Households, Work and Consumer Changes. 
The Case of Tea and Coffee Sellers in 18th-Century Leiden 

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Introduction

Households have been at the core of interests of many economic historians since the 1970s. In recent years, this interest has further increased, not least as a result of Jan de Vrie’s influential work on the Industrious Revolution. In his theory on the Industrious Revolution De Vries proposes households as key agents of the fundamental economic changes taking place in Northwestern Europe, especially in the Northern Netherlands and England, after 1650. According to De Vries households changed their work patterns during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in order to be able to increase their consumption. These changes in consumer behaviour would not only have entailed an intensification of (male) labour, but also a shift by household members, in particular married women and children, from household to market production. Nevertheless, the evidence on married women’s work as presented by De Vries is rather limited and sheds only oblique light on the actual workings of the pre-industrial household economy. More generally it is fair to state that, despite the growing attention for pre-industrial women’s work and household economic strategies, we still know remarkably little about work patterns of married couples and what factors determined their character.

Based on three case studies for the early modern Northern Netherlands and England, as presented in a special issue of Continuity and Change, we have earlier concluded that social and professional status were very important in determining whether husbands and wives shared a trade; the middling sorts, and among them the self-employed in particular, were most likely to form spousal work partnerships. From this collection of essays it also appeared that transformations taking place in the wider economy significantly affected married women taking on work independently from their husbands. In market-based retailing in Dutch urban centres the expansion of the food trades resulted in a decrease of spousal cooperation, at the same time allowing more (married) women to start an independent

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1 We would like to thank Markus Kuepker for his advice on the database construction and Sara Horrell, Sheilagh Ogilvie and the audience at the 2011 N.W. Posthumus Conference for their helpful suggestions for the further improvement of this paper.


business. In the pre-industrial Dutch textile industry on the other hand, the early capitalist shifts in the organization of production led to the proletarianization of weaving, and an accompanying increase in the number of households in which both husbands and wives were wage workers. These two examples, taken from two studies that overlap in chronology and in geography, clearly illustrate that shifts in work patterns among married couples were very complex and far from one-dimensional: whereas declining work partnerships among married couples in retailing may point to an increase in opportunities for married women, in the textile industry a similar decline is more likely to be explained by economic necessity. These case studies also show that although De Vries may be right in assuming a rise in married women’s market work from the late seventeenth century onwards, it is still far from clear what caused this increase.

This paper aims to take a further step in enhancing our understanding of changes in work patterns within early modern urban households. The paper presents a case study of tea and coffee vendors in the eighteenth-century Dutch city of Leiden to address questions on the impact of changing consumption patterns on work and work relations amongst married couples. In the eighteenth-century Northern Netherlands, tea and coffee were exotic commodities that rapidly found their way to the masses. With the rising tea and coffee consumption, a simultaneous boom in retail outlets selling these colonial groceries can be observed in many Dutch cities and towns. An earlier exploratory study has shown that the proprietors of the new tea and coffee outlets were very often married women, which makes the case of shopkeepers in colonial groceries an excellent starting point for an investigation into the impact of changes in consumption on work practices of pre-industrial households. Moreover, the extensive records available on tea and coffee selling in Leiden allow for a long-term analysis, spanning over a century, which is unique for this particular trade.

Although we find the hypothesis that changing consumer behaviour led to alterations in work patterns within early modern households very challenging indeed, we also want to investigate possible other factors that may have caused shifts in work practices within the

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9 As far as we are aware, a similar register is available for the city of Maassluis but this only covers the period 1750-1778. Dibbits and Nijboer, ‘Detaillisten’.
family economy. The reasons for setting up a trade in a new branch of retailing could be manifold. It could be the case, as De Vries suggests, that married women moved from performing ‘assisting labour’ for their husbands to their own market activities in order to fill the desire to increase their consumption. However, setting up a new trade may also simply have been a way to expand an already existing retail trade, or to compensate for the downturn in another trade. This is particularly relevant in the context of the declining Leiden textile industry, which led to a loss of employment, both for married women (mainly in spinning) and their husbands (when employed as wage workers or as craftsmen in the textile industry).  

In addition to such macro-economic transitions, embarking on a new trade may also be inspired by life-cycle changes. Marriage may have provided women with both the need for a new occupation (as they could no longer work as domestic servants or in their parents’ trade) as well as the opportunity to start a business (since they could use the financial means of both bride and groom in setting up a business). Furthermore, the transition to parenthood may have also caused people to change work patterns. Not only is it often suggested that shop-keeping was a trade par excellence for mothers with young children, as it could be done from home and on a part-time basis, previous research furthermore suggests that households were especially strapped for cash when they had young children. This may have been a further possible incentive for people to set up a tea and coffee trade. By analysing the occupations of people who were issued a permit and those of their spouses, as well as their marriage and reproductive behaviour, we aim to shed light on the possible reasons for married women to embark on a new trade.

The basis of this paper is a dataset containing information on 831 individuals who held a permit to sell tea, coffee and chocolate in the Dutch city of Leiden during the long eighteenth-century. For a large share of the individuals in the dataset we have been able to trace the occupation of the permit holder or the spouse in the 1749 tax register, as well as additional data on occupations and on household formation from marriage, baptism and

12 These are the groceries, not the prepared drinks. Throughout this paper we will refer to permits for tea and coffee selling as also in other records (such as the tax register of 1749) these retailers are referred to as tea and coffee retailers.
burial registers.\(^{13}\) This type of data-linkage allows for in-depth analyses of the careers of husbands and wives, of the relationship between household composition and employment (e.g. parenthood and shop-keeping), and the impact of the life cycle on work patterns (e.g. timing of marriage and opening a shop), thereby greatly expanding our understanding of the microeconomics of early modern households in a rapidly changing urban economy. However, before we move to a discussion of these findings we will first discuss the role of women in the sale of new commodities.

