



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI VERONA

*DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS*

*GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LAW AND ECONOMICS*

*DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT*

30<sup>TH</sup> Cycle

**CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND MATERIAL LIVING  
STANDARDS IN A TRANSITION ECONOMY: VENICE  
(ca. 1650-1800)**

*IN CO-TUTELLE DE THÈSE WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP*

S.S.D. SECS-P/12

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Consumer behaviour and material living standards in a transition economy: Venice (ca. 1650-1800)  
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Ph.D. thesis  
Verona and Antwerp, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017  
ISBN ---

## Abstract

According to some scholars, during the eighteenth century there was a radical transformation in lifestyle and of the dynamics of purchase and demand for goods. This significant change in private consumption patterns, the so-called ‘consumer revolution’, was one of the fundamental premises for the subsequent economic and industrial development. Today, it is believed that most of the early modern economies underwent some kind of consumer revolution. However, the empirical evidence to support this theory is almost exclusively based on the rich and advanced economies from the North-Atlantic areas, such as England, France, and the Low Countries. Few quantitative studies exist that address material living standards through changes in consumption patterns in European regions that only experienced industrial and economic development later. Therefore, numerous questions about these regions remain unanswered. What were the variations in the acquisition and consumption strategies in these areas? Was the process similar to that found in Northern Europe? What elements of a consumer society can be identified in these regions?

This study aims to fill this gap in knowledge by analysing the consumption practices of one of the most important and populous centres of Southern Europe: Venice between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This research uses a wide body of empirical evidence, mainly unpublished documentation maintained at the Venetian State Archive. The principal source of this research is the household budgets preserved in the archive of the *Giudici di Petizion* judiciary. These documents were produced by curators and trustees charged, in case of the death of the householder, to manage the family assets if there were minors or infirm family members to protect. These sources allow us to follow, often for years, the full account of a household’s bookkeeping, through descriptions of the flows of incomes and expenses. Household budgets offer an invaluable view

of the internal economic dynamics of a household, along with the resource allocation among the various family members. Through these documents, we can go beyond the study of material living standards by analysing the behaviour of consumers and the evolution of consumer cultures over time. We can therefore analyse both the material and cultural aspects of consumption.

A reconstruction of the evolution of consumption dynamics between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is performed through qualitative and quantitative analysis. The latter uses as a classification tool for the household budgets a variant of the Classification of Individual Consumption according to Functional Purpose system (COICOP), specifically revised and adapted for the preindustrial context. To better appreciate continuities and changes, three decades have been chosen as the sample for analysis: the 1670s, the 1720s and the 1770s.

The results reveal how in the last two centuries of the early modern period, the evolution of consumption practices looks nuanced and is sometimes characterised by little-defined contours. Nevertheless, we show how behind the apparent rigidity in consumption that we can trace, there were an extreme variety of consumer behaviours, already present in the *Serenissima* since the seventeenth century. Venetian consumer society appears, in fact, to have been especially articulated, faceted and segmented, and every actor behaved primarily according to his or her unique set of preferences and desires. Therefore, we show how the logics of consumption do not respond to the logics of subsistence that for a long time have been hypothesised for the preindustrial period; rather, the logics of consumption were driven by a non- uniform and flexible consumption culture. We argue that the modernity of Venetian consumption did not lie in a general shift in consumer behaviour from a particular set of goods to another, as believed to have occurred with the consumer revolution, but in the high degree of flexibility in consumption behaviours that characterised the Venetian consumers, regardless of their social class.

## Sommario

Secondo alcuni studiosi, nel corso del diciottesimo secolo vi sarebbe stata un radicale mutamento negli stili di vita e nelle dinamiche di acquisto e consumo di beni. Questa significativa trasformazione nelle dinamiche del consumo privato, che alcuni hanno definito come una vera e propria ‘rivoluzione dei consumi’, non solo avrebbe preceduto il processo di sviluppo economico, ma ne sarebbe stata anche una delle determinanti principali. Sebbene oggi si crede che la maggior parte delle economie preindustriali abbia conosciuto una qualche forma di rivoluzione dei consumi, le evidenze empiriche a favore di questa tesi provengono quasi esclusivamente dalle ricche ed avanzate economie dell’area nord-Atlantica come Inghilterra, Francia, e Paesi Bassi. Pochi sono invece gli studi che si sono dedicati ad indagare dal punto di vista quantitativo l’evoluzione degli stili di vita di quelle aree del continente europeo che arrivarono solo in un secondo momento allo sviluppo economico e industriale. Per queste regioni, molte sono le domande che restano ancora aperte. Ci furono anche in queste aree variazioni nelle strategie di acquisto e consumo come quelle identificate nel nord Europa? Quali elementi di una società del consumo possono essere identificati in queste regioni?

Questo studio si propone di rispondere a queste domande, analizzando l’evoluzione delle pratiche di consumo di uno dei più importanti e popolosi centri dell’Europa mediterranea: Venezia tra il diciassettesimo e il diciottesimo secolo.

La presente ricerca utilizza un grande corpus di evidenze empiriche, ricavate da documentazione prevalentemente inedita conservata presso l’Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Fonti principali di questo studio sono i bilanci di famiglia raccolti dalla magistratura veneziana dei *Giudici di Petizion*. Si tratta di documenti realizzati da tutori e commissari i quali, in caso di morte o infermità del capofamiglia, erano incaricati di gestire il patrimonio familiare nell’eventuale presenza di minori da tutelare. Questi documenti permettono di seguire, spesso per anni, la contabilità di un’unità familiare, attraverso la descrizione delle varie voci di entrata e di spesa. I bilanci di famiglia rappresentano una fonte straordinaria nel panorama degli studi

sui consumi, in quanto forniscono una visione particolarmente completa delle dinamiche e delle logiche economiche interne alla famiglia. Utilizzando questi documenti possiamo andare oltre il mero studio degli standard di vita materiale, fornendo un'analisi dell'evoluzione della cultura materiale nel corso del tempo. Attraverso i bilanci, dunque, possiamo studiare sia il lato materiale che quello culturale del consumo.

L'evoluzione delle dinamiche del consumo è studiata attraverso un approccio sia qualitativo che quantitativo. In particolare, l'analisi quantitativa dei bilanci è condotta attraverso una variante del sistema di classificazione COICOP (Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose), specificatamente rivista e adattata per lo studio del consumo in epoca preindustriale. Per meglio apprezzare continuità e mutamenti, l'analisi si concentra su un campione di tre decenni: 1670, 1720, 1770.

Le analisi mostrano come, tra Sei e Settecento, l'evoluzione delle pratiche di consumo appaia sfumata e talvolta caratterizzata da contorni appena riconoscibili. Tuttavia, dietro a questa apparente rigidità si nasconde un'estrema varietà nelle culture del consumo. Fenomeno, quest'ultimo, che sembra caratterizzare varie classi sociali già a partire dal diciassettesimo secolo. La società del consumo veneziana tra Sei e Settecento appare dunque complessa, sfaccettata, ed estremamente segmentata al suo interno, in cui ogni consumatore agisce primariamente in base a quelle che sono le sue preferenze e le sue aspirazioni. La ricerca mostra come le logiche del consumo nella Serenissima non rispondano a quelle logiche di sussistenza che a lungo sono state ipotizzate per l'età preindustriale, ma siano bensì guidate da una cultura del consumo non uniforme, articolata, e soprattutto flessibile. Si sostiene, dunque, che la modernità del consumo veneziano risieda non tanto nell'adozione di un particolare pattern di consumo rispetto ad un altro, ma piuttosto nell'elevato grado di flessibilità di azione che caratterizza il consumatore veneziano, qualunque sia la sua classe sociale di appartenenza.

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## Notes on currencies and measurements of volume

### Currencies

The most used currency in the household budgets between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is the Venetian *lira di piccoli*. This latter was an account currency, and its subdivision was:

$1 \text{ lira di piccoli} = 20 \text{ soldi} = 240 \text{ denari}$

Sometimes, significant sums were expressed in *ducati di conto*, another account money used in early modern Venice. Its value in Venetian *lire* was:

$1 \text{ ducato di conto} = 6 \text{ Venetian lire di piccoli and } 4 \text{ soldi}$

### Measurements of volume

$1 \text{ moggio} = 333.26 \text{ litres}$

$1 \text{ staio} = 83.31 \text{ litres}$

Source: MARTINI Angelo, *Dizionario di metrologia. Ossia misure, pesi e monete in uso attualmente e anticamente presso tutti i popoli*, Turin, Loescher, 1883, pp. 817-821.



# I

## Introduction

Until 40 years ago, the dominant theory described an early modern economy characterised by the inability to generate well-being and economic growth, and a society dominated by necessity and by the tyranny of scarcity.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1980s, this vision has faced an increasing number of critiques. Economic historians are now describing how the pre-industrial European economy was not in decadence but rather was characterised by a particular dynamicity, which was fundamental for the process of modern growth. In recent years, the debate on the ‘great divergence’, and then on the ‘little divergence’, has given a new lease on life to this branch of study.<sup>2</sup>

These investigations occurred with the use of new indicators of economic dynamics able to explore the complexity of the European economy during the *Ancien Régime*. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) plays a prominent role in this new review. Created in 1934, when the world was affected by the Great Depression, the GDP was thought to offer good quality national macroeconomic data,<sup>3</sup> and in a short time,

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance: PHELPS BROWN E. H. and HOPKINS Sheila, *Seven centuries of prices of consumables, compared with builders' wage rates*, “Economica”, n. 92, 23, 1956, pp. 296-314; SLICHER VAN BATH B. H., *The agrarian history of western Europe, A.D. 500-1850*, London, Arnold, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> POMERANZ Kenneth, *The great divergence. China, Europe, and the making of the new world economy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000; ALLEN Robert C., BASSINO Jean-Pascal, MA Debin, MOLL-MURATA Christine, and van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, *Wages, prices, and living standards in China, 1738-1925: in comparison with Europe, Japan, and India*, “Oxford University, Department of Economics Working Paper”, n. 316, 2007, pp. 1-56; GOLDSTONE Jack, *Why Europe? The rise of the West in New World History, 1500-1850*, Boston, McGraw-Hill, 2009; van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, *The long road to the Industrial Revolution. The European Economy in a global perspective, 1000-1800*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> ZENCEY Eric, *Measuring what matters*, in *Consumption and well-being in the material world*, edited by Miriam Tatzel, Heidelberg, Springer, 2014, p. 154.

GDP became the most common economic statistic in the world. It was (and often is) commonly taken as a good instrument to measure economic and social performance of a society. Due to these properties, in the 1990s GDP was also introduced to the analysis of economic history thanks to the seminal contributions of Graeme Snooks.<sup>4</sup> The monumental works of Angus Maddison also contributed to the widespread use of this indicator, thanks to the wealth of data available for almost every country in the world.<sup>5</sup>

Although GDP remains an important indicator of economic dynamics, over the years there has been a growing dissatisfaction with it. This is because trends in GDP do not fully reflect the various dimensions of well-being, such as material living standards, life expectancy, education, and issues of inequality.<sup>6</sup> Historians have not ignored this need and thanks to a greater dialogue with other social sciences, they searched for other measures of well-being. As a consequence, notable studies have focused on anthropometric indices, life expectancy, working time, and literacy.<sup>7</sup>

Research on material living standards was particularly important. The early modern period is the first time when consumer society took shape,<sup>8</sup> and when ‘the good life’ started to become a ‘goods life’. Within this context, studies able to investigate purchasing and consumption practices became of noticeable interest. During the eighteenth century, the consumption dynamic was radically transformed. There was

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<sup>4</sup> SNOOKS Graeme, *Economic growth during the last millennium. A quantitative perspective for the British Industrial Revolution*, “Working Paper in Economic History – Australian National University”, n. 140, 1990, pp. 1-44; SNOOKS Graeme, *Economics without time. A science blind to the forces of historical change*, London, Palmgrave-McMillan, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> MADDISON Angus, *The world economy. A millennial perspective*, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, BATEN Joerg, MIRA D’ERCOLE Marco, RIJPMAN Auke, SMITH Conal, and TIMMER Marcel (edited by), *How was life? Global well-being since 1820*, Paris, OECD Publishing, 2014, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> For an overview: PAMUK Şevket and van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, *Standards of living*, in *The Cambridge economic history of modern Europe, volume 1, 1700-1870*, edited by Stephen Broadberry and Kevin H. O’Rourke, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 217-234.

<sup>8</sup> McKENDRICK Neil, BREWER John, and PLUMB John Harold (eds.), *The birth of a consumer society. The commercialization of eighteenth-century England*, London, Europa Publications, 1982, p. 9.

an increase in the number of consumers, an increasing number of articles acquired from the market, and a radical increase in the proportion of income spent for the purchase of luxuries and semi-luxurious goods. Ultimately, there was a general rise in material well-being also thanks to a process of fairer redistribution of wealth. This significant change in private consumption patterns, the so-called ‘consumer revolution’, for some scholars would be one of the fundamental premises for the subsequent economic and industrial development.

As noted by Sheila Ogilvie, today it is believed that most of the early modern economies have had some kind of consumer revolution. However, the empirical evidence to support this theory are almost exclusively based on the rich and advanced economies from the North-Atlantic areas such as England, France, and the Low Countries.<sup>9</sup> Quantitative studies addressing material living standards through changes in the patterns of consumption in European regions that arrived only later to industrial and economic development are lacking. Therefore, for these regions numerous questions remain open. What were the variations in the strategies of acquisition and consumption in these areas? Was the process similar to that found in Northern Europe? What elements of a consumer society can be identified in these regions? Was there a contextual redistribution of wealth within society?

This study aims to fill this gap by analysing the material well-being of one of one of the most important and populous centres of Southern Europe: Venice between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this period, the *Serenissima*, is living a period of strong economic transition. On the one hand, it is losing its position at the centre of the European world economy, being replaced by the advance of Atlantic urban economies such as London, Paris, and Amsterdam. On the other hand, it is simultaneously losing its position of economic and manufacturing leadership inside the Saint Mark Republic in favour of the smaller towns in the Mainland. At the end of the eighteenth century, the relative economic weight of Venice was thus weakened both at European and national (or regional) level.

This research will use a wide body of empirical evidence, mainly unpublished documentation maintained at the Venetian State Archive. Literature on

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<sup>9</sup> OGILVIE Sheila, *Consumption, social capital, and the “Industrious Revolution” in Early Modern Germany*, “Journal of Economic History”, n. 70, 2010, p. 288.

consumption and material culture has traditionally based its research on the analysis of probate inventories. The latter are ‘static’ sources that depict the stock of movable goods available to a family at a certain point in time (usually the death of the breadwinner). By contrast, in this study we have decided to focus our attention on household budgets. These are ‘dynamic’ sources that allow us to follow, often for years, the economic history of a family through the flows of revenues and expenses. Household accounts give us a comprehensive picture of consumption by describing not only expenditures on movable goods, but also those on immovable properties, intangible goods, and services. In addition, these sources offer an invaluable view on the internal economic dynamics of a household, and on the resource allocation among its various family members. Through household budgets, we can go beyond the study of material living standards by analysing the behaviour of consumers and the evolution of consumer strategies over time. We can therefore analyse both the material and cultural aspects of consumption.

Thus, the main sources of this research will be about one hundred household budgets, belonging to 39 different family groups, preserved in the archive of the *Giudici di Petizion* judiciary. These documents were produced by trustees charged, in case of the death of the breadwinner, to manage the family assets if there were minors or the infirm to protect.

A reconstruction of the evolution of consumption dynamics between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century will be completed through a qualitative and a quantitative analysis. This latter will use as a classification tool for household budgets a variant of the Classification of Individual Consumption according to Purpose system (COICOP), developed by the United Nations in 1993 and now used by a number of national statistical offices around the world, specifically revised and adapted for the preindustrial context. To better appreciate continuities and changes, three decades have been chosen as the sample for analysis: the 1670s, the 1720s, and the 1770s.

## **The economy of Venice and the Republic between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century**

For a long time, the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries were considered by the Italian historiographical school a period characterised by a deep crisis, which led to the decline of Italy and to the overthrow of the internal economic equilibria in the European continent. According to Carlo M. Cipolla, for instance, the causes of this decadence can be traced back to the fifteenth century when, with the institutional transition from the Communes to the *Signorie*, there was a progressive decay of socio-economic life. In this period, the higher classes of society began to consider merchant and manufacturing activities as degrading, deciding to invest their dynamism in the management of the state. Industries were then left in the hands of the lower strata of the population, who were less enterprising and more conservative. According to the Italian historian, in the long run, this would have had a major impact on the strength of industries, and in particular on the textile industry that was the backbone of the Italian economy.<sup>10</sup>

In this context of decay, the outbreak of the Italian wars (1494-1530) further aggravated the situation by drastically cutting production and breaking down the manufacturing sector. When in the second half of the sixteenth century peace was restored, the old production schemes were restarted, but possibly even more rigidly than in the past. In particular, the various guilds set strict rules, mostly with the aim of limiting competition, both internal and external. There were essentially two outcomes of this ‘policy’: first, a production fossilised on luxury and high quality (but by now old and out of fashion) products, probably in the attempt to replicate the glories of the past; and second, a wage level kept artificially high to favour the guild members, which had to further affect the already high price of the various products. Both these elements were fatal for the international competitiveness of Italy, especially at a time when England and the Low Countries were entering the

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<sup>10</sup> CIPOLLA Carlo M., *The decline of Italy. The case of a fully matured economy*, “Economic History Review”, n. 5.2, 1952, 178-187; CIPOLLA Carlo M., *Storia economica dell’Europa pre-industriale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002, pp. 365-375.

