the past two decades this insight has led many social theorists to think of (potential) trust as social capital. The social capital theory as it has evolved over the last decade has, however, in large measure ignored the distinction made by Bourdieu between social capital and symbolic capital. This distinction is especially significant when we compare covenantal and contractual modes of credit. Symbolic capital is (potential) trust that is imposed upon relationships by ideologies and worldviews. For example, we trust kings and priests because we ought to trust them. Symbolic capital is therefore closely affiliated with the ‘public trust’ we discussed above in the context of cultures of honor. Furthermore, the amount of symbolic capital present in a society is more or less fixed. When social capital is ‘freed’ from symbolic constraints, it becomes in need of being constantly generated. It becomes dependent on cultural exchange rather than cultural determination. In this context sharing preferences is an important means of establishing mutual trust, or when we hold on to Bourdieuesque terminology: social capital is produced with cultural capital. This system demands patterns of consumption around goods that are flexible in both value and meaning.
When trust is privatized, it tends to become dependent on the empathic sensibilities of the parties involved. Once prestige and status in the public realm and the personal guarantees by one’s sense of honor and shame are no longer active in establishing confidence and trust, there are hardly any other options left than relying on empathic feelings to judge someone’s trustworthiness or lack of it. Enlightenment philosophers like David Hume and Adam Smith were somehow well aware that ‘sympathy’ and ‘moral sentiments’ were the subtle but necessary emotional counterweights in the private realm that balanced the increasingly rationalized nature of social intercourse in the public realm of a contractual society. It is a paradoxical phenomenon, but contractualist philosophy and Sentimentalist literature in eighteenth-century Britain had pretty much the same intellectual roots. Eighteenth-century Sentimentalism advocated quite extreme and afflicted sensibilities and is regarded by Colin Campbell to have been a key movement in shaping modern attitudes towards consumption. Sentimentalist sensibilities covered a wide range of feelings, from feeling sorry for oneself and for others to being moved by beauty. In this context being a man or woman of good taste more or less defined one’s moral standing. The Sentimentalist character therefore ideally required goods to possess and to consume that were subject to judgment rather than goods of absolute intrinsic value. It does not require a lot of sensibility to possess and to consume goods that are more or less made up of raw wealth. Making sense of fashion, on the other hand, does.

Although Sentimentalism shows a clear ‘elective affinity’ with the consumption of fashion, that does not mean that this movement shaped modern patterns of consumption. Fashioning processes can be observed long before Sentimentalist novelists like Richardson and Sterne were even born. And sentimentalist (without a capital S) attitudes started to evolve long before Sentimentalism hit the stage as a kind of grande finale.

Leeuwarden was certainly not the only place where a fashioning process occurred in the early modern era. Similar and related processes have been suggested for various regions and places in the Dutch Republic, Britain, France and the Southern Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nevertheless, more robust data on these developments elsewhere are still desired. The methodological, conceptual and theoretical frameworks outlined in this book may provide a sound basis for further research on this topic, including international and intertemporal comparisons.