**Women and the sale of ‘new’ commodities**

In eighteenth-century Northwestern Europe, fundamental changes took place in consumption patterns. The extent of these transformations was so large that in the early 1980s McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb introduced the concept of a ‘Consumer Revolution’ to describe both the quantitative and the qualitative changes in consumer behaviour in England in the late eighteenth century.\(^{14}\) In later years, other historians – most notably Jan de Vries – have claimed that this ‘revolution’ was in fact a much lengthier process, starting earlier in the eighteenth century, and in some parts of Europe as early as the late seventeenth century. In addition to increasing shares of the population buying more consumer goods, in this process people also started to consume other, often new, products. Linen and cotton, for instance, replaced the much more durable but also more expensive woollens, which stimulated the rise of more cyclical demand, and gave rise to ‘fashion’. Also, the lowering of prices of new colonial commodities such as spices, sugar, tea and coffee meant that these products became available to people from virtually all social layers in the course of the eighteenth century.\(^{15}\)

Women, often being the keepers of the household budget, would have played a key role in these changes in consumer preferences. It has even been suggested that early modern women had a greater ‘sensitivity to commodities’ than men.\(^{16}\)


Women’s crucial role in consumption, and their supposedly keen nose for new fashionable items, are also thought to have led to their involvement in the retailing of new consumer goods. The rise of fashion and the growing demand for clothing and accessories, for instance, would have stimulated female entrepreneurship, especially in certain ‘feminine niches’.

Similar mechanisms may well have been in place in tea and coffee selling. From the second half of the seventeenth century, the increase of tea and coffee imports from the East and West Indies led to a growing consumption of these – at first luxury – exotic commodities in the Northern Netherlands. The larger supply of tea and coffee led to sharp fallings in price, which enabled a larger share of the population to buy these commodities, but various historians have argued that changing consumer patterns also increased the demand for these stimulants.

In the city of Leiden, the locus of our study, tea and coffee consumption also increased markedly from the late seventeenth century onwards. For one thing, the number of shops where inhabitants of Leiden could buy tea and coffee took off drastically. For example in the 1674 tax register, there is no mentioning of any specialized tea and coffee retailer, although one could at that time probably buy tea or coffee at grocers’ shops or drink freshly brewed coffee in one of the two available coffee houses. By 1749 this had completely changed and a tax register from that year records 196 tea and coffee shops: five for every thousand inhabitants! Strikingly, by the 1750s the numbers of tea and coffee vendors not only exceeded other specialized shops, such as those selling brandy (99) and tobacco (70), but also more general shops which sold groceries and sundries, such as the kommenijen (91) and kruideniers (59).

The development of tea and coffee retailing in Leiden can be plotted more precisely by using the registers of the permits issued for selling tea and coffee. From the late seventeenth century onwards, the local authorities demanded that every tea and coffee retailer obtained a permit; this concerned a permanent permission to sell the colonial groceries, which

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20 De Vries, Industrious revolution; McCants, ‘Poor consumers’.
did not have to be renewed annually.\textsuperscript{22} As with similar permits, the city authorities administered the tea and coffee permits in a special register (\textit{Burgemeestersdagboeken}). The register was continuously kept from 1700 to 1794 and includes both first names and surnames of the people who obtained a permit, which allowed us to identify their gender. In the case of women, the clerk also recorded their marital status and the first names and surnames of their spouses.\textsuperscript{23} As no annual renewal of the permit was required individuals only show up once in the register.\textsuperscript{24}

From the permit registers it appears that in nearly all decades of the eighteenth century over 100 new permits were issued, culminating in an exceptionally high number of 453 new permits in the 1750s.\textsuperscript{25} In this growing segment of the retail trade, women conquered an ever larger share, among them especially married women.\textsuperscript{26} In the first decade of the eighteenth century, over half of all 143 new tea and coffee sellers were women (56.6\%), but their share increased to a steady 80\% in the decades after 1750.\textsuperscript{27} The proportion of women registered as permit holders was thus exceptionally high: only in the selling of haberdasheries and in the fish and offal markets we find similar shares of women.\textsuperscript{28} Interestingly, also in eighteenth-century ’s-Hertogenbosch, another Dutch town, women formed the majority of tea and coffee sellers.\textsuperscript{29}

When we look at the marital status of the female sellers at the time they acquired their sales permit, we can observe a clear trend towards a growing share of married women,

\textsuperscript{22} The first tea and coffee permits in Leiden were issued in 1691. This is probably connected to a new excise on tea and coffee consumption, which was implemented on 15 March 1692. L. Yong, \textit{The Dutch East India Company’s tea trade with China, 1757-1781} (Leiden 2007) 138-139.
\textsuperscript{23} Regionaal Archief Leiden (RAL), Stadsarchief II (SAIL), inv.nos. 161-184.
\textsuperscript{24} On the contrary, permits for street vending generally had to be renewed on a regular basis. See Van den Heuvel, \textit{Women and entrepreneurship}, 91-93.
\textsuperscript{25} The exceptions are the 1730s and 1740s. We currently have no data for the period 1765-1788. Van den Heuvel and Van Nederveen Meerkerk, ‘Huishoudens’, 110. Of course these high numbers of new business people raises questions about the longevity of their careers and the size of the trade. We need to look into this further but evidence suggests that these people were not necessarily in business for a short time (we have found people who held a tea and coffee shop for ten years and over) or were all small-scale traders.
\textsuperscript{26} Although one could assume that the male permit holders who were married applied for a permit for their wives, we assume that in the majority of cases when a married woman wanted a permit she applied for it herself. This assumption is strengthened by the overwhelmingly large numbers of married women obtaining a permit in their own names.
\textsuperscript{27} Van den Heuvel and Van Nederveen Meerkerk, ‘Huishoudens’, 110, Table 1. Based on 1,411 granted permits in the period 1700-1794, with a lacuna of the period 1765-1788. In the year 1750, a peak in the issuing of new permits occurred. This was probably related to policy changes. On 12 April 1749 the states of Holland and West-Friesland issued an ordinance on the payment of excise on tea and coffee, and three-quarters of a year later, in January 1750, the city of Leiden issued a separate ordinance on tea and coffee consumption. These ordinances probably resulted in an increased monitoring of tea and coffee retailers and thus in a sudden boom in permits.
\textsuperscript{28} Van den Heuvel, \textit{Women and entrepreneurship}, 98, 202
especially in the first half of the eighteenth century (see Figure 1). The share of married women among female permit holders rose from a little over 3% in the first two decades of the century, via one-third in the 1720s, to approximately 60% in the 1740s, 50s and 60s. In the 1790s the share of married women among all female permit holders was as high as 77%.