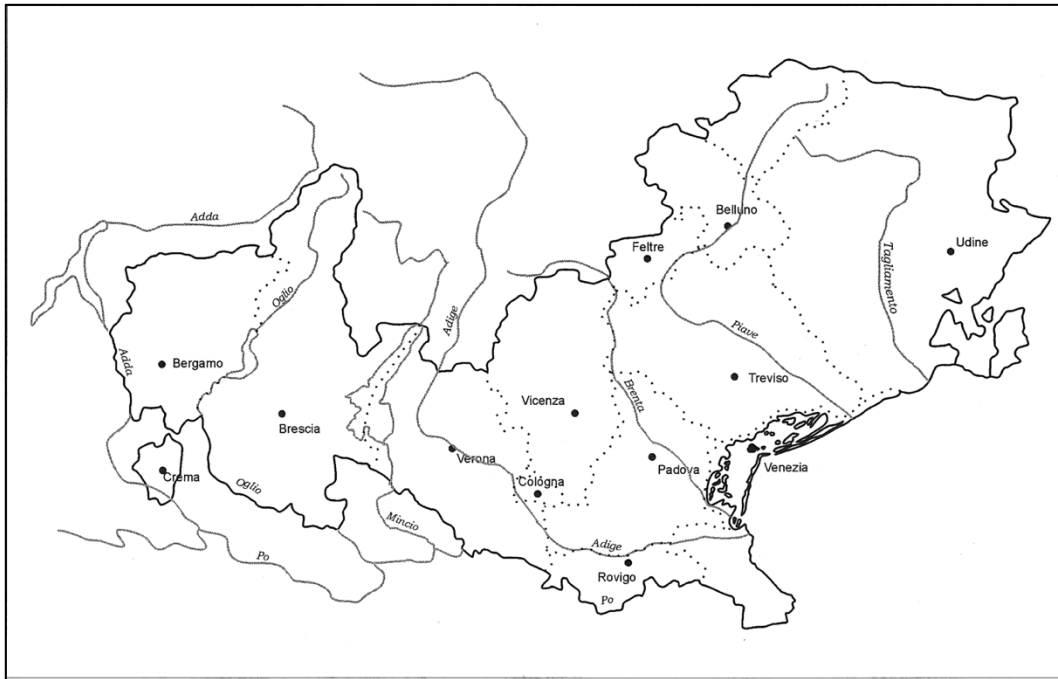


Figure 1. *The Venetian Mainland between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.*  
 Source: LANARO Paola (ed.), *At the Centre of the Old World. Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and on the Venetian Mainland (1400–1800)*, Toronto, CRRS, 2006, p. 17.

stage with their mid-range products sold at competitive prices. Italian products were in fact easily taken off the market.

For the Venetian state, this interpretation was basically confirmed by the studies of Domenico Sella and Richard Rapp. Sella showed how Venice Mediterranean trades were facing serious difficulties with the arrival of North European mercantile ships loaded with their coloured, fashionable, but above all cheap woollen cloths.<sup>11</sup> For his part, Rapp showed how Venetian production costs were largely higher than those that can be found in England at the same time, and how this was caused essentially by the higher wages granted to guild workers in the city of Saint Mark. Higher production costs meant of course higher retail prices, and this element favoured the penetration of northern goods in the market.<sup>12</sup> The final blow was caused by the

<sup>11</sup> SELLA Domenico, *Commerci e industrie a Venezia nel secolo XVII*, Venice-Rome, Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1961.

<sup>12</sup> RAPP Richard, *Industria e decadenza economica a Venezia nel XVII secolo*, Rome, Il Velcro, 1976.



entry of British and Dutch sailors in the Mediterranean, who began to trade in areas that were previously ‘hunting ground’ in Venice. Northern vessels, smaller, faster, and cheaper to build, provided an additional benefit to British and Dutch traders who could enjoy lower transaction costs.<sup>13</sup>

There is no doubt that in the seventeenth century the economy of Venice was experiencing a deep transition that led to the loss of its central role within the European economy, in favour of the most advanced and dynamic economies of the North Atlantic area.<sup>14</sup> However, recent studies have shown that the last two centuries of the early modern period were not a long and continuous period of socio-economic decline. Indeed, alongside some economic sectors that were able to hold their position, others followed a significant path of growth.<sup>15</sup>

From the demographic point of view, for instance, after the hard hit caused by the plague of 1630, the number of inhabitants progressively increased in Venice. After the loss of nearly 30 per cent of its population, dropping from 140,000 to just over 100,000 inhabitants in just a few months, the *Serenissima* experienced a slow but continuous positive demographic trend. At the time of its fall under the cannon shots of the Napoleonic army, in 1797, the city had basically restored pre-crisis demographic levels. We are certainly far from the reaction capacity that the city

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<sup>13</sup> PEZZOLO Luciano, *L'economia*, in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima. La Venezia Barocca*, vol. VII, edited by Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, Rome, Treccani, 1997, p. 404.

<sup>14</sup> de VRIES Jan, *European Urbanization, 1500-1800*, London, Methuen and Co., 1984, p. 159.

<sup>15</sup> For a general overview, see: DEMO Edoardo, *Industry and production in the Venetian Terraferma (15th-18th centuries)*, in *A companion to Venetian history*, edited by Eric Dursteler, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2013, pp. 291-318; FONTANA Giovanni Luigi, *Industria e impresa nel nord est d'Italia*, in *Storiografia di industria e d'impresa in Italia e Spagna in età moderna e contemporanea*, edited by Antonio di Vittorio, Carlos Barciela Lopez, and Giovanni Luigi Fontana, Padua, Cleup, 2004, pp. 161-218; PANCIERA Walter, *L'economia. Imprenditoria, corporazioni, lavoro* in *Storia di Venezia. L'ultima fase della Serenissima*, vol. VIII, edited by Paolo del Negro and Paolo Preto, Rome, Treccani, 1998, pp. 479-554; PANCIERA Walter, *La Repubblica di Venezia nel Settecento*, Rome, Viella, pp. 71-115; PEZZOLO Luciano, *L'economia*, pp. 369-433; PEZZOLO Luciano, *The Venetian economy*, in *A companion to Venetian history*, edited by Eric Dursteler, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2013, pp. 255-289. Dated but still interesting is: CAIZZI Bruno, *Industria e commercio della Repubblica veneta nel XVIII secolo*, Milan, Banca Commerciale Italiana, 1965.

had demonstrated at the end of the sixteenth century, when the effects of the plague of 1575 were largely reabsorbed in just three decades, but it shows that the city was still economically active and was still representing an important attraction pole for workers and merchants.<sup>16</sup>

Looking at the manufacturing sector, the gradual spread of low quality and cheap products from northern Europe, to which the Venetian industries could not compete, pushed the economy of the capital to focus its efforts (and its money) on the production of luxury goods. Only these products could in fact aim to retain a significant market share at both local and international levels. Therefore, goldsmithing and precious metal processing, art glass manufacturing, furniture crafting, and musical instrument making remained particularly active inside the city perimeter.<sup>17</sup>

A different fate touched textile manufacturing. The tight constraints imposed by guilds, the high cost of labour, the difficulty in adopting state-of-the-art production technologies, and the ever-increasing inability to supply raw materials of good quality led to a rapid haemorrhage of capitals to the Mainland (Figure 1).<sup>18</sup> In the wool industry, this escape from the city favoured the growth of manufactures located in the Venetian foothills. These areas provided plenty of water (necessary for machine operation), proximity to raw material producers, and abundance of a cheap labour force. The quality of raw wool could certainly not compete with that used for luxury productions in the capital, and thus manufactures specialised in the weaving of fabrics imitated those coming from northern Europe.<sup>19</sup> These districts

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<sup>16</sup> Data on the population are gathered from: BELTRAMI Daniele, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia dalla fine del secolo XVI alla caduta della Repubblica*, Padua, Cedam, 1954, p. 59; BELOCH Giulio, *La popolazione di Venezia nei secoli XVI e XVII*, "Nuovo Archivio Veneto", n. 2.1, p. 41.

<sup>17</sup> CIRIACONO Salvatore, *Le trasformazioni economiche dal 1650 all'Unificazione*, in *Storia del Veneto. Dal Seicento a oggi*, vol. 2, edited by Carlo Fumian and Angelo Ventura, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2004, pp. 36-38.

<sup>18</sup> We define Mainland as all the territories and provinces under Venetian control in northern Italy. Using today's administrative borders, the Mainland comprises the Veneto region, Friuli region (without the area of Trieste), and the Lombard provinces of Brescia, Bergamo, and Crema.

<sup>19</sup> DEMO Edoardo, *Industry and production*, p. 302.

had great fortune and at the end of the eighteenth century, two-thirds of the entire wool production of the Republic came from the pre-Alpine areas of Vicenza and Treviso.<sup>20</sup>

The situation for silk weaving was more complex. In this sector, city guilds were more flexible and more open to change. The production of gold-silk and brocade fabrics was certainly the flagship of the Venetian manufacturing sector. However, as early as the end of the sixteenth century, the lagoon industries were able to differentiate their production by offering even less precious and expensive fabrics (for instance mixed yarns of silk and other fibres), and artefacts that imitated the colours and the design patterns of foreign products.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the mulberry cultivation had been widespread in the Venetian provinces since the second half of the fifteenth century, finding in Verona and Vicenza a particularly fertile soil, where also some activity transforming the raw silk into semi-finished products began.<sup>22</sup> These two territories soon became the most important raw silk producers of the Republic. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the manufacturers of the territory of Vicenza gradually increased their production, both in the industrial districts around the capital and in the area of Bassano, along the Brenta river.<sup>23</sup> The silk industry in Padua also took on some importance. In this province, the production of raw material was rather limited in quantity, but the manufacturers were able to circumvent this limitation by concentrating their forces in the

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<sup>20</sup> PANCIERA Walter, *The industries of Venice in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, in *At the centre of the Old World. Trade and manufacturing in Venice and the Venetian Maninland, 1400-1800*, edited by Paola Lanaro, Toronto, CRRS, 2006, p. 190. For a closer look at the activities of these two districts, see: PANCIERA Walter, *L'arte matrice. I lanifici della Repubblica di Venezia nei secoli XVII e XVIII*, Treviso, Canova-Fondazione Benetton, 1996; VIANELLO Francesco, *Seta fine e panni grossi. Manifatture e commerci nel vicentino, 1570-1700*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> PANCIERA Walter, *The industries of Venice*, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup> DEMO Edoardo, *Mercanti di Terraferma. Uomini, merci e capitali nell'Europa del Cinquecento*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2012, pp. 28-29; MOLÀ Luca, *The silk industry of Renaissance Venice*, Baltimore-London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000, p. 237.

<sup>23</sup> PANCIERA Walter, *La formazione delle specializzazioni economiche territoriali nel Sei e Settecento*, in *L'industria vicentina dal Medioevo a oggi*, edited by Giovanni Luigi Fontana, Padua, Cleup, 2004, pp. 275-276.

production of trimmings and garnishments. The latter were certainly products with a relatively modest value, but their commerce created a business that certainly should not be underestimated.<sup>24</sup>

Generally, the success of the textile sector in the Mainland was also accompanied by the introduction of new production logics aimed at the manufacture of products able to meet the taste, the favour, and the budget of a wider range of consumers. The Mainland production was therefore extremely differentiated, also because the producers were trying to continuously change the variety and quality of the fabrics to craft, in order to face the evolution of the demand and the trends of the market.<sup>25</sup> However, production in the Mainland was not limited to wool and silk only. The role of the Remondini printing house in Bassano was also important, once again in the territory of Vicenza;<sup>26</sup> paper production in the territory of Brescia<sup>27</sup> and weapons manufacturing between Brescia and Bergamo were likewise important.<sup>28</sup> In this new economic structure of the Republic, the weight of the Mainland became more and more evident. The gradual process of regionalisation of the economy led the city of Venice to abandon its position as a leader in the manufacturing sector in favour of the provinces in Veneto and in Venetian Lombardy, to assume the status of the commercial and financial hub of the state.<sup>29</sup> Venice became increasingly the connection centre between the industries, its inner-city market (we remember that

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<sup>24</sup> CARACAUSI Andrea, *Nastri, nastrini, cordelle. L'industria serica nel Padovano, secc. XVII-XIX*, Padua, Cleup, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> PANCIERA Walter, *La formazione delle specializzazioni*, p. 283.

<sup>26</sup> INFELISE Mario, *I Remondini di Bassano. Stampa e industria nel Veneto del Settecento*, Bassano del Grappa, Tassotti, 1980.

<sup>27</sup> MATTOZZI Ivo, *Produzione e commercio di carta nello Stato veneziano settecentesco. Lineamenti e problemi*, Bologna, Tamari, 1975.

<sup>28</sup> BELFANTI Carlo Marco, *Una catena di mestieri. La filiera delle armi nel bresciano (secoli XVI-XVIII)*, in *Corporazioni e gruppi professionali nell'Italia moderna*, edited by Alberto Guenzi, Paola Massa, and Alberto Moioli, Milan, Franco Angeli, pp. 404-420.

<sup>29</sup> CIRIACONO Salvatore, *Venise et ses villes. Structuration et déstructuration d'un marché régional, XVI-XVIII siècle*, "Revue Historique", n. 2, 1986, pp. 287-307; PEZZOLO Luciano, *The Venetian economy*, p. 282; ZANNINI Andrea, *Sempre più agricola, sempre più regionale. L'economia della Repubblica di Venezia da Agnadello al Lombardo-Veneto (1509-1817)*, "Ateneo Veneto", n. 9.1, 2010, pp. 137-171.

the *Serenissima* in these years is still a city of over 100,000 inhabitants), and the merchants who exported goods to neighbouring states and Mediterranean ports. This polycentric system certainly helped the Republic to maintain general good economic vivacity. Nevertheless, in the long run it would have proved to be less successful than North European economic structures, based on a single-centre system where a large city (usually the capital) attracted the vast majority of the productive and financial forces of the entire state.<sup>30</sup> The new economic structure of the state of Saint Mark was able to keep running the economy, but it failed to keep up with the north and started slipping away from the centre of gravity of the European economy.

### **The historiography on early modern consumption and material culture**

In recent decades, few topics have attracted the attention of historians like consumption. This was for a long time an object of study almost exclusive to sociology, but from the Sixties of the last century consumption has entered the agenda of historians.<sup>31</sup>

Much of the merit of the encounter between history and consumption is given to the historiographic branch of the ‘history from below’, launched by E.P. Thompson in an article dated 1966.<sup>32</sup> This new approach, born in the heart of Marxist historiography, was interested in the study of ordinary people as such, and no longer, as done in the past, only in their forms of social and political aggregation. The strong interest in studying the material culture and lifestyles of the peoples of the past came from Marxist thought, and in particular from the ‘historical

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<sup>30</sup> See: de VRIES Jan, *European Urbanization*, pp. 167-172.

<sup>31</sup> For a general overview, see: CHESSEL Marie-Emmanuelle, *Histoire de la consommation*, Paris, La Découverte, 2012; CLEMENTE Alida, *Storiografie di confine? Consumi di beni durevoli e cultura del consumo nel XVIII secolo*, “Società e Storia”, n. 109, 2005, pp. 569-598; RYCKBOSCH Wouter, *Early modern consumption history*, “BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review”, n. 130.1, 2015, pp. 57-85; TRENTMANN Frank, *Introduction*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 1-19.

<sup>32</sup> THOMPSON E.P., *History from below*, “Times Literary Supplement”, n. 7, 1966, pp. 279-280.

materialism' that distinguished Marx's vision of human history.<sup>33</sup> In this approach, the study of people's possessions and relationships with objects was considered fundamental to have a better notion of all the elements that contributed to boost social changes in the past. The five volumes of *A History of Private Life*, curated by Georges Duby and Philippe Ariès and which covers a time span of basically two thousand years, can be considered the sum of this path.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, there was also an interest in the economic role of consumption. The first signs of crisis in real socialism economies, connected with a colossal gap with the consumption processes of western societies, led scholars to seriously reflect on the determinants of economic growth. The economic model of the United States, which was increasingly exported to the entire Western Bloc, gave the consumer an absolutely central role. As never before, consumption was in fact fuelling growth, defining identities, and shaping public and private life.<sup>35</sup> This 'new' centrality of consumption in the economic life induced many scholars to theorise a reversal of the dictates of classical economics, which considered consumption as the mere outlet of production.<sup>36</sup> Consumption thus gained a central role in economic reasoning. Economic historians did not fail to take part in this debate, and they began to wonder what the role of consumption was in pre-industrial economies. The most significant contributions on this topic came from the historiographical schools of France and England.

In France, the history of consumption and material culture is indissolubly tied to Fernand Braudel. In his *Civilization and Capitalism*, Braudel assigns to material culture a fundamental role, that is the basic foundation of the capitalist economic structure. In fact, Braudel imagines the economic history as a three-floor building, where the basement is represented by material-everyday life, the second floor is

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<sup>33</sup> GREEN Anna and TROUP Kathleen (eds.), *The houses of History. A critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> DUBY Georges and ARIÈS Philippe (eds.), *A History of Private Life*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 1992-1998.

<sup>35</sup> TRENTMANN Frank, *Introduction*, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> "The more men can produce, the more they will purchase" is the original formulation of Say's Law. SAY Jean-Baptiste, *A treatise on Political Economy*, Philadelphia, Grigg & Elliot, 1834, p. 3.

economic life, and finally, the third floor is capitalism. Material culture is therefore the basis on which the market economy and capitalism are anchored and can evolve. However, for Braudel in the preindustrial world the relative weight of the market economy and capitalism with respect to the economic structure of everyday life remains rather limited, at least for the majority of the population. Only the richest strata of the population were benefiting from a greater integration between consumption and trade.<sup>37</sup> The model imagined by the French historian describes a strongly static society severely divided into two parts: the first, the rich and noble one, characterised by the consumption of luxury goods often purchased on the international market; the second comprised the poor, characterised by a consumption pattern almost dominated by a subsistence logic. Ultimately, in Braudel's thinking, the production and distribution of goods would be influenced only by the consumption models of the nobles.

In England, interest in consumer and material culture emerged within the studies of the determinants of the British industrial revolution. One of the most interesting theories, and certainly one of the most debated in the last 35 years, formulated within this course of study is certainly that of the 'consumer revolution' by Neil McKendrick.<sup>38</sup> According to the Anglo-Saxon historian, in eighteenth century England there was a general increase in the quantity of goods purchased on the market, and a simultaneous growth in the number of consumers belonging to the middle-class. This phenomenon was caused by a change in taste, which came in turn from the desire to emulate aristocratic attitudes towards consumption; and by a general rise in the level of well-being, thanks to a process of redistribution of wealth among society. The middle class now had the desire, and above all the capability, to buy goods that were previously destined only to the wealthiest strata of the social ladder. This radical change, combined with the birth of new sales and advertising systems, would have contributed to the emergence of a modern consumer society. According to this theory, the consumer revolution would not

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<sup>37</sup> BRAUDEL Fernand, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th century. The structures of everyday life, the limits of the possible*, vol. I, London, William Collins, 1985, pp. 23-29.

<sup>38</sup> MCKENDRICK Neil, BREWER John, and PLUMB John Harold (eds.), *The birth of a consumer society*.

only have preceded, but also paved the way for British industrial growth. Thus, consumption became one of the primary causes of the industrial revolution, not one of its effects.

Although interesting and innovative, the model of McKendrick was still not theoretically solid and scarcely supported by empirical evidence. Indeed, it was necessary to prove the effective dissemination of new consumer goods within family possessions, as well as to understand how households could increase their consumption in a period characterised by declining real wages.

Regarding the actual spread of the new consumer goods, the answer was given by a rich branch of quantitative studies that started in the 1980s. This approach found its main source in probate inventories, which are lists of all the movable possessions of a household at the time of the death of the breadwinner, and which were usually drawn up to assign to every heir his or her portion of heritage. These research studies showed that during the eighteenth century, the presence and diffusion of consumer goods were effectively increasing among ever-broader strata of the population.<sup>39</sup>

Regarding the conundrum about the increase in consumption and the simultaneous fall of real wages, the most interesting answer was provided by Jan de Vries, according to whom the increase in demand for market goods would not have been linked to an increase in incomes, but to a change within the household in the optimal allocation of time and of the productive resources of its members. A large number of families would decide, in a certain historical time, to increase both their participation in wage labour and their demand for market goods, giving rise to what

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<sup>39</sup> EARLE Peter, *The making of the English middle class, 1660-1730*, Berkley (CA), University of California Press, 1989; OVERTON Mark, WHITTLE Jane, DEAN Darron, and HANN Andrew, *Production and consumption in English Households, 1600-1750*, London-New York, Routledge, 2004; SHAMMAS Carole, *The pre-industrial consumers in England and America*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990; WEATHERILL Lorna, *Consumer behaviour and material culture, 1660-1760*, London-New York, Routledge, 1988; WEATHERILL Lorna, *The meaning of consumer behaviour in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England* in *Consumption and the world of goods*, edited by John Brewer and Roy Porter, London-New York, Routledge, 1993, pp. 206-227. For a critique of the results of these analyses, see: CLARK Gregory, *The consumer Revolution. Turning point in human history, or statistical artifact?*, “MPRA Paper”, n. 25467, 2010, pp. 1-22.



de Vries called an ‘industrious revolution’.<sup>40</sup> Every household would have in fact been induced to work more to afford the purchase of new consumer goods, increasing the hours of wage labour at the expense of those devoted to leisure and domestic work. Women and children were also encouraged to seek employment in order to exploit the maximum workforce available in the family.<sup>41</sup>

Created to explain the changes in consumer attitudes in eighteenth-century England, the theory of the consumer revolution immediately had great success even beyond the Channel. Soon, research dedicated to trace the origins of the consumer society expanded its horizons, both from the geographical and from the timing point of view.

Regarding the geographical borders of the consumer revolution, the first to perceive the potentialities of this theory were the historians interested in the history of France<sup>42</sup> and the Low Countries,<sup>43</sup> two of the wealthiest and most economically active regions of Europe in the early modern period. Afterwards, studies began to focus also on those areas of the European continent that experienced a late process of economic development. Thus, today we can find studies on Germany, Italy, the

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<sup>40</sup> de VRIES Jan, *The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution*, “Journal of Economic History”, n. 54, 1994, pp. 249-270.

<sup>41</sup> For critiques on the theory of the industrious revolution, see: ALLEN Robert C. and WEISDORF Jacob, *Was there an ‘industrious revolution’ before the industrial revolution? An empirical exercise for England, c. 1300-1830*, “Economic History Review”, n. 64.3, 2011, pp. 715-729; CLARK Gregory, and van der WER Ysbrand, *Work in progress? The industrious revolution*, “Journal of Economic History”, n. 58.3, pp. 830-843; MALANIMA Paolo and PINCHERA Valeria, *A puzzling relationship. Consumptions and incomes in Early Modern Europe*, “Histoire et Mesure”, n. 27.2, pp. 197-222.

<sup>42</sup> CORNETTE Joël, *Le Paris des inventaires après-décès (XVII-XVIII siècle). La révolution des objets*, “Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine”, n. 36.3, 1989, p. 476-486; PARDILHÉ-GALABRUN Annik, *The birth of intimacy. Privacy and domestic life in early modern Paris*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991; ROCHE Daniel, *Histoire des choses banales. Naissance de la consommation (XVII-XIX siècle)*, Paris, Fayard, 1997.

<sup>43</sup> de VRIES Jan, *The industrious revolution. Consumer behaviour and the household economy, 1650 to the present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008; McCANTS Anne, *Poor consumers as global consumers. The diffusion of tea and coffee drinking in the eighteenth century*, “Economic History Review”, 61.1, 2008, pp. 172-200.

Scandinavian peninsula, and the Ottoman empire.<sup>44</sup> The recent debate on the rise of the West has generated a number of comparative studies on material well-being between Europe and Asia.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, there have been contributions focussed on cities and regions in North and South America, and Africa.<sup>46</sup>

Broadening the geographical horizon, however, meant not only leaving England, but also leaving the urban scene, the indispensable stage where the changes observed by McKendrick could happen. The focus then shifted from cities to the countryside, showing how the latter have often followed the fate of the urban centres and have seen marked changes in material living standards.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding the time horizon, many scholars have questioned whether the eighteenth century was really the age when the consumer society was born. If Joan Thirsk had shown how the seventeenth century in England was already a period when consumption was a significant active force within the economic system,<sup>48</sup> others

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<sup>44</sup> BELFANTI Carlo Marco and GIUSBERTI Fabio, *Clothing and social inequality in early modern Europe. Introductory remarks*, “Continuity and Change”, n. 15, 2000, pp. 359-365; KARABABA Eminegül, *Investigating early modern Ottoman consumer culture in lights of Bursa probate inventories*, “Economic History Review”, 65.1, 2012, pp. 194-219; OGILVIE Sheilagh, *Consumption*, pp. 287-325; RÖNNBÄCK Klas, *An early modern consumer revolution in the Baltic?*, “Scandinavian Journal of History”, n. 35.2, 2010, pp. 177-197.

<sup>45</sup> CLUNAS Craig, *Modernity global and local. Consumption and the rise of the West*, “American Historical Review”, n. 104.5, 1999, pp. 1497-1511.

<sup>46</sup> BEDELL John, *Archaeology and probate inventories in the study of eighteenth century life*, “The Journal of Interdisciplinary History”, 31.2, 2000, pp. 223-245; FOURIE Johan, *The remarkable wealth of the Dutch Cape Colony. Measurements from eighteenth century probate inventories*, “Economic History Review”, 66.2, 2013, pp. 419-448; MAIN Gloria, *The standard of living in southern New England, 1640-1773*, “The William and Mary Quarterly”, 45.1, 1988, pp. 124-134; MACHUCA Paulina, *De porcelanas chinas y otros menestres. Cultura material de origen asiático en Colima, siglos XVI-XVII*, “Relaciones”, n. 131, 2012, pp. 77-134.

<sup>47</sup> MALANIMA Paolo, *Il lusso dei contadini. Consumi e industrie nelle campagne toscane del Sei e Settecento*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1990; MULDREW Craig, *Food, energy and the creation of industriousness. Work and material culture in agrarian England, 1550-1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011; BROAD John and SCHUURMAN Anton (eds.), *Wealth and Poverty in European Rural Societies from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> THIRSK Joan, *Economic policy and projects*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978.

demonstrated that sophisticated consumption patterns can be traced elsewhere in Europe, also in the previous centuries.<sup>49</sup> Particularly fruitful has been the study of the material culture during the Italian Renaissance, although the results of this debate have often been left in ‘splendid isolation’ and have not been properly linked to the achievement reached with the debate on the consumer revolution.<sup>50</sup>

According to the theory of McKendrick, the motivation for the drastic change in middle class consumption practices was represented by the will of the latter to emulate the behaviours of the aristocracy. Even though this argument has been strongly criticised,<sup>51</sup> this particular perspective pushed many historians to approach the study of consumption with a new attitude. If changes in consumer dynamics had preceded the industrial revolution and were not caused by the latter, the focus of the research necessarily turned towards a study of consumption as such, as a cultural and social phenomenon. This ‘cultural turn’ has been interpreted by historians in the most diverse ways, further multiplying the approaches to consumption in the pre-industrial age.

First, we want to remember research devoted to find the causes that gave rise to the changes of consumer practices. Studies on the rising demand for fashion and luxury by the middle class, a mechanism that can hardly find explanation only in the emulative paradigm, are worth remembering. Some researchers have explained this occurrence through the emergence of the Protestant ethic,<sup>52</sup> the presence of a

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<sup>49</sup> GOLDWHITE Richard, *Ricchezza e domanda nel mercato dell'arte in Italia dal Trecento al Seicento. La cultura materiale e le origini del consumismo*, Milan, Unicopli, 1995; SHAMA Simon, *The embarrassment of riches. An interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age*, New York, Knopf, 1987; WELCH Evelyn, *Shopping in the Renaissance. Consumer cultures in Italy, 1400-1600*, New Haven (CT), Yale University Press, 2005.

<sup>50</sup> BLONDÉ Bruno and RYCKBOSCH Wouter, *In 'splendid isolation'. A comparative perspective on the historiographies of the 'material renaissance' and the 'consumer revolution'*, “History of Retailing and Consumption”, n. 1.2, 2015, 105-124.

<sup>51</sup> See for instance: LEVI Giovanni, *Comportements, ressources, procès. Avant de la «révolution» de la consommation in Jeux d'échelles. La microanalyse à l'expérience*, edited by Jacques Revel, Paris, Gallimard, 1996, pp. 187-207.

<sup>52</sup> FINE Ben and LEOPOLD Ellen, *Consumerism and the Industrial Revolution*, “Social History”, n. 2, vol. 15, 1990, pp. 151- 179.

growing sense of individualism within society;<sup>53</sup> others through the will of the lower strata of society to be compensated, at least in a material way, for exclusion from the active socio-political life;<sup>54</sup> or as a reaction to the stimuli coming from abroad, and in particular from Asia.<sup>55</sup>

Then, we want to remember the research dedicated to the development of the domestic interior.<sup>56</sup> The eighteenth century has been in fact the period in which an entirely new form of sociality would be born, in which the public sphere prevailed over the private one. In this context, homes were adapted to this new way of life. Dining rooms became the centre of the house and they were furnished with new furniture that could make the entertainment of guests more enjoyable, but also show off the wealth and taste of the hosts during the dinners. Big and comfortable dining-tables, chairs, porcelains, chinaware, silverware, displays, libraries, carpets, and art objects began to spread more and more. If during the Middle Ages the house was structured for the family itself, starting from the eighteenth century it was set (also) to accommodate others.<sup>57</sup> This also led to a progressive specialisation of home environments, where each room was entrusted with a particular role. The public space of the house was separated from the private one, giving rise to a new form of privacy.<sup>58</sup>

These are just two of the most representative strands within the cultural historiography on consumption, but the research topics over the years have multiplied. In fact, we want to highlight the studies on gender consumption,

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<sup>53</sup> LEMIRE Beverly, *Second-hand beaux and "red-armed Belles"*. *Conflict and the creation of fashion in England, c. 1660-1680*, "Continuity and Change", n. 15, 2000, pp. 391-417.

<sup>54</sup> ALLERSTON Patricia, *Clothing and early modern venetian society*, "Continuity and Change", vol. 15, 2000, pp. 367-390.

<sup>55</sup> BERG Maxine, *In pursuit of luxury. Global history and British consumers goods in the Eighteenth Century*, "Past & Present", n. 182, 2004, pp. 85-142.

<sup>56</sup> An overview on this topic is given by: SARTI Raffaella, *Vita di casa. Abitare, mangiare, vestire nell'Europa moderna*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1999 (see also the updated English translation published in 2002 by Yale University Press titled *Europe at home*).

<sup>57</sup> NENADIC Stana, *Middle-rank consumers and domestic culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow 1720-1840*, "Past & Present", n. 145, 1994, pp. 122-154.

<sup>58</sup> SARTI Raffaella, *Vita di casa*, pp. 178-184.

dedicated to study the role of women and young people in influencing the allocation of resources available to families;<sup>59</sup> the investigations on consumption stages other than purchasing and consumption, such as gifting, reusing, recycling, repairing, stealing, and wasting,<sup>60</sup> as well as a completely ‘new return’ to the study of material culture, in which the historian leaves the archive to write a story of material objects in direct contact with them, and in synergy with archaeologists and museum curators.<sup>61</sup>

In previous pages, we have described some of the major lines of research that have characterised the international historiography on consumption and material culture in recent decades. Now, taking into consideration only the historiography on Venice, we can see how the interest in these themes has ancient origins, and be traced back to the monumental work of Pompeo Molmenti on the history of private life in the *Serenissima* published in 1880.<sup>62</sup> The lesson of Molmenti was soon abandoned and the interest in his research topics sharply declined in the following decades, when historians primarily dedicated their attention to the maritime and commercial history of Venice. However, from the Eighties of the last century studies on consumption and material culture have begun to sail again to the canals of the lagoon. The focus of the research was mostly focused on describing the lifestyle of the aristocracy and of the middle-class of the city, with particular attention to the evolution of the domestic interiors.<sup>63</sup> Of considerable importance

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<sup>59</sup> ASQUER Enrica, *Domesticity and beyond. Gender, family, and consumption in modern Europe*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, edited by Frank Trentmann, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 568-584.

<sup>60</sup> HORREL Sara, HUMPHRIES Jane, and SNEATH Ken, *Consumption conundrum unravelled*, “Economic History Review”, n. 68.3, 2015, pp. 830-857; STRASSER Susan, *Waste and want. A social history of trash*, New York, Holt, 1999; STYLES John, *The dress of the people. Everyday fashion in eighteenth-century England*, New Haven (CT), Yale University Press, 2007.

<sup>61</sup> See the anthology: GERRITSEN Anne and RIELLO Giorgio (eds.), *Writing material culture history*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014.

<sup>62</sup> MOLMENTI Pompeo, *La storia di Venezia nella vita privata. Dalle origini alla caduta della Repubblica*, Turin, Roux e Favale, 1880.