This observation brings us back to the central question of our paper: why did so many married women move into the branch of tea and coffee selling? Was it out of opportunity or rather out of necessity (or perhaps a combination of both), and to what extent were their moves into this new branch of retailing inspired by changes taking place in the wider economy or within the households these women were members of? To examine these issues in the next section we will start by analysing the occupations of the husbands of the married female permit holders.

Figure 1 – Marital status of female permit holders, 1700-1794

![Marital Status Chart]

30 The share of women with marital status ‘unknown’ is larger in the beginning of the eighteenth century, which may have biased the category of unmarried women. Nevertheless, in most of these cases we were unable to find both marriages and baptisms, which implies that the majority of the female permit holders with marital status ‘unknown’ will indeed have been unmarried.


32 We are still in the process of working through the register. We now have two datasets based on the register: one which runs from 1700-1764 and 1789-1794 for which we have included the number of permits, the gender, and marital status of the permit holders.
Selling tea and coffee in the family economy

Analysing married women’s professional careers is very difficult for the pre-statistical era. Whereas for men and unmarried women (both singles and widows) heading a household information on occupations can be gathered from tax registers and censuses which are relatively numerous for the Dutch Republic, married women’s occupations are generally not included in these registers. In addition, marriage registers, another source used to analyse occupations, only generally only include information on the occupation of the groom. Finding out what the married women in our sample did before they started their tea and coffee business therefore needs to be done in an indirect way, through an analysis of the occupations of their spouses.

As in the permit register the names of spouses of the married female permit holders are given it is possible to trace occupational information on their spouses in tax and marriage registers. For Leiden marriage registers are available from 1575-1795 and generally provide the occupation of the groom at his first marriage. Additionally in 1749 a tax register was compiled which includes occupational activities (first and incidentally also secondary occupations) for all heads of households. Through nominal record linkage the 831 individuals who applied for a permit between 1719 and 1764 were linked to occupational information derived from the marriage and tax registers, and among them were 369 married women. For 172 of these married women we have been able to trace the occupation of their spouses in the tax register. In addition the marriage registers gave occupations for another 40 husbands.

Although the results from the tax and marriage registers differ somewhat, overall they show the same pattern (Table 1). The majority of the partners of married women who obtained a permit to sell tea and coffee in eighteenth-century Leiden worked in industry. Of the individuals who could be traced in the tax register only one-quarter worked in the service sector, and of the husbands we traced in the marriage registers this was even less at one-fifth of the total. Another striking finding is that only a relatively small share of the husbands was a shopkeeper by first occupation: 12% of the men traced in the tax register, and none of the

33 Interestingly, at second or further marriages, grooms were usually – though not always – identified by their marital status (‘widower of …’) instead of by their occupational status.
34 We have discussed the results of this analysis in a previous paper: Van den Heuvel and Van Nederveen Meerkerk, ‘Huishoudens’.
35 18 of these women (10%) obtained a permit before the tax register was compiled. Of the women obtaining a permit after 1749 56% was granted a permit in the five years after the occupational information for the tax register was collected.
36 At this moment we have looked up 64% of all permit holders (male and female) in our sample in the marriage registers available online. We expect the number of occupations to go up as we look up the additional 36% of permit holders in our dataset.
grooms. For another 32 husbands who worked in industry a second occupation in the service sector was given in the tax register, 30 of them were a wholesaler or retailer of some sort. Nevertheless, only 9 of these traders sold anything different from tea and coffee. If we assume the tax register adequately reflects what trades households were engaged in, the majority of women who embarked on a tea and coffee trade were thus moving into another sector rather than expanding an existing range of activities in retailing.

Table 1 – The occupations of spouses of married women who hold a permit to sell tea and coffee (1719-1764)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax register</th>
<th>Marriage registers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>IN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innkeepers etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom in tea and coffee</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom in stimulants</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom in foodstuffs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom in non-food</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom unspecified</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SERVICES</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No | IN | ON | TOTAL |
| Wage labourers in textiles | 45 | 35.4% | 26.8% |
| Craftsmen in textiles | 22 | 17.3% | 13.1% |
| Other craftsmen | 30 | 23.6% | 17.9% |
| Journeymen | 30 | 23.6% | 17.9% |
| TOTAL INDUSTRY | 127 | 100.0% | 75.6% | 38 | 100.0% | 80.9% |
| TOTAL | 16 | 8 | 47 | 3 | No occupation |
surprise. However, although the number of husbands employed in the textile industry was the largest among all husbands of permit holders, it was smaller compared to the overall share of people employed in this industry in Leiden. In 1749, 63% of all male household heads in Leiden worked in the textile industry – 85% of whom working as wage workers, 15% as self-employed. As craftsmen were more likely to be married than wage workers, it is perhaps not surprising that we find relatively fewer husbands employed in the textiles industry compared to the total Leiden population. This is also reflected in the ratio between wage workers and craftsmen among the husbands in our sample with 67% wage workers and 33% self-employed, the share of self-employed thus being twice as high as among the total population. The analyses of the occupations of husbands of permit holders as registered in the 1749 tax register show that wives of textile workers, both craftsmen and wage labourers, were indeed moving into the sale of the new colonial groceries in large numbers, but that the majority were wives of the self-employed craftsmen in textiles and in other urban industries.

The data from the marriage registers show a similar but slightly different pattern: here too, very few husbands of women who sold tea and coffee worked in the service sector and a relatively large share were craftsmen (42.1% of all men in industry; this is 40.9% in the tax register), and thus self-employed. Of course, the nature of the source is rather different: the tax register gives a snapshot of all inhabitants of Leiden and their occupations in 1749, while the marriage registers are dispersed over time. Moreover, marriage registers only provide occupational information of grooms living in Leiden at the time they entered into marriage, thus excluding migrant men who came to live in the city after they had married. This may largely account for the underrepresentation of textile workers and wage workers in the marriage data – these people were relatively often migrants who came to look for employment in the Leiden textile industry. Craftsmen, on the other hand, were generally citizens of Leiden, usually (though not always) born and raised in the town, as many craft

37 Van Nederveen Meerkerk, *Draad in eigen handen*, 111, 328.
38 In the tax registers we also find unmarried men as heads of households who were more likely to work as wage workers than as craftsmen.
39 It is unlikely that the discrepancy represents (downward) job mobility. Of the 7 cases we could find occupational information in both the 1749 tax register and the marriage records, only one man changed his occupation: Steven Groenhout, who had been a skipper’s mate in 1749, was recorded as a milk vendor when he married the tea and coffee seller Elisabeth Fleur in 1763. (Compare Database Tax 1749 with RAL, DTB, Schepenhuwelijken M-115). All of the other husbands of tea and coffee sellers stayed in the same occupation, sometimes for decades. The time lag between tax record and marriage record of these 6 men were 3, 4, 5, 8, 19 and even 41 years!
guilds demanded their members to be town citizens. This requirement did not apply to weavers, spinners and other (wage) workers in the Leiden textile industry.  

A further, and perhaps more important, reason why we find relatively few wives of wage workers amongst those applying for a permit to sell tea and coffee despite diminishing economic opportunities as a result of the decline of the local textile industry probably lies in the entry barriers to this trade. Firstly, there was the obligatory permit, which cost 5 guilders to obtain. Although this was less than a weekly wage of an unskilled male labourer, and may thus seem very little, it took unskilled female workers much longer (up to two and a half weeks) to work for such money, especially when one takes into account that wages were predominantly used for covering living costs. Secondly, setting up shop required investments in stock and shop furniture. Of course this could vary according to the type and scale of the shop, but it could mean a substantial financial investment. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, regulation regarding the tea and coffee trade required the retailers of tea and coffee to have a shop sign indicating that they sold the colonial groceries. This had a very important implication as it meant that one could not sell tea or coffee in the streets, as was possible in segments of retailing in which we generally find poorer sorts of people, such as the trade in rags, haberdashery and herbs. As a result, prospective sellers of tea and coffee had to have access to a proper space to sell their wares; ideally a ground-floor dwelling facing the street. Unlike many craftsmen, many wage workers probably could not afford such accommodation.

A final interesting result is that many spouses of female permit holders worked in a trade that did not necessarily require assistance by family members or which was not an

42 We are unsure whether these tea and coffee retailers also had to obtain membership of the local guild of grocers (kruideniers) as hardly any records for this guild have survived. If this was the case, the total costs of setting up a tea and coffee shop will have been higher.
43 In the seventeenth century this permit had cost 12 guilders, but for reasons unknown, by the early eighteenth century it was lowered to 5 guilders.
45 Jansen has calculated that the investments for opening a tea and coffee shop in Maastricht at the end of the 18th century were about 160 guilders. J.C.G.M. Jansen, ‘Wilt u koffie of thee? Consumentengedrag in Maastricht in de achttiende eeuw’, NEHA-Jaarboek 60 (1997) 36-68, 65. Moreover, Van den Heuvel has estimated that house rents for tea and coffee dealers were certainly not among the lowest among the specialized traders in Leiden around 1749. Van den Heuvel, Women and entrepreneurship, 214.
46 This was presumably done to tax collectors to find the outlets.
activity that took place within or surrounding the home, as a traditional family economy would suggest. At least 49 husbands traced in the tax register were employed outside their family home, as journeymen (30), in construction (3), as skippers or sailors (5) or as soldiers (2). We may assume therefore that at least 29% of the married women in our sample were not moving from ‘assisting labour’ to independent work. Unfortunately we are left in the dark as to whether these women shifted from unpaid household labour to market work, but this nevertheless shows that a very substantial share (nearly one-third at least) of married women who embarked on a new retailing business did not withdraw from a typical family economy in which husband, wife and children worked together in the same trade.

All in all, a large majority of husbands of women selling tea and coffee engaged in a totally different type of economic activity. Many of them worked in the local industries, mostly as craftsmen and journeymen. This means that overall tea and coffee shops were not set up as an alternative source of income for deprived wage workers in the waning Leiden textile industry, but rather by people from the lower middling sorts. Moreover, our analysis shows that the majority of husbands – whether wage workers or self-employed – did not have an occupation that was normally carried out within the household. This implies that the opening of a tea and coffee outlet was also not an extension of similar activities already undertaken within the family economy. As a consequence, it is relevant to investigate alternative reasons for shifts in household work patterns. Let us start with scrutinizing to what extent the opening of a shop in colonial groceries was part and parcel of the formation of a new household.