<sup>63</sup> PALUMBO FOSSATI Isabella, *L'interno della casa dell'artigiano e dell'artista nella Venezia del '500*, “Studi Veneziani”, n. 8, 1984, pp. 109-154; PALUMBO FOSSATI Isabella, *Dentro le case. Abitare a Venezia nel Cinquecento*, Venice, Gambier & Keller, 2013.

are the studies devoted to the study of consumer cultures, and then to the ideological background behind the dynamics of consumption and purchase, during the Renaissance.<sup>64</sup> The qualitative and cultural approach has thus dominated, while there are few studies that have quantitatively addressed Venetian consumption.<sup>65</sup>

### **The outline of the thesis**

After this first chapter that introduced the topic of the research, the historical context, and outlined the main trends in historiography on consumption and material culture in the early modern period, the thesis will continue as follows. In the second chapter, we will devote our attention to the description of the sources that are at the basis of this work and the research methodology. First, we will describe the benefits of using household budgets as an historical source for the study of patterns of consumption and the reasons that led us to prefer them to after death inventories, which are, in historiography, widely used documents for this kind of investigation. Then we will describe the characteristics of the Venetian family accounts that we have collected, but also their main limitations as historical sources. This part will be followed by the presentation of the ‘in-house’ classification system that we have created for the analysis of the evolution of consumer behaviours in the pre-industrial period. The third chapter is devoted to the quantitative analysis of

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<sup>64</sup> ALLERSTON Patricia, *Consuming problems. Wordly goods in Renaissance Venice*, in *The material Renaissance*, edited by Michelle O’Malley and Evelyn Welch, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007, pp. 11-46; BROWN-FORTINI Patricia, *Behind the walls. The material cultures of Venetian elites*, in *Venice reconsidered. The history and civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, edited by John Martin and Dennis Romano, Baltimore-London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000, pp. 295-338; WELCH Evelyn, *Shopping in the Renaissance*.

<sup>65</sup> CECCHINI Isabella, *Material culture in sixteenth century Venice. A sample from probate inventories, 1510–1615*, “Working Papers. Department of Economics. Ca’ Foscari University of Venice”, n. 14, 2008, pp. 1-19; CECCHINI Isabella, *A World of Small Objects. Probate inventories, pawns, and domestic life in early modern Venice*, “Renaissance and Reformation”, n. 35.3, 2012, pp. 39-61; ZANATTA Francesca, *L’inventario come fonte per lo studio della storia della ricchezza privata: Venezia nel 1661*, “Studi Veneziani”, n. 34, 1997, pp. 199-223.

family budgets. We will begin by analysing the broader and more general movements in consumption patterns. We will highlight the categories of spending where families invested more of their wealth, and then we will describe the trends in consumption patterns that can be identified in the long run. These considerations will be made both on a general level, considering the entire distribution of families of our sample, and by considering differences between the nobles and the non-nobles. For some categories, which are considered particularly significant, we will also propose a more detailed analysis. The chapter will close with an analysis of economic inequality within the Venetian society, with a particular focus on trends in consumption inequality.

In the fourth chapter, we will use a more qualitative treatment of household budgets. Using the accounts of three families belonging to very different socio-economic levels, we will show the vivacity and variety of consumer behaviours between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through the qualitative approach we will appreciate some of the aspects that, within a quantitative study, are usually ‘smoothed’ during data processing. We will therefore show how the quantitative and qualitative approaches are mutually necessary to ensure more complete and informative results. The fifth chapter is finally devoted to the conclusions of the study, and to outline some of the paths that seem to be the most fruitful to follow to continue the study of consumption and material culture in Venice during the early modern period.





## II

### Sources and research methodology

#### Household budgets as a source for material living conditions

Material living conditions have interested scholars since the ancient times, and in these investigations the use of household budgets has always been crucial. These documents are in fact considered first-order tools for the analysis of well-being and living standards because the analysis of transformation over time of revenues and expenditures is a perfect monetary gauge of how the benefits of economic growth are distributed among the population.<sup>1</sup>

It is still unclear who first introduced budgets collected in the field for the study of the economic condition of families.<sup>2</sup> Some believe that the primacy should be assigned to the British team of David Davies and Frederick Morton Eden, but according to others, the first to use budgets in economic writings was the Italian Antonio Genovesi, while others suggest that the Franco-Irish researcher Richard Cantillon was the first to do so.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CHIANESE Stefano and VECCHI Giovanni, *Bilanci di famiglia*, in *In ricchezza e in povertà. Il benessere degli italiani dall'Unità a oggi*, edited by Giovanni Vecchi, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2011, p. 357. Indeed, it is not by chance that the scholarly use of budgets had a rapid growth in the second half of the twentieth century at the same time as the culmination of studies on the interaction between development and wealth distribution. KANBUR Ravi, *Income distribution and development*, "Working Paper – Department of Agricultural, Resource, and Managerial Economics, Cornell University", n. 98–13, 1998, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century, some studies that relied on 'hypothetical budgets' were performed. In these studies, a 'typical' family budget was constructed to understand the way in which available resources were allocated, providing the scope to offer insight into poverty. Within this body of research, of notable interest are the works of William Petty and Gregory King. See: DEEMING Christopher, *The historical development of family budget standards in Britain, from the 17th century to the present*, "Social Policy and Administration", n. 44.7, 2010, pp. 767-769.

<sup>3</sup> CHIANESE Stefano and VECCHI Giovanni, *Bilanci di famiglia*, pp. 359-360.

In these studies, the household budget analysis was still very limited, both in the methodology and in the number of budgets used. However, the fault is certainly not attributable to the authors. Statistics had not yet been significantly diffused outside the academic environment, and the cost of collecting documents was high. In those years, and at least until the 1840s, data processing remained firmly qualitative; none of the aforementioned studies, for instance, suggests a general summary of their budgets. The turnaround came at the middle of the nineteenth century, when a sort of ‘golden age of household budgets’ began. Industrialization had disrupted traditional economic paradigms that characterized the West during the *Ancien Régime*, and it also gave rise to great derangements from a social point of view. In 1844, Friedrich Engels said that the industrial revolution “altered the whole civil society”.<sup>4</sup>

The socialist-inspired agitations that crossed Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century were the most obvious signal of the state of difficulty and dissatisfaction in which the working class of the time existed. These events, in turn, motivated a push for the launch of major campaigns to survey and study the economic situation of the population. It is precisely at this time that the monumental work *Les Ouvriers Européens* by Frédéric Le Play was published.<sup>5</sup>

Through large collections of family budgets, which were for the first time analysed through statistical tools, it was also possible to deduce some initial and important empirical generalizations. The most famous is certainly Engel’s law, which says that “the poorer a family, the greater the proportion of its total expenditure that must be devoted to the provision of food”.<sup>6</sup> This law was expressed in a study by Engel of Saxony, which relied on 153 budgets of Belgian families published in 1855 by Édouard Ducpetiaux and some data provided by Le Play.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cited in: PAMUK Şevket and van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, *Standards of living*, in *The Cambridge economic history of modern Europe*, vol. 1, 1700-1870, edited by Stephen Broadberry and Kevin H. O’Rourke, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> LE PLAY Frédéric, *Les Ouvriers Européens*, Paris, Imprimerie Impériale, 1855.

<sup>6</sup> RUTHERFORD Donald (ed.), *Routledge dictionary of economics*, London-New York, Routledge, 2002, *ad vocem* Engel’s law.

<sup>7</sup> It is curious how, speaking about Engel’s law in 1875, Carrol Wright and George Long, Commissioners of Labor Statistics in Massachusetts, pointed out that this generalization finds

Engel's study, however, was not the only empirical analysis formulated on the basis of family budgets in those years. In 1868, Hermann Schwabe, director of the Berlin Statistical Office, noted that "the poorer anyone is, the greater the amount relative to his income that he must spend for housing".<sup>8</sup> In a related observation, Carroll Wright, using data from almost 400 families of workers in Massachusetts, came to the conclusion that "the higher the income, generally speaking, the greater saving, actually and proportionally".<sup>9</sup>

After this first phase of strong attention to the economic components in family budget studies, the attention of scholars gradually moved on to social issues.<sup>10</sup> This attention certainly did not mean a neglect of the purely statistical approach, which in fact was increasingly refined. The first investigators had to work on documents collected where they able to find them—and therefore on strongly biased samples, while between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the capacity to build representative statistical samples of the population was reinforced. Fundamentals in this regard were the contributions of Arthur Lyon Bowley, Ronald Fisher, and Jerzy Neyman.<sup>11</sup>

During this period, many states launched major regional or national investigations based on household budgets, often focused on poverty: in England we have the study published in 1899 by the Board of Trade; in Italy the work of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1878, of the Labour Office in 1909, and those of the National Institute of Agricultural Economics carried out between 1929 and 1935; in Australia we find the Royal Commission on Basic Wage in 1920; and in the United States the publications of the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1909 and 1919.<sup>12</sup>

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perfect confirmation in Dupetiaux and Le Play data. See: *Sixth annual report of the bureau of statistics of labor*, Boston, Wright and Potter, 1875, pp. 437-438.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in: STIGLER George J., *The early history of empirical studies of consumer behavior*, "Journal of Political Economy", n. 64.2, 1954, p. 100.

<sup>9</sup> *Sixth annual report*, p. 385.

<sup>10</sup> STIGLER George J., *The early history*, p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> DEATON Angus, *The analysis of household surveys*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press and The World Bank, 1997, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> For Italy, see the already mentioned work by Stefano Chianese and Giovanni Vecchi, and: SOMOGYI Stefano, *Cento anni di bilanci familiari in Italia (1857-1956)*, "Annali Feltrinelli", 2,

Although these studies were episodic, after World War II inquiries on family budgets became systematic and institutional. The first such studies were carried out by Prasanta Mahalanobis at the Indian Statistical Institute in Calcutta, and in a few years many other national statistical offices had begun to establish regular surveys.<sup>13</sup>

Even if household budgets are considered by economic historians as the best sources for the study of economic welfare, they were mostly used for the study of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century<sup>14</sup>. On the contrary,

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1959, pp. 121-174. For England: DEEMING Christopher, *The historical development*. For Australia: SAUNDERS Peter, *The historical development of budget standards for Australian working families*, "Journal of Industrial relations", n. 48.2, 2006, pp. 155-173. For the USA: JOHNSON David, ROGERS John, and TAN Lucilla, *A century of family budgets in the United States*, "Monthly Labour Review", n. 124.5, 2001, pp. 28-45.

<sup>13</sup> DEATON Angus, *The analysis of household surveys*, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> See for instance: FEDERICO Giovanni, *Una prima stima dell'autoconsumo sulla base dei bilanci familiari (1850-1914)*, in *Mercati e consumi. Organizzazione e qualificazione del commercio in Italia dal XII al XX secolo*, Bologna, Analsi, 1986, pp. 751-770; FEDERICO Giovanni, *Mercantilizzazione e sviluppo economico in Italia (1860-1940)*, "Rivista di Storia Economica", n. 2, 1986, pp. 149-186; VECCHI Giovanni and COPPOLA Michela, *Nutrizione e povertà in Italia, 1861-1911*, "Rivista di Storia Economica", n. 3, 2003, pp. 383-0; HORREL Sara and HUMPHRIES Jane, *Old questions, new data, and alternative perspectives. Families' living standards in the industrial revolution*, "Journal of Economic History", n. 52.4, 1992, pp. 849-880; HORREL Sara and OXLEY Deborah, *Crust or Crumb? Intrahousehold resource allocation and male breadwinning in late Victorian Britain*, "Economic History Review", n. 52.3, 1999, pp. 494-522; HOLLEN LEES Lynn, *Getting and spending. The family budgets of English industrial workers in 1890*, in *Consciousness and class experience in 19th century Europe*, edited by John Merriman, New York and London, Holmes & Meier, 1979, pp. 169-186; ODDY D. J., *Working class diets in late 19th century Britain*, "Economic History Review", n. 23.2, 1970, pp. 314-323; LOGAN Trevon, *The transformation of hunger. Demand for calories past and present*, "Journal of Economic History", n. 69.2, 2009, pp. 388-408; GAZELEY Ian and HORREL Sarah, *Nutrition in English agricultural labourer's households over the course of the long 19th century*, "Economic History Review", n. 66.3, 2013, pp. 757-784; SAARITSA Sakari and KAIHOVAARA Antii, *Good for girls or bad for boys? Schooling, social inequality and intrahousehold allocation in early twentieth century Finland*, "Cliometrica", n. 10.1, 2016, pp. 55-98; GAZELEY Ian and NEWELL Andrew, *Urban working-class food consumption and nutrition in Britain in 1904*, "Economic History Review", n. 68.1, 2015, pp. 101-122. Recently, budget historiography has enjoyed new life since the launch of two major

their exploitation has been rather limited for the early modern period.<sup>15</sup> When scholars have used them, they have preferred a mostly qualitative discussion, even an ethnographic one,<sup>16</sup> paying attention to a single family or a small group of households. The scarce use of these sources originates in the belief that they were available only for a few aristocratic families. This led to the perception of the impossibility of building a robust chronological sample and persuaded historians to find other sources for their studies.

Thus, research on consumption and consumer behaviour in the early modern period relied upon after-death inventories as its primary source material; such inventories include lists of assets owned by a family when the primary breadwinner died. Typically, these documents were generated to allow for the division of assets among the heirs of the deceased, or to return to the widow the amount of her dowry. The popularity of utilising after-death inventories is mainly due to their wide diffusion in European and non-European archives, in addition to good temporal coverage and the vast amount of information they can supply. Fernand Braudel considered after-

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projects that build on budgets. They are the ‘Historic Household Budget Project’ launched by the University of Rome Tor Vergata and guided by Giovanni Vecchi, and the ‘Global Income Inequality Project’ of the University of Sussex co-directed by Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell. For a presentation of the Italian project see also: A’HEARN Brian, AMENDOLA Nicola, and VECCHI Giovanni, *On Historical Household Budgets*, “Rivista di Storia Economica”, n. 2, 2016, pp. 137-176. It is worth mentioning that this entire issue of the *Rivista di Storia Economica* is dedicated to household budgets studies, with articles of Sakari Saaritsa, Stefan Öberg, Evan Roberts, and Federica di Battista.

<sup>15</sup> GULLINO Giuseppe, *I Pisani da Banco e Moretta. Storia di due famiglie veneziane in età moderna e delle loro vicende patrimoniali tra 1705 e 1836*, Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano, 1984; MALANIMA Paolo, *I Riccardi di Firenze. Una famiglia e un patrimonio nella Firenze dei Medici*, Florence, Olschki, 1977; MIRA Giuseppe, *Vicende economiche di una famiglia italiana dal XIV al XVIII secolo*, Milan, Vita e Pensiero, 1940; PINCHERA Valeria, *Ricchezza, redditi e consumi della nobiltà in età moderna. Il caso toscano*, “Studi e Ricerche”, n. 57, 2000, pp. 1-31; TAGLIAFERRI Amelio, *Consumi e tenore di vita di una famiglia borghese del ‘600*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1968; WEATHERILL Lorna, *Consumer behaviour and material culture, 1660-1760*, London-New York, Routledge, 1988.

<sup>16</sup> LEVI Giovanni, *Il consumo a Venezia. Una fonte contabile*, in *Prima lezione di metodo storico*, edited by Sergio Luzzatto, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2010, p. 54.

death inventories fundamentally as “*document de vérité*”,<sup>17</sup> and many historians after him subscribed to this view. Yet such a reliance on these inventories was too positive, and in recent decades a more cautious and critical approach has made its way among historians. Scholars now never fail to highlight the limitations of inventories as historical sources,<sup>18</sup> especially when they are used to study consumption behaviour. The first limitation suffered by inventories is selection bias, which affects both the sample of the people who were the object of an asset inventory and also the objects that became part of the inventory itself. An inventory was in fact not produced for all people who died. Moreover, not all the objects in the home of the departed were noted in these documents, but only those considered economically significant by the estimator. Foodstuffs were not part of these latter, as they were perishable goods and their value (even if significant) would be lost in a short period of time. Thus, expenses on food, among the most relevant during the *Ancien Régime*, can not be inferred through inventories.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, about the objects listed we often have only an overall summary estimate, making it impossible to understand the precise value of every single item listed in the records. However, the main limitation in the use of inventories for consumption studies is the fact that they are a static source, i.e., a snapshot of a moment in time. The inventories do not take into account the purchase cycle of a family and changes in consumption over time.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Cited in SCHUURMANN Anton, *Probate inventories: research issues, problems and results*, “AAG Bijdragen”, n. 23, 1980, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> For a general overview of the principal limitations of inventories as historical source, see: RIELLO Giorgio, ‘*Things seen and unseen*’. *Inventories and the representation of the domestic interior in the early modern period*, in *Early modern things. Objects and their histories, 1500–1800*, edited by Paula Findlen, London-New York, Routledge, 2013, pp. 125-150.

<sup>19</sup> CORNETTE Joël, *Le Paris des inventaires après-décès (XVII-XVIII siècle). La révolution des objects*, “Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine”, n. 36, 1989, p. 480; DE VRIES Jan, *The industrious revolution. Consumer behaviour and household economy, 1650 to the present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 126; NICOLINI Esteban and RAMOS Fernando, *A new method for estimating the money demand in pre-industrial economies: probate inventories and Spain in the eighteenth century*, “European Review of Economic History”, n. 14, 2009, p. 159.