**Did starting a household mean starting a business?**

The formation of a new household in early modern Western Europe generally started with a marriage between a young man and a young woman. The timing of marriage not only involved emotional and biological considerations, but also economic ones. Assumedly, the ‘European Marriage Pattern’, in which the nuclear family prevailed and people married relatively late, generally implied that both spouses-to-be had been economically active to save a certain amount of money prior to their union.48 Before entering into marriage, young men from the middling groups often worked as apprentices, whereas their female

counterparts were more likely to be acquiring skills in their parents’ workshop or business.\textsuperscript{49} For boys and girls from the labouring sorts, it was more customary to engage in wage work, ranging from working as an errand-boy to a VOC-sailor (for men), and from a seamstress to a domestic servant (for women).\textsuperscript{50} The entry into the selling of colonial drinks may have been caused by a change in occupation that came with the marriage. On the other hand, marriage may not only have provided people with the necessity, but also with the opportunity to embark on a new trade, as a marital union also brought together the financial and human capital of a husband and wife. For those who were not yet married when entering the trade, opening a tea and coffee shop may have been an activity by which they aimed to acquire some savings before getting married.

In order to find out to what extent entry into marriage and setting up a tea and coffee business were related, we have used nominal record linkage to relate information from the Leiden marriage registers to our database on permit holders. As the marital statuses of female permit holders are given in the permit register, it was possible to distinguish between married, unmarried and widowed female tea and coffee sellers at the time their permit was issued. This enabled us to look more closely at whether there were differences between women of different marital statuses in how marriage (or remarriage in the case of widows) impacted on their economic activities.

We have been able to trace the marriage dates of 76 female permit holders, 45 of whom were listed as married women in the permit registers, 17 as widows, and 14 for whom no marital status was recorded when they obtained a permit.\textsuperscript{51} The question is to what extent the setting up of a tea and coffee outlet was related to their entry into marriage. Were these women moving into the tea and coffee trade regardless of their phase in the life cycle, and simply responding to a sudden increase in the demand for colonial drinks, potentially triggered by the urge to increase their own consumption of market goods? Or was the reason for this influx of large numbers of women more complicated and also determined by more general shifts in economic activities as a result of large changes in the life cycle such as (re-)marriage or having children?

As many women married more than once in their lives, we have analysed the timing of those marriages that were closest in time to the permit. For women who were taken down

\textsuperscript{51} In total we have found 89 marriages for these 76 women. We expect to be able to trace more marriages in future
as 'wife of' in the permit registers we analysed the marriages they were in at the time they were issued a permit. For unmarried women who entered into marriage after obtaining a permit we looked at the relationship between the marriage that was closest in time to the permit rather than later marriages, and for widows we also analysed the marriages closest in time to the permit date. Since in the case of women who were married at the time they obtained their permit, the question is how close these two dates were related and whether we can find any patterns in this. If the marriage date of married women was close to the permit date (up to five years before the permit date), we can assume that the move into tea and coffee selling was closely related to this change in the life cycle. If we find a more scattered pattern, other motivations may have been in order. Similarly, for single women we aim to find out how soon they married after their permit registration. If the time difference was small (up to five years after obtaining a permit), again, we can consider the setting up of the tea and coffee shop as a ‘life-cycle event’, and if not, we must look for other explanations. For widowed women, we use the marriage data to find out whether their entry into the tea and coffee trade is linked to an upcoming second marriage. Another interesting question for this category of female tea and coffee sellers is whether there is a link to the death of her spouse.

For 45 married women in the permit registers we could trace the date at which they married; the time differences between marriage and permit dates differed substantially and could vary between 21 years and less than a year. There was even one case in which both events happened on the same day: on 30 April 1757, Elisabeth van Hasselt obtained a permit, and on the same day she married the valet Johannes Bakhuijs. However, Elisabeth was not alone in entering into a new trade shortly after marriage: as Table 2 shows, almost 29% of all married women obtained their permit within a year of entering into marriage.

When we scrutinize the data in greater detail we observe that 11 out of the 13 of married women who married and subsequently (i.e. within one year) obtained the permit for a tea and coffee business did so within 3 months after their marriage. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that 51% of all married women were issued a permit within 1 to 5 years after their entry into wedlock. Thus, in total 80% of all married female permit holders had only been married for up to five years when they started selling tea and coffee, which means that for the large majority of married women, embarking on this new trade was strikingly related to this new phase in their life cycle.
Table 2 – Timing of permit in relation to entry into marriage for women (grouped according to marital status) and men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married women</th>
<th>Unmarried women</th>
<th>Widowed women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=45</td>
<td>n=1</td>
<td>n=1</td>
<td>n=2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before marriage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10 years before</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years before</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>na</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years before</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the same year</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After marriage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years after</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years after</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10 years after</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: the marital status for women is derived from the marital status given in the permit registers; for men no marital status is given in the permit registers.

na = not applicable

For 14 women who were unmarried when they obtained a permit the date of a future marriage could be identified. The single women married in a range of 0 to 16 years after obtaining the permit to sell tea and coffee. Interestingly, the pattern that arises from the marriage dates of this group of women shows a mirrored image of our sample of married female permit holders. As with the married women, for an overwhelming majority of the single women (over 78%) the time between the marriage and the permit dates was less than 6 years, although in this case of course the women married after obtaining the permit. And also among these women, the date of marriage and of obtaining a tea and coffee permit in some cases closely corresponded. Stijntje van der Ham, for instance, obtained a permit on 15 August 1755, a day before she married Dirk Kost, a ribbon maker’s journeyman. The striking

52 For only one of the women, Ida Schoeren, we have found a marriage before getting the permit (12 years), and as this was obviously an omission in the permit register, we have left her out of the table. This single omission suggests that most of the women who were recorded in the permit register without the mentioning of their marital status were indeed unmarried women.
resemblance in the time distribution between marriage and permit (albeit in opposite direction) for married and unmarried female permit holders is nicely illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 below.

Figures 2 & 3 – Timing of tea and coffee permit in relation to entry into marriage for married and unmarried women

The 17 widows in our sample were all married long before they obtained their permit: varying from 13 up to 48 years before they entered into the tea and coffee trade. This means that there was no link to marriage or remarriage and suggests a very different motivation for embarking on a new trade. Presumably, the crucial life cycle event for widows was the death of their husband. Although the data do not provide us with information on all these widows, we can tell from various sources that at least 9 of the 17 widows in our sample (53%), obtained their permit within 5 years after their husbands had died. For two of them, we are
certain that their spouse had died in the year they were issued a permit.⁵³ Nevertheless, we cannot be sure that for these widows the move into tea and coffee selling was always inspired by the husband’s death. In one particular case, that of Barbera Timmerman, it may rather have been related to an upcoming second marriage. Barbera, the widow of wig maker Johannes Mastik, obtained a tea and coffee permit in October 1723.⁵⁴ Only a year later, in December 1724, she remarried – again to a wig maker by the name of Paulus Petit.

Interestingly, when we look at the male permit holders, for whom no information on marital status could be obtained in the permit registers, it appears that they were more likely than women to obtain a permit long before they entered into marriage (40% of the men held a permit at least 10 years before their marriage). Although we cannot be entirely sure that we have traced these men’s first marriages, as the spouses’ names are not included in the permit registers, it is nevertheless an interesting difference. Also, the range of years from the marriage date to the permit date (married 43 years before to 15 years after obtaining a permit) is larger than for women. Still, one quarter (24%) of the male tea and coffee vendors obtained a permit in the same year as their marriage. Everardus Bakker, for example, obtained his permit two days after marrying Maria Cleuters in November 1760. From this, it is clear that for many men too, the opening of a tea and coffee shop may have corresponded with the stage in the life cycle in which they set up a household. Incidentally, there is a striking resemblance between male tea and coffee vendors and male shopkeepers entering the shopkeepers’ guild of the southern town of ’s-Hertogenbosch, many of whom also had just married, or married in the same year as entering the guild. Here, the vast majority of guild members married just before entry into the guild, and thus setting up a shop, whereas marrying after entering the guild was very uncommon.⁵⁵

We can conclude that for the majority of the tea and coffee retailers for whom we could trace a marriage date in Leiden marriage records, there was a clear relationship between the timing of marriage and the timing of starting a tea and coffee business. For almost 30% of the women who were married when they applied for a permit, this meant shortly after marriage, sometimes only weeks or just days after they married. Interestingly, however, another 50% of the married women waited for a period of one to five years after

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⁵³ This concerns Grietje Plancke and Johanna Catharina Gedouw, who were acting as witnesses at baptisms together with their husbands in the respective years (1722 and 1763) they were issued their permits. RAL, DTB.
⁵⁴ We have no exact date for Johannes’ death, but we know that he died between June 1721 and October 1723.
⁵⁵ Based on all male members who entered in 1745. In total 32 entered, 16 could be traced in the marriage registers. Van den Heuvel, *Women and entrepreneurship*, 172.
they had married to take on tea and coffee selling. We will now turn to see to what extent we can explain this ‘delay’ in terms of another life cycle event: bearing and caring for children.

**Combining work and children**

Traditionally, historians claimed that childbirth and the care for small children seriously hampered women’s economic activities. Although since the 1970s, claims that “in the early modern period married women did not work” have been refuted, even feminist historians have long retained the assumption that most of the work wives performed was ancillary and unpaid. With the birth of their first child, women’s economic activities were supposed to have instantly been accommodated to their new family situation. As a consequence, the ability to combine work with childcare has long been one of the most important explanations for the segmented labour market between the sexes. In this view, married women worked at home, in occupations they could easily interrupt for their household and childcare duties, such as spinning, needlework, and as proprietors of small shops.

In this context, embarking on a new trade, such as tea and coffee selling, may for some households have been a way of expanding the couple’s financial leeway when they were expecting a child. Was starting out as tea and coffee retailers related to the timing of child births? To what extent did the birth of the first child coincide with applying for a permit? The analysis of the marriage registers already provided us with hints in this direction. The finding that 50% of the married women for whom we were able to trace a marriage date were entering into the trade not directly, but between one and five years after their marriage, suggests that for these women entering into the tea and coffee trade may have been linked even more strongly to becoming mothers than to becoming wives. By relating the entry into tea and coffee selling to the first (and last) known baptism of the sellers’ children, and to the number of children female and male permit holders had, we aim to find more clues to the workings of the household economy of tea and coffee retailers.

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Table 3 – Timing of permit in relation to baptism of first child for married women and for men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All married female permit holders traced in baptism registers (n=124)</th>
<th>Married female permit holders traced in marriage and baptism registers (n=24)</th>
<th>Men (n=44)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before first baptism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 10 years before 1st bapt.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years before 1st bapt.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years before 1st bapt.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same year</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After first baptism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years after 1st bapt.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years after 1st bapt.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 10 years after 1st bapt.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: the marital status for women is derived from the marital status given in the permit registers; for men no marital status is given in the permit registers.

Table 3 shows the number of first baptisms we traced for 124 of the 369 married female permit holders in our database and their timing compared to the issuing of the permit (columns 2 and 3). In total we found 496 baptisms for these 124 women, which means that on average each of these tea and coffee vendors had at least 4.0 children baptized. Almost 47% of these women obtained a permit to sell tea and coffee within 5 years after the birth of their first child. For male permit holders, this percentage was slightly lower (43%), but since we cannot differentiate according to marital status here, and widowers are therefore

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60 With ‘first baptisms’ we refer to the baptism of the first child. This, however, only concerns the baptisms we were able to trace in the Leiden baptism registers.
automatically included, it is clear that for men and women alike the tea and coffee outlet very often was set up when they were in the early stages of parenthood.