<sup>20</sup> REIS Jaime, *Economic growth, human capital formation and consumption in Western Europe before 1800*, in *Living standard in the past. New perspectives on well-being in Asia and Europe*,

This study refocuses the attention on early modern household budgets, arguing that it is possible to identify a sufficient quantity of documentation representative of a broad segment of the society. During the *Ancién Regime*, there were not, of course, national statistical bureaus or any regular national surveys investigating household budgets. Nevertheless, household budgets can be found in archives throughout Europe. On the Italian peninsula, for instance, there were institutions charged with the annual collection of dozens of family accounts. On some occasions (the most common was the death of the head of household), if there were minors or the infirm to protect, the law forced the establishment of a trust and obliged the trustee to share the accounts of the expenses made on behalf of his beneficiaries. In Venice, there was a judiciary charged with monitoring trusts and the behaviour of trustees: the *Giudici di Petizion*. The rich variety of documents that can be found in this archive is impressive and almost entirely unpublished.

Through the use of these household budgets, many of the problems that characterise studies carried out with inventories can be bypassed, such as addressing the important issues of household purchasing power and consumer behaviour. First, documents from the *Petizion* depict the life of families with very different levels of wealth. Moreover, they are dynamic sources, which sometimes enable us to reconstruct the financial history of a family over long periods of time. When the degree of detail is high, it is also possible to follow the seasonality of purchases and to begin to identify which family member was involved with a particular expenditure.

Venetian budgets also allow us to have a very complete overview of the wealth of a family. It is possible to reconstruct, with good detail, the composition of expenditure items. If inventories, by their nature, only listed durable and valuable goods, through the household budget we also have an account of expenditures made for foodstuffs, drinks, small objects, or for the purchase of services, or intangibles. In budgets, we may have reports of how much was spent for the education of children, for the maintenance of the house by masons or carpenters, for the

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edited by Robert C. Allen, Tommy Bengtsson, and Martin Dribe, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 200.

submission of documents in court, for the celebration of masses, and even for alms to charitable institutions.

Probably the most interesting element of household budgets is that they not only list the items but also their precise expenditures in money.<sup>21</sup> This element is particularly important because we can go back to identify the retail price of a wide range of consumer goods and services.

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<sup>21</sup> Within our budgets the price is almost always indicated in lire, while rarely it is expressed in ducats. Behind the indication on how much is spent on paying for a good or a service, there is one of the most fascinating, but often ignored, problems in economic history: what types of coins were used for payments? Gold coins were certainly very rare, despite references to ducats in budgets. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, gold coins, mainly used for international trade and for domestic transactions of great value, became stores of values and progressively disappeared from circulation to be hoarded. The ‘commercial’ role of gold coins was taken from high-value silver coins, and this, over the long run, had adverse effects on the ability of states to control the mass (and consequently the value) of fractional coins that was minted in alloys in which minimal quantities of silver was present. For daily exchanges, these low-silver-content coins flanked copper coins, forming a mass of small change that was particularly wide and heterogeneous. Moreover, one must not forget the presence of a multitude of low-value coins from foreign states. The circulation of these was illegal and forbidden by the institutions but in practice impossible to block, especially in a city like Venice that saw a continuous flow of merchants and travelers coming from all of Europe and the entire Mediterranean basin. The variety of coins that circulated at the same time on the soil of the *Serenissima* appears impressive, and probably we are speaking of dozens of different coins and currencies. Therefore, providing an answer to our initial question seems extremely difficult (if not impossible), unless we find precise information in the sources. This is an extremely rare case, which was never found in the documents that are the object of this study. CATTINI Marco, *L’oro in Italia. Monete reali e monete ideali (secoli XIII-XVIII)*, in *Soldi d’oro*, edited by Silvana Balbi de Caro, Rome, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2004, pp. 70-90; MOZZATO Andrea and MUELLER Reinhold C., *Prezzi e monete nella Vacchetta di Tiberio Tinelli*, in *Libretto dei conti del pittore Tiberio Tinelli (1618–1633)*, edited by Bianca Lanfranchi Strina, Venice, il Comitato, 2000, pp. xxvi-xliv; TRAVAINI Lucia, *Zecche e monete*, in *Il Rinascimento in Italia e l’Europa. Produzione e tecniche*, vol. III, edited by Philippe Braunstein and Luca Molà, Treviso-Costabissara, Fondazione Cassamarca-Angelo Colla Editore, 2007, pp. 479-483; TUCCI Ugo, *Monete e riforme monetarie nell’Italia del Settecento*, “Rivista Storica Italiana”, n. 98, 1986, pp. 78-119.



## The *Giudici di Petizion* and their household budgets

The judiciary of the *Giudici di Petizion* was created in 1244 by the doge Jacopo Tiepolo and is considered the first judicial magistracy in Venice.<sup>22</sup> The magistracy was composed of three judges who stayed in office, from the early decades of the sixteenth century, for 16 months.<sup>23</sup> The judiciary was concerned with inheritance acceptances, appointment of executors and trustees, monitoring the management of trusts (*Commissarie*, in Venetian),<sup>24</sup> and trials related to testamentary dispositions.<sup>25</sup> Judges would manage disputes about debts of no less than 50 ducats, in which (at least) one of the parties was Venetian, and for a time they had authority over bankruptcies.<sup>26</sup> Already in the fourteenth century, the variety and importance of the issues followed by *Giudici di Petizion* brought Jacopo Bertaldo to say, “*petitionum curia, que in quibuslibet potencior est de omnibus premissis Palaci*”.<sup>27</sup> Financial issues were thus the main activity of the *Petizion*. The appointments of trustees and executors, and the monitoring of their work, were among the most common tasks for the judiciary (and this is confirmed by the wealth of the *Petition* archive related to the management of trusts).

The purpose of a *Commissaria* was to handle and protect the properties of a child or of any other person who, because of his age or some infirmity, was unable to

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<sup>22</sup> CASSANDRO Giovanni Italo, *La curia di Petizion e il diritto processuale di Venezia*, “Archivio Veneto”, n. 19, 1936, pp. 72-75.

<sup>23</sup> At the time of its foundation, the charge of the *Giudici di Petizion* lasted six months, and it was extended to 12 months during the fifteenth century until the beginning of the sixteenth century. CASSANDRO Giovanni Italo, *La curia di Petizion*, p. 83.

<sup>24</sup> Venetian law contemplated two kinds of *Commissaria*. The first is the *Tutela*, in which the trustee is charged both with the control of the proprieties and with the health of the beneficiaries. The second is the *Curatela*, in which the trustee must guard only the assets assigned to him. See: FERRO Marco, *Dizionario del diritto comune e veneto*, vol. I, Venice, 1845, p. 439 *ad vocem* Commissario.

<sup>25</sup> ARGELATI Francesco, *Pratica del foro veneto*, Venice, 1737, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> DA MOSTO Andrea, *L'Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Indice generale, storico, descrittivo ed analitico*, vol. I, Rome, Biblioteca dell'Arte Editrice, p. 92.

<sup>27</sup> “The *Petizion* judiciary is more powerful with respect to any other judiciary of the state.” BERTALDO Jacopo, *Spendor Venetorum civitatis consuetudinum*, Bologna, 1895, p. 10. Translation is mine.

manage his affairs. Therefore, the assets of adults and older people also could be protected by a trustee (*commissario*, in Venetian). The Venetian law distinguished three types of trustees: testamentary, legitimate, and given.<sup>28</sup> The testamentary trustee was one whose nomination was already determined by the deceased's will. In this case, the dying, taking care of the future of his family, appointed in his will a future guardian for his dependents.<sup>29</sup> In this case, Venetian law did not interfere with the designation, which was in fact automatic and could be entrusted to anyone

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<sup>28</sup> FERRO Marco, *Dizionario del diritto comune*, vol. I, p. 439 *ad vocem* Commissario.

<sup>29</sup> During the thirteenth century, it became quite common among the citizens of Venice to appoint as their testamentary trustees the procurators of Saint Mark, one of the most important judiciaries of the Republic. According to tradition, this judiciary was born in the ninth century with the arrival in Venice of the body of Saint Mark, stolen from Alexandria of Egypt by two Venetian merchants. The first procurators were in charge of overseeing the construction of the new church dedicated to the saint and of the management of it (it should be remembered that the basilica of Saint Mark was until 1807 the private chapel of the Ducal Palace, and this is the reason why the management of the church was in the hands of a public institution and not of the city bishop). The number of procurators went to four in the thirteenth century and in less than 200 years it was brought to nine. The increase in the number of procurators also coincides with the increase in the functions entrusted to this judiciary. In 1269, the *Serenissima* granted the procurators the protection of the pupils and the infirm, the execution of wills, and the administration of inheritances. Trusts administration was a task that the judiciary held until the end of its existence, and that for many centuries absorbed many of the powers of the judiciary. However, looking at the number of *Commissarie* managed by the procurators in the early modern period, we can see a progressive decline. These are in fact numerous at least until the sixteenth century, then almost disappearing between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is a phenomenon that probably goes back to the willingness of Venetian families to escape the direct control of the state on family patrimonies. CAPPELLETTI Giuseppe, *Storia delle magistrature venete*, Venice, Grimaldo, 1873, pp. 99–100; DA MOSTO Andrea, *L'Archivio di Stato*, I, pp. 25-26; FERRO Marco, *Dizionario del diritto comune*, vol. II, *ad vocem* Procuratore; MUELLER Reinhold C., *The Procurators of San Marco in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A study of the office as a financial and trust institution*, "Studi Veneziani", n. 13, 1971, pp. 105-220; VIGGIANO Alfredo, *I procuratori di San Marco in età moderna*, in *Le Procuratie Vecchie in piazza San Marco*, edited by Feliciano Benvenuti, Rome, Editalia, pp. 11-56.

the dying considered reliable and worthy of the task. In this situation, a judiciary would confirm and track the testamentary trustee.<sup>30</sup>

In the case that a last will and testament was missing, and there was an urgent need to appoint an administrator for minor children or for an infirm person, the judiciary of *Petizion* could intervene “without citing anyone”.<sup>31</sup> Generally, the judiciary tried to give power of attorney to the closest relatives of the protected. Priority was given to the members of the family of the father and only later, in case of necessity, to the relatives of the mother.<sup>32</sup> If this solution was viable, the judges confirmed the appointment of the trustees, which was a legitimation act. Thus these trustees were called legitimate trustees.

Formally, women could not legally be appointed as trustees, unless they were the mother or the grandmother of the beneficiaries, because being a trustee was considered a public office and women were not authorized to assume this kind of responsibility. In practice, however, there are numerous documents that refer to women being nominated as trustees, even of large fortunes of some of their closest relatives. This is the case of the noblewoman Lucrezia Cappello, who was appointed *commissario* of the huge estate of her brother Andrea,<sup>33</sup> or Orsetta Foscolo, niece of the abbot Lunardo Valier, who was charged with managing the inheritance for her uncle for several years during the 1770s.<sup>34</sup> Particularly significant is the case of the Soardi family trust. After the death of Andrea Soardi on 13 July 1763, a *Commissaria* was set up in his name, in which the three orphans Margherita, Maria, and Anna were the beneficiaries.<sup>35</sup> Giovanni Battista Cambiasio was appointed by the court as a trustee, and he held this role for more than eight years. After his death, occurred between the end of 1771 and the beginning of 1772, the trust was not

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<sup>30</sup> Here, trustees were appointed by the *Giudici di Petizion*, while the Lower Chancellery was the institution chosen to follow the successive steps of the practice. FERRO Marco, *Dizionario del diritto comune*, vol. I, p. 440 *ad vocem* Commissario.

<sup>31</sup> NANI Franceco, *Prattica civile delle Corti del Palazzo Veneto*, Venice, 1668, p. 71.

<sup>32</sup> NANI Franceco, *Prattica civile*, p. 74.

<sup>33</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter ASV), *Giudici di Petizion*, Commissarie, Commissaria Andrea Cappello, 1054.

<sup>34</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1005, c. 51.

<sup>35</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1004, c. 2.

assigned to another external *commissario* but to the older of the three sisters, Margherita, who in the meantime had reached the age of majority (we know with certainty that she married in January 1771) and was therefore eligible to manage her family's estate in the name of the two sisters who were still minors.<sup>36</sup>

In these examples, there is no trace of an added (male) trustee designated by the judges for help (and monitoring) of the activities of the newly appointed trustee. Most likely, as it often happened, rules were ignored and women took charge of managing the wealth of their relatives rather frequently. This practice can be traced to the desire of the family to preserve its assets from possible external interference. In the search for a good manager of family assets, parental closeness was therefore considered an added value, certainly much more than gender.

In addition to the limitations given for women, the only other ban on the assumption of the office of trustee was for members of religious institutions.<sup>37</sup> Except for these cases, the role of administrator could be taken by anyone.

Returning to the various types of trustees, in the case where there was no will and there were no willing relatives, the *Petizion* judges had to go looking for someone willing to accept this role. The person who assumed the position in this case took the title of given trustee, and for them the duties and obligations were basically the same as for legitimate trustees.

Before the official appointment of a trustee, the judges required an inventory of all assets that he was about to manage on behalf of his beneficiaries. A trustee could

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<sup>36</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1004, c. 8.

<sup>37</sup> FERRO Marco, *Dizionario del diritto comune*, vol. I, p. 440 *ad vocem* Commissario. The ban involving the members of religious institutions is probably another sign of the mistrust between the Republic of Venice and the Papal State. The *Serenissima* had in fact a Byzantine ancestry, and over time it retained many of the aspects that characterized the ecclesiastical policy of Byzantium. Among them, the idea of the doge as “*princeps in re publica, princeps in ecclesia*” (sovereign in the state, sovereign in religion), borrowed from the title of ‘equal-to-apostles’ given to Eastern Roman Emperors. Interferences by the Church in the secular life were therefore poorly tolerated in Venice, even at low levels as could be the management of a trust by a priest. See: GULLINO Giuseppe, *La politica ecclesiastica veneziana nella seconda metà del XVIII secolo*, in *Geografie confessionali. Cattolici e ortodossi nel crepuscolo della Repubblica di Venezia (1718-1797)*, edited by Giuseppe Gullino and Egidio Ivetic, Milan, Franco Angeli, pp. 13-14.

not exclude real estate, silver and gold objects, jewellery, and valuable paintings without permission from the judiciary.<sup>38</sup> An inventory of all the assets at the beginning of the *Commissaria* served as a useful benchmark during periodic inspections performed by the court (discussed below). The development of the inventory was therefore an important step in the establishment of the trust, because it was an important tool to minimise the risk of potential fraud.<sup>39</sup>

Another precaution taken by the *Petizion* to try to protect beneficiaries as far as possible in case the trustee was a foreigner (so with no family ties) was the institution of a *pieggeria*.<sup>40</sup> The trustee, after his appointment, was obliged to create a kind of insurance in favour of the beneficiaries; the idea was to compel the administrator to deal with his assigned assets with the same care and dedication he would have if the assets were owned by him. In the event of future shortages, the amount paid as *pieggeria* served to cover the gaps.

With these initial precautions taken, the trustee came into full possession of his office. The actual obligations were few. As mentioned earlier, the trustee was prohibited to sell real estate and movable assets of value without official approval given by the court. He could, however, freely sell chattels of little value and make investments to provide for the maintenance of the beneficiaries.

Of interest for this study, the manager was also held to record day-to-day revenues and expenditures, with the aim of producing a general budget for the trust. According to the law, at the end of the trust the administrator was obligated to give to the judiciary all of the accounting books, in order to ensure full accessibility of the records for the beneficiaries. The rules are quite clear when the beneficiaries

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<sup>38</sup> FERRO Marco, *Dizionario del diritto comune e veneto*, vol. II, Venice, 1847, p. 822 *ad vocem* Tutela.

<sup>39</sup> Unlike in other judiciaries where these documents were made by internal members of the staff, for the establishment of a trust after death inventories were realized by public notaries. The testamentary trustees, being not formally under the supervision of the *Giudici di Petizion*, handed their inventories to the Lower Chancellery, an office charged with keeping notarial acts. The legitimate and the given trustees, who were instead under the direct control of the *Petizion*, were obliged to hand their budgets directly to them. DA MOSTO Andrea, *L'Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, vol. I, p. 2; FERRO Marco, *Dizionario del diritto comune*, vol. I, p. 440 *ad vocem* Commissario.

<sup>40</sup> *Pratica del foro veneto ridotta a ordine alfabetico*, Venice, 1796, p. 30 *ad vocem* Commissarij.

were minors: when the age of majority was attained, the beneficiary obtained the full possession of his properties and gained the right to see how his assets had been administered. In case they found anomalies in the accounting books, the judiciary guaranteed them the opportunity to sue their (former) trustee. The situation is less clear with regard to the infirm and the elderly. Probably the trust allowed these accounts to return to the family.

The *Petizion* apparently granted broad latitude about how the administrators were required to submit their budgets. Most likely, the judiciary merely imposed an obligation to submit budgets without setting a restrictive standard on the actual preparation of the accounts. Each trustee was therefore free to produce accounts in the manner and at the time he preferred, with the only requirement that they should be available at the end of the trust. The most obvious result of this wide freedom of action given to trustees is the high degree of heterogeneity of the sources in the archive of the *Giudici di Petizion*.

### **Venetian household budgets in detail**

Venetian trust budgets are today preserved at the *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, in the series *Rendimenti di Conti* of the *Giudici di Petizion* archive. The series consists of 88 folders. The time span of these folders runs from 1436 to 1797, the year of the collapse of the republic. This series of documents is not limited to budgets created by trustees during their work as managers. There is a wealth of additional documents related to the management of workshops, shops, and landholdings. In these cases, the documents can be inventories of merchandise, lists of creditors and debtors, contracts, or budgets of workshops.

Reviewing the folders belonging to this series related to the period from the second half of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century, it is possible to realise the heterogeneity of the documents. Given the lack of clear rules on the types of documents needed for the *Petizion*, each trustee maintained his documentation to his preference. There are some very precise and detailed household budgets, where expenses are marked day by day; there are budgets where various items of

expenditures and revenues are grouped together by categories; and finally, there are highly general budgets. There are managers who prefer to present their budget every year, while others bring all their documentation to the judiciary at the end of the period they served as trustees.

In October 1748, the nobleman Antonio Morosini died. A few days later, his widow, the noblewoman Vittoria Correr, was entrusted with the responsibility of her young children's care. Starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> of that month, Vittoria Correr kept an extremely precise and detailed budget of expenditures for her family.<sup>41</sup> For instance, between 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October these expenses were logged:

*October 24<sup>th</sup>*

*in meat. . . lire 5: 1*  
*in chickens. . . lire 2: 5*  
*in cured meat. . . lire -: 15*  
*in one half staio of flour. . . lire 15*  
*in one chicken. . . lire 1: 6*  
*in coffee. . . lire 3: 6*

*October 25<sup>th</sup>*

*in washerwoman. . . lire 2:5*  
*in seafood. . . lire 3:13*  
*in oil. . . lire 1:4*  
*in silk. . . lire 1:1*  
*in vegetables. . . lire 1*  
*in seafood. . . lire 3:16*

In an anonymous budget for the year 1780,<sup>42</sup> there is a more general description where all of the expenses incurred in the month of August are annotated:

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<sup>41</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 998, c. 8. Vittoria Correr is extremely precise when speaking about her expenditures but, curiously, she does not cite the number of her children.

<sup>42</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1011, c. 3, p. 17.

*For expenses in groceries as seen in the long book. . . lire 291:11*  
*For expenditures in an aviary. . .lire 5*  
*For expenses for the restoration of the palace in Taglio. . . lire 1*  
*Given to my son Giovanni as pocket money. . . lire 250*  
*For the expenses for the embankments in Zevarese. . .lire 250*  
*For expenses of works done in Barbaran. . .lire 60*

However, there are cases where the trustee writes a budget for a full past year. Here is an example of the document presented by the widow Cominciolli, responsible for the maintenance of her two children.<sup>43</sup> Some of the expenses incurred in 1749 were:

*Spent in food. . . lire 2670*  
*Spent on firewood. . .lire 197*  
*Spent in flour. . . lire 608*  
*Spent on wine. . . lire 375*  
*Spent in dress. . . lire 1528*  
*Spent in washerwoman. . . lire 120*  
*Spent on salaries. . . lire 196.16*  
*Spent for the medicine master of Iseppo my son. . . lire 306*  
*Spent for my nun daughter during the feast of Corpus Christi. . . lire 396.16*  
*Spent for my daughter dressed in the monastery of Terese. . . lire 248*

From the above examples, it is clear that the judiciary not only left freedom about the method in which to compose the budgets, but also on the nature of the documentation to create. Thus, it appears that the anonymous budget and the Cominciolli accounts were created specifically to be presented to the judiciary, while Correr seems to have turned in all the papers in her possession. Although the rules are not clear on this point, it seemed a common practice for the administrators to share a final summation along with bills for incurred expenditures or other kinds of supporting documents that could be used to justify items in the budget. For instance, in the anonymous account of 1780, in the line where there is a reference about the expenditure for food, the trustee noted that the amount spent is found fully and with precise justification in the “long book”. Other budgets make explicit reference to “monthly books”, and in others to “masters’ books”. There is a wealth

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<sup>43</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 998, c. 18.



of documents where every expenditure refers to a precise attached bill. Unfortunately, monthly books, masters' books, and bills are documents almost absent in the series *Rendimenti di Conti*.<sup>44</sup> Research conducted in other series in the same archive did not lead to better results.

The administrators were not obliged to justify only expenses but also revenues. In this latter section of the budgets, we find the gains from investments in government debt securities, from investments in private companies, from houses rented in Venice, and the money collected from the sale of agricultural products produced on family-owned farms in the mainland. As mentioned, the trustee was forbidden to sell real estate and high-value items, but nothing prohibited him from selling less valuable items to increase the amount of money available for ordinary management. This is the reason why we often see gains obtained from the sale of clothes or personal belongings of the deceased, or of part of the furniture or other domestic tools and objects. The section of the budget related to revenues does not differ significantly from that relating to payments. Household budgets that are characterized by a high degree of detail in the recording of expenditures will have a good degree of detail in the description of revenues (although expenditures naturally occur with greater frequency than earnings); likewise, budgets in which the costs are described in a very general way will treat revenues similarly.

In the excerpts of the documents shown above, it is possible to note the continued presence of references to bills, and in the end to the duty of trustees to justify their actions. This is another signal of the surveillance operated by the judiciary on the proper behaviour of the trust managers. In fact, the rules state that “negligent or malicious commissioners in the administration of their trust can be forced by the judges [to behave honestly]”.<sup>45</sup> The creation of an inventory and the need to apply for specific authorization to manage costs, sales, or investments outside the normal administration were all meant to protect the assets. In addition, it seems likely that there were administrative controls over the accounts presented by the trustees. Signs

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<sup>44</sup>The only complete document we found is: ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conto, 1006, c. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Novissimum statutorum ac venetorum legum, vol. I*, Venice, 1739, p. 27 *ad vocem* Commissarj (in the *Prattica Sommaria Civile* part).

of this practice are given by the presence within this series of documents that summarize the result of these checks. There are in fact reports of shortages, omissions, and mistakes made by trustees during their work.<sup>46</sup> Most likely, after these checks were carried out, and after actions against irregularities would have been taken, master books and bills were thrown away. This would explain the continued reference to these documents within many budgets, but their complete absence within the archives of the judiciary.

In general, the efforts made by the judiciary to ensure good management of the assets of the beneficiaries appear quite substantial. Nevertheless, disputes related to frauds remained quite frequent, and these represented the most evident sign of the conflicts that affected the creation and management of a *Commissaria*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See for instance: ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1004, c. 26; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1005, c. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Exemplary is the Prevadovich file. In this case, we do not have a budget but only the documents produced by the commission charged to examine the work of the two trustees. Giovanni Prevadovich died on 21 April, 1750, and the next day his will was published. As Prevadovich was a religious man, the beneficiaries of all his belongings were his nephews. Twenty years after his death, at the beginning of the 1770s, Prevadovich's nephews were now of age and ready to collect their inheritance which, however, seems to have diminished. This was the beginning of a lawsuit before the *Petition* that ended with the documents in our possession, describing all the fraudulent strategies used by the trustees to cheat the family and the state: many of the objects and credits in the inventory of 1750 were completely absent in the budget of 1773; many goods were (officially) sold at a much lower price than their real value; in the budget, payments were made to people who were never named in the will and who did not appear to be creditors of the deceased; and finally, many valuable goods were never declared, so the trustees could avoid the authorisation of the judiciary for their sale. However, the trustees were not the only ones who wanted to cheat the heirs of Giovanni Prevadovich. Other members of the family seem to have had an interest in subtracting funds from the inheritance. The budget, in fact, includes "the magnificent sum of 17,386 lire and 7 soldi" that the trust had to pay to Gerolamo, Pietro Antonio, and Pietro Zorzi Prevadovich, who were never cited in the will and did not seem to have any rights to that sum. ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1005, c. 10; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1005, file dated January 27, 1774.

## The sample under analysis

To better understand the purchasing and consumption dynamics of Venetian families during the early modern period, three decades have been chosen for a detailed analysis. Specifically, the focus of the study is on the 1670s, the 1720s, and the 1770s.<sup>48</sup>

Although the eighteenth century is the period in which historians place the birth of the world of goods, this study also proposes an in-depth analysis of the consumer practices of the seventeenth century. For Italy, the seventeenth century was considered a century of crisis in which, among other things, the peninsula lost its primacy as an advanced consumer society because of gains via the *material Renaissance*<sup>49</sup> to the North Atlantic economies. Nevertheless, recent historiography depicts an image of the *Seicento* that is less severe and more articulated. In this period, if the signals of the economic structural contraction are clear, some studies on maritime trade and manufacturing have shown that there were also some positive reactions. In certain cases, above all in the second half of the century, there were also some signs of growth.<sup>50</sup> Thus, a look into the consumption dynamics of this century can provide important information about material well-being in the period between the material Renaissance and the age of the consumer revolution.

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<sup>48</sup> These decades were used as guidelines. In the collection of budgets, first we have identified the families whose trusts were active in the 1670s, 1720s, and 1770s, and then all the documents related to these families were collected, even though they transcended the temporal boundaries that had originally been fixed. This choice was made to analyse the full accounting history of a given household, without creating artificial breaks. Therefore, we have three decades with fluid boundaries: the decade 1670s collects documents for the period 1655–1680; the 1720s presents documentation produced between 1717 and 1733; while for the 1770s we analysed budgets dated between 1758 and 1782.

<sup>49</sup> For a selection of works dealing with the ‘material Renaissance’ see: BLONDÉ Bruno and RYKBOSCH Wouter, *In ‘splendid isolation’. A comparative perspective on the historiographies of the ‘material Renaissance’ and the ‘consumer revolution’*, “History of Retailing and Consumption”, n. 1.2, 2015, pp. 105-124.

<sup>50</sup> PEZZOLO Luciano, *L’economia*, in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, vol. VII, *La Venezia Barocca*, edited by Gino Benzoni and Gaetano Cozzi, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997, pp. 369–433. For more bibliography see chapter I.

The choice to use a period of 50 years between each of the three decades seems a reasonable and appropriate pace to appreciate continuity and change in Venetian material culture and consumption strategies. On the other hand, the choice to pay attention to these three specific decades was primarily dictated by a matter of pragmatism. This is the combination that guarantees the highest number of documents to be examined and therefore a more robust sample.

All of the budgets<sup>51</sup> collected by the *Petizion* during these three decades were considered.<sup>52</sup> In total, the analysis covers 99 documents belonging to 39 different families.<sup>53</sup> Households that are part of the sample are not homogeneously divided

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<sup>51</sup> We have used all the budgets in which there were direct references to expenditures for the maintenance of one or more beneficiaries. All documents with this feature were considered, regardless their degree of detail. Budgets that refer only to legal and financial expenses were not included in our sample.

<sup>52</sup> Documents can be found in: ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 983; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 984; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 985; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 986; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 994; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 995; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 996; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1001; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1002; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1003; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1004; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1005; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1006; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1007; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1008; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1009; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1010; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1011; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1012.

<sup>53</sup> Here the terms ‘families’ and ‘households’ are used in an interchangeable way, even though the latter is technically more accurate. The term family refers in fact to the idea of a social group formed by two people (usually) linked by the bond of marriage who are living under the same roof with their children, whereas in the cases we present this situation is never true. The breadwinner is always missing, the widow is rarely named (is she still alive?), and we hardly know if the eventual orphans are still living with their mother. There are also instances where the household is made up of only one old or sick beneficiary who lives in the company of a servant or a relative. We used the term ‘families’ for brevity, while it would be preferable to refer to these households as ‘family aggregates’.

among the three decades; there are 13 households for the 1670s, seven for the 1720s, and 19 for the 1770s.<sup>54</sup>

Interestingly, there is an increase in the number of records between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a trend that contrasts with what happens in the same period for after-death inventories and budgets of trusts managed by the Procurators of Saint Mark. In this period there is apparently a sort of ‘escape’ by Venetian families from all the forms of direct control over family wealth exerted by the state. Testamentary trustees are no longer sought by the Procurators of Saint Mark, and the procedures of dowry returning<sup>55</sup> are managed by notaries rather than by the judiciary of the *Giudici del Proprio*. Probably this phenomenon does not affect the proceedings handled by the *Petizion* because the latter were already managed by private citizens and the judges were just controlling and verifying the accuracy of the accounts. State interference was therefore limited and was not considered as an obstacle by families. Moreover, when the trustee was not a family member, even though he was chosen among those who had close ties with the household, this monitoring operation granted by the judges could also be considered an additional safeguard with respect to family interests and assets.

It should be noted that the sample of analysis is not a balanced sample, and therefore it does not reflect faithfully the Venetian social structure of the time, nor even that

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<sup>54</sup> During the life of the trust, the number of household members may change, for example, for the (voluntary or non-voluntary) removal of one or more beneficiaries from the family group. Since the number of household members is vital information for the quantitative analysis, we take into account these changes in the sample created to be treated statistically. We could have a trust in which the number of beneficiaries passes from three to two due, for instance, to the marriage of one of them. In this case, we consider the trust with three beneficiaries as a household, and the trust with two beneficiaries as another household. It should be noted that these are isolated cases. It happens in one case in the 1670s, and in two cases in the 1770s.

<sup>55</sup> After the death of her husband, the widow had to be returned a sum of money equal to what she had paid as dowry to her husband’s family before the wedding. The dowry was used by the young couple to start the business of their matrimonial firm, while after the death of the husband this same sum served for the widow as capital to invest in a new marriage or as social insurance for her old age. On this proceeding, and on the legal issues related to it, see: LANARO Paola, *La restituzione della dote. Il gioco ambiguo della stima tra beni mobili e beni immobili (Venezia tra Cinque e Settecento)*, “Quaderni Storici”, n. 3, 2010, pp. 753-778.

of a particular social class. In general, the families here considered are part of the middle-high part of society, and we find, among others, craftsmen, small landowners, members of the mainland aristocracy, and Venetian nobles. The poor and the lower classes do not appear in this archive, even though they represented the most significant portion of the population. A trust was activated to manage the family's wealth in the absence of its 'primary manager' (because he was dead or because he was no longer able to handle his business), but in the circumstances of the lower classes, where wealth was non-existent, the establishment of a trust was of course unnecessary.

A precise and accurate stratification of the families belonging to our sample, by social class and other demographic characteristics, was not possible. We do not have sufficient documentation to precisely pinpoint the various family groups on the social ladder on the basis of their wealth. The tax declarations available at the state archive for the second half of the seventeenth and for the eighteenth century are in fact only three, and they provide a description of the years 1661, 1711, and 1740.<sup>56</sup> What we know with certainty is that the noble families present in our sample are three for the decade of the 1670s, one for the 1720s, and seven for the 1770s (in this latter case, we have five families belonging to the nobility of the city of Venice and two from the mainland). Thus, aristocratic households account, respectively, for 23 per cent, 14 per cent, and 36 per cent of the families making up the sample. Although we are lacking official tax documentation, we have been able to classify most households by calculating the monthly average expenditures per beneficiary, and the monthly average revenues. Although we have data only for middle-high households, the differences we found are quite high. Looking at the average monthly expenditures per beneficiary, we can see how in all three decades the values between the families at the top of the distribution with respect to those at the bottom are extremely marked. For the 1670s, this ratio is equal to eight, for the 1720s it rises to 47, and in the 1770s it reaches almost 1,250. The same phenomenon is depicted by the data for average revenues per month: the ratio between the households at the top with those at the bottom of the distribution is 2,733 in the

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<sup>56</sup> *Guida generale agli archivi di Stato italiani*, vol. IV, Florence, Le Monnier, 1994, pp. 940-941.

1670s, 358 in the 1720s, and 1,400 in the 1770s. Therefore, we have a sample of families belonging to the same general segment of society, but strongly differentiated in terms of revenues and expenses.

The length of the trusts under analysis is extremely variable. The average duration is about five years, but we find one trust that lasts a few months and others of much longer duration, and one that continues for over 23 years. The latter is certainly an isolated and atypical case, but it shows how the norm that required the trust to be dissolved upon beneficiaries' reaching the age of majority was not exactly adamant. As often happens in the *Ancien Régime*, laws are fluid and can be changed, altered, or simply ignored if needed.