For 24 out of the 124 married women for whom we traced baptism dates, we were able to also trace their marriage date. This smaller dataset allows us to further investigate the relationship between obtaining a tea and coffee permit and the consecutive stages of household formation: marriage and the birth of a first child. The number of all baptisms for this particular group is 112, which implies an average of 4.7 baptisms, which is higher than for the larger dataset we used above. This may be a statistical deviation, because of the smaller dataset, but it may also be due to the fact that these women all married in Leiden. As a consequence, these women had not had children elsewhere, which may have been the case for migrant women who are probably included in the larger dataset. These migrant women had not only married elsewhere, but potentially also had given birth to some of their children before migrating to Leiden, which could explain the lower average of children baptized in Leiden.

Of the women in the smaller dataset, 19 (79%) had their first child within a year of marriage – two of them even within two months of marriage, which was not uncommon in this period. Remarkably, marriage, childbirth, and applying for a permit, never occurred in the same year. Only one of the 24 women, Clara van der Slooten, had her first child baptized in the same year she was issued permit, after five years of marriage to the weaver Barend Droeve. Clara and Barend’s first child Gerret was baptized in February 1759, and 5 months later, in July of that same year, Clara obtained her permit.61 Four other women followed the distinct pattern of marrying, having a first child, and obtaining a permit, in consecutive years: Jannetje Fleur (marriage in 1759; first baptism in 1760; permit in 1761), Grietje Meijer (marriage, baptism and permit identical years to Jannetje Fleur), Petronella Koggers (marriage and first baptism in 1760; permit in 1761 and Maria Cocq (marriage in 1761; first baptism in 1762; permit in 1763). For the other women in the smaller dataset the time difference between first baptism and obtaining a permit was larger and varied between two and fourteen years after they had given birth to their first child (see also columns 4 and 5 of Table 3).

Further scrutiny of the baptism dates in the larger dataset shows that most of our married female permit holders (almost one-third) were issued a permit between the birth of their first and second child, although there were deviations from this pattern. Only 21% of

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61 Subsequently, Clara and Barend had four other children baptized: in 1763, 1765, 1767, and 1769.
them did not yet have children before embarking on the tea and coffee trade. Also, more than 70% of the 124 women in the large dataset obtained the permit before the last observed baptism of their children. All this implies that most women did not enter into tea and coffee selling when they were past their reproductive phase, but rather that they chose to do so when they were in the middle of it. Interestingly, having the responsibility of caring for toddlers and one’s customers at the same time did not prove to be problematic. As mentioned earlier, the average number of children these women gave birth to was 4, and this is of course a minimum. Although in early modern cities about 20% of all children died in their first year, on average this still left women with three children to take care of, but several of the tea and coffee vendors had many more. Angenes Vlek, who started selling tea and coffee in 1754, gave birth to 10 children from 1757 to 1776. Another woman, Arnolda Kniest, opened a tea and coffee outlet four months after the birth of her third child in 1755, but continued to have another 10 children after that.

The analysis of the baptisms of the children of tea and coffee vendors shows that the pattern that had earlier arisen from the marriage data is confirmed: most men and women entered into the business after they had been married for a couple of years and had become parents of their first children. For married women (and men) the entry into the new highly prolific trade was thus not a direct result of marriage, but rather a delayed result which closely connected to the burden of having a small but growing family. The newly established tea and coffee shops thus fit the hypothesis that mothers of young children worked as shopkeepers rather well. Although recent research has shown that their reproductive duties are far from a sufficient explanation for women’s work patterns in the early modern period, this shows that they did affect choices in what type of work women performed in specific moments in the life cycle.

The reasons why the majority only entered into tea and coffee selling after a couple of years in wedlock are yet unsure but we can think of at least three causes for this specific

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62 26 women (21.0%) obtained the permit before their first child; 39 (31.5%) between the first and second; 25 (20.2%) between second and third child; 10 (8.1%) between their third and fourth child; 14 (11.3%) between their fourth and fifth child and 10 (8.1%) after their fifth child. For the 44 men in our dataset, these percentages are not very different. Here too, the most common pattern was between first and second child (27.3%); then before the first child (25.0%); and then between second and third child (18.2%).


64 This is based only on the baptisms we were able to trace in the baptism registers. We are missing out on children who had been born and baptised elsewhere. For the men in our dataset the average number of children is 4.5.

65 For instance, men also often worked at home, or moved into ‘feminine’ occupations such as spinning, and women’s work patterns too were historically far from static, while their reproductive responsibilities throughout most of history remained the same. Ogilvie, A bitter living, 8-9; Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, ‘Segmentation’.
timing. The first is that the first child did not necessarily require additional income, but that a second or a third child did, either because couples aimed at keeping their family income at a certain level, or even to expand their consumptive possibilities. Secondly, obtaining a permit to sell tea and coffee did not necessarily mean that before one started selling these colonial groceries one had not been engaged in another retail trade. Elsewhere, we have shown that up to three-quarters new female permit holders whom we could trace as heads of households in the 1749 tax register, were already involved in retailing before embarking on the tea and coffee trade. This may also have been applicable to the married tea and coffee vendors. Perhaps this delay after marriage is explained by the fact that people first set up a shop which required fewer financial investments (no permit, cheaper sales goods) and after a few years expanded the range or wares they sold with the exotic tea and coffee. A final reason, of a very different character, may be that it took some time for the couple took to get used to their new situation as newlyweds and young parents, before they embarked on a new trade and applied for a tea and coffee sales permit.