The number of beneficiaries is less variable, and rarely are they more than two. We have little information about them, and we often know just their name (although we have cases where even this is not explicit). Their age is never declared, and sometimes we can try to get it from some other information in the budgets, such as the beginning of scholastic studies, or participation in some religious rite (like the first communion or the affirmation). In the case of noble families, we can arrive at suggestions about the date of birth of household members thanks to the records of the *Libro d'Oro della Nobiltà Italiana*, or to some genealogical publications. In most cases the beneficiaries are minors who come under the supervision of a guard after the death of their father. The cases where a trust is activated for a sick or elderly individual are rare but also present in our sample. There are just four such cases, for the decade of the 1770s.<sup>57</sup> In addition, we have a unique case where, due to the disability of the breadwinner, the maintenance of an entire family group is entrusted to a trust where the management is given to the son-in-law of the breadwinner. The beneficiaries are the sick breadwinner (who is defined as “mad”

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<sup>57</sup> These are the households Minio, Pitteri, Porzia, and Tonnon. In the case of the Tonnon family, the beneficiary is the widow of the breadwinner, while in the Minio Trust the beneficiary is the old mother of the deceased. Pitteri and Porzia documentation refers instead to two infirm people who are assisted by their trustees. ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1005, c. 7; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1006, c. 2; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1006, c. 3; ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1006, c. 13.

in the documents), his wife, his two children with their wives, and a grandson, for a total of seven people.<sup>58</sup>

### **How to define consumption schemes: From COICOP to HiCHEP**

This study proposes an analysis that is both qualitative and quantitative, in the belief that these two approaches are mutually indispensable to fully understand the evolution of the economic dynamics of the past, especially if we want to analyse the behaviour of consumers and consumption pattern trends. In fact, it is impossible to have a comprehensive understanding of quantitative documents such as the budgets produced by the *Petizion* without a deep appreciation of the social context in which they were produced, and moreover there are nuances that are completely out of the question with a quantitative analysis and that can only be perceived through a qualitative methodology.

The first approach used in this research will be the quantitative one, and in this respect the methodological choice was fundamental both for cataloguing the available data and for creating the database used for analysing household budgets. Because of the formal variety of sources and the different degrees of detail for data, mentioned previously, we adopted a classification system that allows us to maximally exploit the data, even from those files that are more generic and less detailed. Thus, the choice fell on a “stratigraphic” system that is well suited to the organization of data with different levels of detail, and that moreover can both categorize expenses generally and provide deeper insight on subcategories when the documents allow it.

We relied on a variant of the Classification of Individual Consumption according to Functional Purpose system (COICOP), developed by the United Nations in 1993<sup>59</sup> and now used by a number of national statistical offices around the world. The COICOP system is characterised by an articulated structure divided into three

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<sup>58</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conti, 1004, c. 6.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations, *Statistical Papers*, Series M, n. 84, 1999, p. 18.



different levels: divisions, groups, and classes.<sup>60</sup> Divisions are the broadest categories and show the most general movements in the consumption patterns of a household.<sup>61</sup> Each division is then subdivided into a variable number of groups, and finally each group is composed of a different number of classes. These last two levels are extremely useful to provide in-depth analyses on consumer choices.

In the system that we have developed, the formal structure of COICOP has been substantially maintained (names of categories remained the same), while the range of information that was analysed has been considerably affected. Although it was created without following a particular model of consumption and to reflect differences in income elasticities, the 'stock version' of the COICOP system is limited in the context of a preindustrial study because it does not consider expenditures that may participate in the capital formation of the household. In the version currently used by the various statistical offices, expenses for the purchase of new buildings, residential restorations, and purchases of furniture, carpets, paintings, works of art, and jewellery acquired primarily as stores of value are not considered. Not considering such expenses in an historical survey is basically impossible mainly for two reasons. First, we cannot revisit the logic that led to the purchase of a given object, and then we are not able to understand whether it was purchased for everyday use or to be put aside to be subsequently resold for profit. Second, in the preindustrial age every object virtually represented a reserve of value and thus contributed to the formation of the capital available to a family. Material goods were the basis of a sort of social security based on an articulated system that tied together consumption, resale, and pawning. In a context like early modern Europe characterized by strong fluctuations of prices, the ability to make money from material objects guaranteed economic security to families and allowed them to continue to access the economic system. In case of necessity, objects could in fact be used as a means of payment, or they could be pawned or resold to collect

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<sup>60</sup> For the complete scheme of the COICOP system with all the specifications, see: [unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=5](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=5)

<sup>61</sup> Here we do not consider Division 13 (Individual consumption expenditures of non-profit institutions serving households), and Division 14 (Individual consumption expenditures of general government), since they are not strictly related to household consumption.

cash for the purchase of other goods or services.<sup>62</sup> This behaviour was common to both the richest and the poorest social classes, and it potentially exploited all of the material goods available to the family. To feed this exchange system, we find not just silk shirts, embroidered sheets, silverware, or rich art objects, but also little-value items such as napkins, aprons, or small cloth scarves.<sup>63</sup> It is evident that it is impossible for a study about preindustrial consumption to not consider expenditures for those objects that could represent a reserve of value and that could contribute to the capital formation of the household. The risk is to discard too many expenses from the analysis and thus undermine the quality of the results.

Therefore, we created a classification system that considers these expenses as well as others that the COICOP system does not take into account, such as direct taxes, because they are not considered part of household consumption.

The new classification goes beyond COICOP, from an analysis ‘limited’ to consumption expenditures to an analysis of the full range of household expenditures. Given these characteristics, the new classification system was named Historical Classification of Household Expenditure according to Purpose (HiCHEP).

The COICOP tripartite structure has been maintained in HiCHEP, but the number of divisions has increased significantly from 12 to 16. We worked particularly on the twelfth division of COICOP, titled ‘Miscellaneous goods and services’, which was considered too broad and general. The division was split into smaller categories that reflect more homogeneous information (see Table 1). In this way, even division-level analysis can be immediately read without resorting to detailed analysis (groups and classes) to obtain information about spending categories such as ‘Social protection’ or ‘Financial services’, for instance.

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<sup>62</sup> ALLERSTON Patricia, *Clothing and early modern Venetian society*, “Continuity and Change”, n. 15.3, 2000, pp. 367-390; MULDREW Craig, *Interpreting the market. The ethics of credit and community relations in early modern England*, “Social History”, n. 18, 1993, pp. 163-183; WELCH Evelyn, *Sites of consumption in early modern Europe*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, edited by Frank Trentmann, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 244-249.

<sup>63</sup> POMPERMAIER Matteo, *Women and credit in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Venice. A preliminary analysis*, forthcoming.

<b>COICOP</b>	<b>HiCHEP</b>
1 Food and non-alcoholic beverages	1 Food and non-alcoholic beverages
2 Alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and narcotics	2 Alcoholic beverages and tobacco
3 Clothing and footwear	3 Clothing and footwear
4 Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels	4 Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock, and fuels
5 Furnishings, household equipment, and routine household maintenance	5 Furnishings, household equipment, and services
6 Health	6 Health
7 Transport	7 Transport
8 Communication	8 Communication
9 Recreation and culture	9 Recreation and culture
10 Education	10 Education
11 Restaurants and hotels	11 Catering and accommodation services
12 Miscellaneous goods and services	12 Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services
	13 Social protection and support services
	14 Financial and legal services
	15 Taxes and fees
	16 Unidentifiable expenses

*Table 1. Differences between COICOP and HiCHEP classification systems at division level.*

We have worked not only at the division level but also undertaken a significant review and reclassification of groups and classes. On the one hand, we have eliminated all items that are anachronistic to the preindustrial age, such as electricity, gas, motor vehicles, telephone equipment, and computers. On the other hand, new groups and classes have been created by combining or dividing old COICOP categories, while others have been created *ex novo*.

The result is a system that is well suited to the needs of a study on the preindustrial period and that consists of 16 divisions, 48 groups, and 110 classes (to which 16

sub-classes have been added to provide further detail in the analysis of textile products). The final structure of HiCHEP is presented in Table 2.

The first two divisions are mainly devoted to food and beverages. In the first division, we find 'Food and non-alcoholic beverages'. All foods and beverages find a precise and detailed placement according to their characteristics, but it is interesting to point out how a special group for 'Non-alcoholic foods and beverages used as a means of payment' has been prepared. The second division is dedicated to 'Alcoholic beverages and tobacco'. Here the number of subcategories is obviously limited, but a dedicated group covering 'Alcoholic beverages and tobacco products used as a means of payment' reflects the fact that in this era payments in kind are a widespread phenomenon with great economic importance, and it is important to adequately highlight this practice.

The third division catalogues the cost of clothing and footwear. According to some authors, during the last two centuries of the early modern period a new culture of consumption would make an appearance in Europe. One of the main features of this process would be the spread of luxury goods, particularly textiles, across ever-larger layers of the population. In other words, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, linen and hemp would make room for silk and cotton. To investigate this phenomenon, eight sub-classes have been created to catalogue the different materials for garments and textiles that can be traced inside household budgets.

Clothes and textiles, both in luxury materials and in less precious fabrics, had a rather significant economic value. In this era, a garment such as a dress had a very long life, circulating from person to person after being adequately repaired and modified. One of the economic circuits that contributed the most to the transfer of clothes among people was certainly the second-hand market.<sup>64</sup> The importance of this circuit in the preindustrial age has been duly emphasized by introducing special

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<sup>64</sup> ALLERSTON Patricia, *L'abito usato*, in *Annali della storia d'Italia. La moda*, edited by Carlo Marco Belfanti and Fabio Giusberti, Turin, Einaudi, 2003, pp. 561-581; FONTAINE Laurence, *The exchange of second-hand goods between survival strategies and "business" in eighteenth century Paris*, in *Alternative exchanges*, edited by Laurence Fontaine, New York-Oxford, Berghahn, 2008, pp. 97-114.

classes dedicated to used fabrics and clothing materials, used garments and accessories, and used shoes and footwear.

In Division 4, we find the expenses for housing and for residential maintenance. Compared to COICOP, where only house rent and maintenance costs are considered, our system also includes those for the construction of new homes or other premises (a workshop, for instance). This division also catalogues the expenses in fuel for domestic heating and lighting, and those in livestock and seeds. The latter were included in this division because they were considered an investment aimed to improve the quality and value of the property, so they can be considered as restoration work.

Division 4 deals with housing as real estate, while Division 5 deals with how homes are filled and managed. This division includes all the expenses for furniture, furnishings, household textiles, glassware, tableware, and kitchenware; it also includes the salaries of the domestic staff and, in general, of all those who are engaged in the ordinary maintenance of the household.

Division 6 compiles the costs for health, and hence for pharmaceutical products, consultations with doctors and surgeons (and sometimes barbers), and hospital services.

Division 7 deals with transport costs, while Division 8 considers the expenses on communication services: in the former are the costs of purchasing new means of transport, their maintenance, and transport services (both for people and for goods); and in the latter we find payments for the delivery of letters and parcels.

In addition to the growing popularity of luxury goods among the population, one of the main and most interesting aspects of the transition to the modern consumption pattern is given by the birth of leisure culture. Starting with the seventeenth century, spending increases on goods and services for fun and leisure. The purpose of Division 9 is to describe these phenomena. Indeed, this category covers expenditures on musical instruments, games, toys, books, and newspapers, as well as the cost of tickets for theatre, concerts, and lotteries. Again, in this division we find a group dedicated to the expenses for holidays (extremely famous, for instance, are the periods of *villeggiatura* for the Venetian aristocracy).

Division 10 deals with all the expenditures on education, such as teachers, tutors, and mentors, and Division 11 gathers expenses for catering and accommodation services.

In Division 12 there is space for personal care appliances and articles, personal effects, and miscellaneous services. Among others, we have a class for jewels and one for clocks and watches—objects of absolute value in the early modern period. This division also includes the expenses incurred for funeral services.

In Division 13 we find the expenses incurred for social protection and support for family and non-family members in every form, such as monthly revenues, gratuities, and gifts.

Division 14 collects all the financial and legal expenses faced by the family. Here we find the sums invested in government debt securities, investments in commercial companies, and land purchases, but also the money spent to redeem a pawn. We then have a class dedicated to cataloguing legal expenses incurred during trials and legal proceedings, and one that collects expenses for hiring an attorney or for consultations with lawyers.

Division 15 is dedicated to taxes and fees. Here we consider tithes, income taxes, and fees paid for membership in a guild, confraternity, or another secular or religious group.

Finally, it was necessary to create a sixteenth division to collect unidentifiable costs. These are expenses that cannot be assigned to a specific category because of a too vague and generic description or because of some problem in the primary source (an unreadable text, an expenditure copied only partially by the scribe).

Although the HiCHEP system has been conceived, implemented, and tested to be used on budgets collected by the *Petizion*, it was not meant as a local system, suitable only for the Venetian context. Our intent was to create a system that can be easily used for the analysis of household budgets of other regions in Italy and in Europe. That is why we have tried to maintain, as with the COICOP system, a structure that is as general as possible. The hope is that this can encourage and facilitate other scholars in their use of family budgets to study consumption in the early modern period. In this way, we could have a more comprehensive and exhaustive picture of material living standards before the onset of the industrial

revolution, giving new blood to one of the most debated and intriguing topics in economic history to have surfaced in recent decades.

Table 2. Complete structure of HiCHEP classification system.

<p><b>HiCHEP</b>  <b>Historical Classification of Household Expenditure according to Purpose</b><sup>130</sup></p> <p><b>01 – FOOD AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES</b></p> <p><b>01.1 – FOOD</b></p> <p><b>01.1.1 – Bread, cereals, and farinaceous-based products (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.2 – Meat (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.3 – Fish and seafood (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.4 – Milk, cheese, and eggs (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.5 – Oils and fats (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.6 – Fruit (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.7 – Vegetables (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.8 – Sugar, chocolate, ice creams, and sorbets (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.9 – Honey, jam, and confectionery (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.10 – Salt and spices (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.1.11 – Food products n.e.c.</b><sup>131</sup> <b>(ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.2 – NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES</b></p> <p><b>01.2.1 – Coffee, tea, and cocoa (ND)</b></p>	<p><b>01.2.2 – Water, fruit, and vegetable juices (ND)</b></p> <p><b>01.3 – FOOD AND NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES USED AS A MEANS OF PAYMENT</b></p> <p><b>01.3.0 – Food and non-alcoholic beverages used as a means of payment (ND)</b></p> <p><b>02 – ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND TOBACCO</b></p> <p><b>02.1 – ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES</b></p> <p><b>02.1.1 – Wine (ND)</b></p> <p><b>02.1.2 – Spirits (ND)</b></p> <p><b>02.1.3 – Beer (ND)</b></p> <p><b>02.2 – TOBACCO</b></p> <p><b>02.2.0 – Tobacco (ND)</b></p> <p><b>03 – CLOTHING</b></p> <p><b>03.1 – CLOTHING</b></p> <p><b>03.1.1 – Fabrics and clothing materials (SD)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 03.1.1/H: linen and hemp</li> <li>• 03.1.1/W: wool</li> <li>• 03.1.1/S: silk</li> <li>• 03.1.1/C: cotton</li> <li>• 03.1.1/M: mixed-fibre fabric</li> <li>• 03.1.1/L: leather</li> </ul>
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<sup>130</sup> D= durable, ND= non-durable, SD= semi-durable, S= service.

<sup>131</sup> Not Elsewhere Classified.



- 03.1.1/F: fur
- 03.1.1/X: other

### **03.1.2 – Garments (SD)**

- 03.1.2/H: linen and hemp
- 03.1.2/W: wool
- 03.1.2/S: silk
- 03.1.2/C: cotton
- 03.1.2/M: mixed-fibre fabric
- 03.1.2/L: leather
- 03.1.2/F: fur
- 03.1.2/X: other