Conclusions

From the late seventeenth century onwards, fundamental changes are supposed to have taken place in the Dutch economy. During the so-called Industrious Revolution households would have increased their market production in order to earn additional income to spend on new and fashionable consumer goods. Married women in particular would have embarked on a range of new economic activities. However, these claims are largely based on indirect evidence. This paper has sought to illuminate the effects of these transitions on the household economy by closely examining a group of women whose lives were greatly affected by these changes: married women who engaged in the new and growing trade of tea and coffee retailing. Not only did the tea and coffee trade take a drastic flight from the late seventeenth century onwards, also the share of married women in this particular branch of retailing greatly expanded over the eighteenth century. In Leiden hundreds of people, mostly women, entered the trade during the eighteenth century, and from the 1750s the share of married women among the new female tea and coffee sellers rose from 60 to 77%. By systematically investigating the economic and demographic background of the women who embarked on an increasingly popular activity during the period in which the Industrious

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Revolution was in full swing, this paper aimed to shed more light on changing work patterns in the pre-industrial family economy.

Most women who entered into tea and coffee selling in the eighteenth century had a husband who worked in a different branch of the economy. The majority of the women (76-81%) were married to men who worked in industry, and the others were wed to men who were employed in the service sector, remarkably few of whom in retailing. Nevertheless, the occupational backgrounds of these women’s spouses differed markedly from the occupational structure of the city of Leiden as a whole. Compared to their large absolute and relative shares in the overall economy, we found relatively few textile wage workers among the husbands of tea and coffee sellers. Instead, most married women who obtained a permit to sell tea and coffee were either wives of self-employed craftsmen in textiles and other urban industries, or wives of journeymen in guild-organized crafts. Moreover, we found that most husbands of tea and coffee vendors did not have an occupation that was normally carried out within the home. This strengthens our argument that opening a tea and coffee outlet by married women was often not an extension of similar activities already undertaken within the family economy: it was – quite literally – their own business. To one extent our results fit what Jan de Vries postulated in his theory of the Industrious Revolution: during the eighteenth century households, and within those especially married women, added an economic activity to those they were already involved in. However, contrary to De Vries’ assumptions, in most cases these women did not move from providing assisting work in the family economy to an independent trade, and only very few of them were the wives of unskilled labourers.

The move into tea and coffee selling for many women (and also men) was inspired by changes in their life cycles. Approximately 30% of married women obtained a permit to sell tea and coffee in the year they married, which may have resulted from a forced change of occupation since they could no longer work as a domestic servant or in their parents’ business, or an opportunity arising from the ability to use the spouses’ joint capital to set up a business. Nevertheless, the majority of women (and men) only entered into tea and coffee retailing after they had been married for a number of years, typically when they had become parents of their first children. Embarking on a new retail trade was thus more strongly related to having a small (and growing) family than to entry into marriage. Again, this does not suggest a typical ‘family economy’, but rather a pattern in which couples of the lower middling sorts adapted to their new household situation – either by the wife setting up a new
trade, or by expanding already existing retail activities, while the husband kept working in a craft as a master or a journeyman.

The finding that the majority of married women embarked on one of the upcoming retail trades in fashionable products precisely when their families started to expand, suggests that the increase of married women’s economic activities in this period should be sought in changing personal circumstances rather than a desire to engage in (conspicuous) consumption as postulated in the theory of the Industrious Revolution. The pattern that arises here shows that tea and coffee selling, a retail trade that was clearly very appealing to married women, was apparently not so seductive to these women to take it on randomly, regardless of their phase in the life cycle. This implies that the entry into tea and coffee retailing was most likely to be motivated by the need to supplement the family income, as has also been shown for other pre-industrial societies where the main aim of women’s activities in small trades was to earn money to buy food and other life necessities for the direct use of their families. For the large number of women whose husbands worked in industry, this need will have been even more pressing due to the decline of the local textile industry, and the more general downfall in the Leiden industries in this period.

This leaves us with the pressing question to what extent the taking on of (extra) work by married women as a result of household expansion can be associated with the Industrious Revolution. This question is difficult to answer. Firstly, we are left in the dark on whether the women who obtained a permit to sell tea and coffee had been in gainful employment before they married and during the first years of their marriage, and whether the taking on of a tea and coffee trade meant an actual increase of their working hours. Secondly, as this still is a somewhat under-researched topic, we cannot be fully sure that before the eighteenth century women did not take on extra economic activities after they had become mothers, as is well known for the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, there are hints that suggest this may have been the case. Earlier research on work patterns of married women in Leiden in the seventeenth century showed that it was common for mothers to engage in market work while their children were young, and fragmented evidence shows that they were motivated by the need to feed their growing families. A large majority of these women were spinners, who presumably belonged to different social strata than the women who embarked on tea and coffee selling a century later.

67 M. McIntosh, ‘The diversity of social capital in English communities, 1300-1640 (with a glance at modern Nigeria)’, Journal of Interdisciplinary History XXIX:3 (1999) 459-490, 481. See also Horrell and Humphries, ‘Women’s labour force participation’, 112.
68 Schmidt, Overleven, 130-131; Van Nederveen Meerkerk, ‘Couples cooperating?’, 245.
It may therefore very well have been the case that for women from the middling and lower middling sorts things were different, and that they were inspired, or offered the chance, to embark on a separate trade in large numbers only as a result of the Industrious Revolution. As we have read in the introduction to this paper, for married women to enter into market-based food selling independently of their spouses, the expansion of these trades was essential. The increase in numbers of married women active in tea and coffee selling may therefore simply be down to growing domestic markets for colonial groceries, instigated, or at least further intensified, by growing consumerism as a result of the Industrious Revolution. However, until further essential research has been undertaken on the economic activities of women from a proto-industrial background during the Industrious Revolution, and on women from the middling sorts before this period, we cannot provide a satisfying answer to this question. Nonetheless, despite the fact that we are left with these questions this paper has shown that utilizing in-depth micro studies that cross economic sectors and combine data from multiple types of sources takes us closer to solving the puzzles on married women’s economic role during the early modern period.