### **03.1.3 – Other articles of clothing and accessories (SD)**

### **03.1.4 – Decorations for garments (SD)**

### **03.1.5 – Making of clothing (S)**

### **03.1.6 – Cleaning and repair of clothing (S)**

### **03.1.7 – Used fabrics, clothing material, and garments (SD)**

### **03.1.8 – Used accessories and decorations for garments (SD)**

## **03.2 – FOOTWEAR**

### **03.2.1 – Shoes and footwear (SD)**

### **03.2.2 – Decorations for footwear (SD)**

### **03.2.3 – Making and repair of footwear (S)**

### **03.2.4 – Used shoes, footwear, and decorations for footwear (SD)**

### **03.2.5 – Used decorations for footwear (SD)**

## **04 – HOUSING, MAINTENANCE OF THE DWELLING, LIVESTOCK, AND FUELS**

### **04.1 – RENTALS FOR HOUSING**

#### **04.1.1 – Rentals paid by tenants for their main residence (S)**

#### **04.1.2 – Other rentals (S)**

### **04.2 – BUILDING, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR OF THE DWELLING**

#### **04.2.1 – Materials for the building, maintenance, and repair of the main residence (D)**

#### **04.2.2 – Materials for the building, maintenance, and repair of secondary residences or of workshops (D)**

#### **04.2.3 – Materials for the building, maintenance, and repair of other properties (D)**

#### **04.2.4 – Services for the building, maintenance, and repair of the main residence (S)**

#### **04.2.5 – Services for the building, maintenance, and repair of secondary residences or of workshops (S)**

#### **04.2.6 – Services for the building, maintenance, and repair of other properties (S)**

### **04.3 – FUELS**

#### **04.3.1 – Liquid fuels (ND)**

#### **04.3.2 – Solid fuels (ND)**

### **04.4 – LIVESTOCK**

#### **04.4.1 – Livestock for the household (ND)**

**04.4.2 – Livestock not for the household (ND)**

**05 – FURNISHINGS, HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT, AND SERVICES**

**05.1 – FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS, FLOOR COVERINGS, WALL COVERINGS, AND WORKS OF ARTS**

**05.1.1 – Furniture and furnishings (D)**

**05.1.2 – Carpets and other floor coverings (D)**

**05.1.3 – Wall coverings (D)**

**05.1.4 – Works of art (D)**

**05.1.5 – Repair of furniture, furnishings, floor coverings, wall coverings, and restorations of works of art (S)**

**05.2 – HOUSEHOLD TEXTILES**

**05.2.0 – Household textiles (SD)**

**05.3 – GLASSWARE, TABLEWARE, AND HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS**

**05.3.1 – Glassware, tableware, silverware, and household utensils (SD)**

**05.3.2 – Kitchen utensils (SD)**

**05.4 – TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT FOR HOUSE AND GARDEN**

**05.4.1 – Tools and equipment for house (SD)**

**05.4.2 – Tools and equipment for garden (SD)**

**05.5 – GOODS AND SERVICES FOR HOUSEHOLD MAINTENANCE**

**05.5.1 – Non-durable household goods (ND)**

**05.5.2 – Domestic and household services (S)**

**06 – HEALTH**

**06.1 – MEDICAL PRODUCTS, APPLIANCES, AND EQUIPMENT**

**06.1.0 – Pharmaceutical and other medical products (ND)**

**06.2 – OUTPATIENT SERVICES**

**06.2.0 – Medical services (S)**

**06.3 – HOSPITAL SERVICES**

**06.3.0 – Hospital services (S)**

**07 – TRANSPORT**

**07.1 – PURCHASE OF MODES OF TRANSPORT**

**07.1.1 – Horses and ponies (D)**

**07.1.2 – Animal-drawn vehicles (D)**

**07.1.3 – Boats and ships (D)**

**07.2 – OPERATION OF PERSONAL TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT**

**07.2.1 – Spare parts and accessories for personal transport equipment (SD)**

**07.2.2 – Maintenance and repair of personal transport equipment (S)**

**07.3 – TRANSPORT SERVICES**

**07.3.1 – Passenger transport by road (S)**

**07.3.2 – Passenger transport by sea and inland waterway (S)**

**07.3.3 – Combined passenger transport (S)**

**07.3.4 – Other transport services (S)**

**08 – COMMUNICATION**

**08.1 – POSTAL SERVICES**

**08.1.0 – Postal services (S)**

**09 – RECREATION AND CULTURE**

**09.1 – MAJOR DURABLES FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE**

**09.1.1 – Music instruments (D)**

**09.1.2 – Durables for indoor recreation (D)**

**09.1.3 – Maintenance and repair of major durables for recreation and culture (S)**

**09.2 – RECREATIONAL ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT**

**09.2.1 – Games, toys, and hobbies (SD)**

**09.2.2 – Gardens, plants, and flowers (ND)**

**09.3 – PETS**

**09.3.0 – Pets (ND)**  
Pets.

**09.4 – RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

**09.4.1 – Cultural services (S)**

**09.4.2 – Games of chance (S)**

**09.5 – BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS, AND STATIONERY**

**09.5.1 – Books (SD)**

**09.5.2 – Newspapers (ND)**

**09.5.3 – Miscellaneous printed matter (SD)**

**09.5.4 – Stationery (ND)**

**09.6 – HOLIDAYS**

**09.6.0 – Holidays (S)**

**10 – EDUCATION**

**10.1 – EDUCATION**

**10.1.0 – Education (S)**

**11 – CATERING AND ACCOMODATION SERVICES**

**11.1 – CATERING SERVICES**

**11.1.0 – Inns, taverns, cafés, and the like (S)**

**11.2 – ACCOMMODATION SERVICES**

**11.2.0 – Accommodation services (S)**

**12 – PERSONAL CARE AND EFFECTS, AND MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES**

**12.1 – PERSONAL CARE**

**12.1.1 – Hairdressers and barbers (S)**

**12.1.2 – Appliances and articles for personal care (ND)**

**12.2 – PROSTITUTION**

**12.2.0 – Prostitution (S)**

**12.3 – PERSONAL EFFECTS**

**12.3.1 – Jewellery (SD)**

**12.3.2 – Clocks and watches (SD)**

**12.3.3 – Objects related to the consumption of tobacco (SD)**

**12.3.4 – Other personal effects n.e.c. (SD)**

**12.4 – FUNERAL EXPENSES AND REQUIEM MASSES**

**12.4.1 – Funerary articles and expenditures for the funeral rite (SD)**

**12.4.2 – Requiem masses (S)**

**13 – SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

**13.1 – SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO FAMILY MEMBERS**

**13.1.0 – Social protection and support**

**13.2 – SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO NON-FAMILY MEMBERS**

**13.2.0 – Social protection and support services to non-family members (S)**

**14 – FINANCIAL AND LEGAL SERVICES**

**14.1 – INVESTMENTS**

**14.1.1 – Investments in public debt or capital (S)**

**14.1.2 – Investments in private capital (S)**

**14.2 – INTEREST**

**14.2.1 – Interest paid on public debts (S)**

**14.2.2 – Interest paid on private debts (S)**

**14.3 – PAWNS**

**14.3.0 – Expenditures paid for the redemption of a pawn (S)**

**14.4 – INSURANCE SERVICES**

**14.4.1 – Business insurance (S)**

**14.4.2 – Property insurance (S)**

**14.4.3 – Life insurance (S)**

**14.5 – LEGAL SERVICES**

**14.5.1 – Trials, legal proceedings, and other legal services (S)**

**14.5.2 – Hiring of an attorney or consultations with lawyers or legal experts (S)**

**15 – TAXES AND FEES**

**15.1 – TITHES AND INCOME TAXES**

**15.1.0 – Tithes and income taxes (S)**

**15.2 – FEES AND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN A GUILD, CONFRATERNITY, ETC.**

**15.2.0 – Fees and contributions for membership in a guild, confraternity, etc. (S)**

**16 – UNIDENTIFIABLE EXPENSES**

**16.1 – UNIDENTIFIABLE EXPENSES**

**16.1.0 – Unidentifiable expenses**



### III

#### **A quantitative approach to Venetian consumption**

The next pages will be devoted to the quantitative analysis of the data we obtained through household budgets of our sample. First, the database created using the HiCHEP system will be maximally exploited to provide both a general analysis at the division level and a more detailed investigation at the group and class levels. The former is useful to appreciate the more general and broad movements in consumer spending (and consumer choices), while the latter permits close observation of details that may reveal more extensive and articulated socioeconomic phenomena. The quantitative approach to budgets will not be limited to the analysis of the outputs obtained through HiCHEP. Budgets will be processed with the aim of extracting all data that can elucidate trends in income and consumption inequality, going far beyond the analysis of spending. Furthermore, where possible, analyses carried out through household budgets are integrated with empirical evidence obtained through other unpublished archival sources, in order to provide a more accurate and detailed picture of material living conditions in Venice during the last two centuries of the early modern period.

#### **Prices**

Before proceeding with the analysis of trends in consumption patterns between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is necessary to look at the trend of prices over the same period. A good price index to be used as a deflator for nominal prices is a necessary tool for a proper analysis of expenditures in the long run. If we divide the value of a nominal price by the value of the price index calculated over the same time period, we obtain the value of that expense in real terms, which is purified from the effect of inflation.

It is important to note that for an accurate and robust analysis it would be optimal to use a consumer price index (CPI) that uses data for goods and services which are representative of the current consumption behaviour of a household. However, building a basket of products to use as a deflator is not a simple operation. First, we need extensive price information; data must cover a wide variety of products and, if we want to build an index able to show trends in the medium to long term, the price series must be continuous. In addition, it would be necessary to have data on consumption patterns over time to adapt the consumption basket, if necessary, to new habits and new behaviours. Although some of these issues have been judged by some authors as “minor”<sup>1</sup> and analyses using basket-based indices have been more frequent in recent years,<sup>2</sup> the construction of a CPI characterised by all these features is still quite difficult for early modern economies because of the lack of data.

For the Venetian case this operation is rather hard. In fact, price data for the *Serenissima* in early modern period are quite scarce. Even if the field of Venetian studies has commanded attention from some of the most influential economic historians of the last century,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ALLEN Robert C., *The great divergence in european wages and prices from the Middle Ages to the First World War*, “Explorations in Economic History”, n. 38, 2001, p. 420.

<sup>2</sup> ALLEN Robert C. and WEISDORF Jacob L., *Was there an ‘industrious revolution’ before the industrial revolution? An empirical exercise for England, c. 1300–1830*, “Economic History Review”, n. 64.3, 2011, pp. 715-729; CALDERON FERNANDEZ Andres, GARCIA MONTERO Hector, and LLOPIS AGELAN Enrique, *New research guidelines for living standards, consumer baskets, and prices in Madrid and Mexico*, in *I prezzi delle cose nell’età preindustriale*, Florence, Firenze University Press, 2017, pp. 333-363; FEDERICO Giovanni, NUVOLARI Alessandro, and VASTA Michelangelo, *The origins of the Italian regional divide. Evidence from real wages, 1861–1913*, “Quaderni del Dipartimento di Economia e Statistica—Università di Siena”, n. 748, 2017, pp. 1-38; PFISTER Ulrich, *The timing and pattern of real wage difference in pre-industrial Europe: evidence from Germany, c. 1500–1850*, “Economic History Review”, n. 70.3, 2017, pp. 701-729; SCHEIDEL Walter, *Real wages in early economies. Evidence for living standards from 1800 BCE to 1300 CE*, “Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient”, n. 53.3, 2010, pp. 425-462;

<sup>3</sup> Let us think of the strong bond that bound the waters of the lagoon to some of the founding fathers of European economic history such as Gino Luzzatto and Fernand Braudel.



the interest in prices has never been overwhelming (and the same thing can be said for wages, the other primary macroeconomic indicator).<sup>4</sup> To this must be added the scholarly predilection, at least until the 1970s, for the study of the ‘winning’ Venice, and therefore for the medieval, maritime, Levant-projected city—in short, Venice before the Battle of Agnadello (1509).<sup>5</sup>

Limited by the availability of sources, we must therefore use a classical deflator: the price of wheat. In absence of information about other prices, data about wheat, “the outstanding product of the pre-industrial economies in Europe”,<sup>6</sup> are considered as a good approximation. While it is true that people do not eat grain, per se, it is also true that wheat is necessary to bake bread. The latter was the basis of the diet of many families during the *Ancien Régime*; in Italy, between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the consumption of bread (and cereals) surpassed 500 grams per capita per day.<sup>7</sup>

For the analysis of wheat prices in the Venetian city market, it is necessary to rely on the figures collected by Giuseppe Toaldo at the end of the eighteenth century. Toaldo, priest and professor of astronomy at the University of Padua, published between 1773 and 1798 an astral-meteorological journal in which, in addition to the calendar of the current year, considerable space was devoted to meteorological observations and various astronomical news.<sup>8</sup> He was in fact convinced that a good

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<sup>4</sup> For an overview on the few available data on wages see: PEZZOLO Luciano, *Il fisco dei veneziani. Finanza pubblica ed economia tra XV e XVII secolo*, Sommacampagna, Cierre, 2003, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup> The Battle of Agnadello represented a watershed in the history of the *Serenissima*. After this defeat, Venetian aspirations to the dominion of Italy collapsed, and the republic was severely weakened in the international political, military, and commercial context. For an overview: GALASSO Giuseppe, *Il quadro internazionale*, in *L'Europa e la Serenissima. La svolta del 1509*, edited by Giuseppe Gullino, Venice, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti, 2011, pp. 3-18.

<sup>6</sup> BRAUDEL Fernand and SPOONER Franck C., *Prices in Europe from 1450 to 1750*, in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe. The economy of the expanding Europe in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, IV, edited by E.E. Rich and C.H. Wilson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 392.

<sup>7</sup> LIVI BACCI Massimo, *Population and nutrition. An essay on European demographic history*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 88-89.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance: TOALDO Giuseppe, *Giornale astro-meteorologico per l'anno 1784*, Rome, Casaletti.

knowledge of meteorology could be of extraordinary help especially for farmers to assist them in their business.<sup>9</sup> In his works, price series were compared with the available meteorological data to show how the continuous, and often violent, fluctuations in the price of foodstuffs were perfectly explained in the oscillations of temperatures, quantity of rain, and humidity levels.<sup>10</sup> Among the various series of prices transcribed by Toaldo, of particular importance are those obtained from the registers of the *Provveditori e Collegio alle Biave*, the Venetian judiciary in charge of the food supply of the city (the so-called *Annona*).<sup>11</sup> Thanks to these transcriptions, we now have the series of wheat prices from 1672 to 1782 collected by the *Provveditori*, whose original records have gone unfortunately been lost.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Completa raccolta di opuscoli, osservazioni, e notizie diverse contenute nei giornali astro-metereologici dall'anno 1773 sino all'anno 1798 del fu signor Abate Giuseppe Toaldo*, vol. I, Venice, Presso Francesco Andreola, 1802, p. xix.

<sup>10</sup> TOALDO Giuseppe, *Della vera influenza degli astri, delle stagioni, e mutazioni di tempo*, Padua, Stamperia del Seminario, 1780.

<sup>11</sup> DA MOSTO Andrea, *L'Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Indice generale, storico, descrittivo ed analitico*, I, Rome, Biblioteca dell'Arte, 1937.

<sup>12</sup> The series has been completed by Jean Georgelin for the period 1783–1796 using data from Udine. For the methodology, see: GEORGELIN Jean, *Venise au siècle des Lumières*, Paris, Mouton, 1978, p. 1049. In that regard, a clarification: both the series of Toaldo and the series of Udine (discussed later) were obtained from the copy of the doctoral dissertation of Georgelin deposited at the Library of the Sorbonne University in Paris. In the version of the same text published in 1978, the complete data are not reported. Georgelin's work is quite famous and debated in the Venetian academic landscape. The merit (or the blame, given the harsh reactions at time) of such renown is due to the questioning of the 'pessimistic' vision of Venetian agriculture in the late early modern period, carried on in those years by illustrious scholars such as Marino Berengo and Daniele Beltrami. They had described the Venetian mainland in a gloomy way: decadent and stagnating economies, landowners not interested in the management of their properties, low agricultural productivity. In contrast, Georgelin identified signs of strong dynamism. For instance, productivity was not lower than that of other areas of continental Europe, and this was possible, according to him, thanks to the contribution of an army of active landowners who with their investments were seeking to further increase their wealth and the value of their assets. The amount and variety of data collected by the author is impressive, so as to occupy an entire volume in the typed version at the Sorbonne Library, and 150 pages of the published version. Even if not always supported by a solid argumentative apparatus, the quality of the observations collected, often the result of research that has been able to skilfully mix public and private archives, seems very good and reliable (net of some gross errors in

However, as Jean Georgelin noted in the 1970s, because we cannot verify the source we need to double the prudence if we want to use it.<sup>13</sup> For this reason, we used the data available for Udine to check the series for Venice. Udine was the capital of the *Patria del Friuli*, the easternmost province of the Venetian mainland. It was a city that in the last two centuries of the early modern age had about 14,000 inhabitants, reaching 15,000 only in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The cereal market in Udine was certainly the most important in the Friuli region, and it had as a supply area the entire plain east of the Tagliamento river. The local magistrates dealing with the *Annona* began to collect weekly data on grain prices in the city market in October 1586 with the aim of controlling the price of bread.<sup>14</sup> This is a particularly complete series, famous for being used by Fernand Braudel and Frank C. Spooner in their (now classic) essay on prices in preindustrial Europe.<sup>15</sup>

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the calculation of rice productivity and some hazardous GDP calculations). For a general overview: PEZZOLO Luciano, *La storia agraria veneta. Risultati, ipotesi, prospettive*, “Archivio Veneto”, n. 142, 2011, pp. 79-110. For comments on the book of Jean Georgelin, see the following reviews: BURKE Peter, “The English Historical Review”, n. 95, 1980, pp. 625–627; GULLINO Giuseppe, “Critica Storica”, n. 17.2, 1980, pp. 314-318; RAPP Richard, “The American Historical Review”, n. 85.4, 1980, pp. 928-929; PULLAN Brian, “The Journal of Modern History”, n. 54.3, 1982, pp. 593-596.

<sup>13</sup> GEORGELIN Jean, *Venise*, p. 252.

<sup>14</sup> FORNASIN Alessio, *Il mercato dei grani di Udine. Indagine per una storia dei prezzi in Friuli (secoli XVI-XVIII)*, “Note di Ricerca del Dipartimento di Scienze Statistiche dell’Università di Udine”, n. 4, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> BRAUDEL Fernand and SPOONER Franck C., *Prices in Europe*, pp. 378–486. Other studies based on this series, apart from that of Georgelin (already cited), are: ROMANO Ruggero, SPOONER Franck C., and TUCCI Ugo, *Le finanze di Udine e della Patria del Friuli all’epoca della dominazione veneziana*, “Memorie Storiche Forogiuliesi”, n. 44, 1960/1961, pp. 237-268; BRESCHI Marco, FORNASIN Alessio, and GONANO Maria Giovanna, *Dinamica dei prezzi e dinamica demografica nel Friuli del Settecento*, in *Prezzi, redditi, popolazioni in Italia. 600 anni (dal secolo XIV al secolo XX)*, edited by Marco Breschi and Paolo Malanima, Udine, Forum, 2002, pp. 61-72.

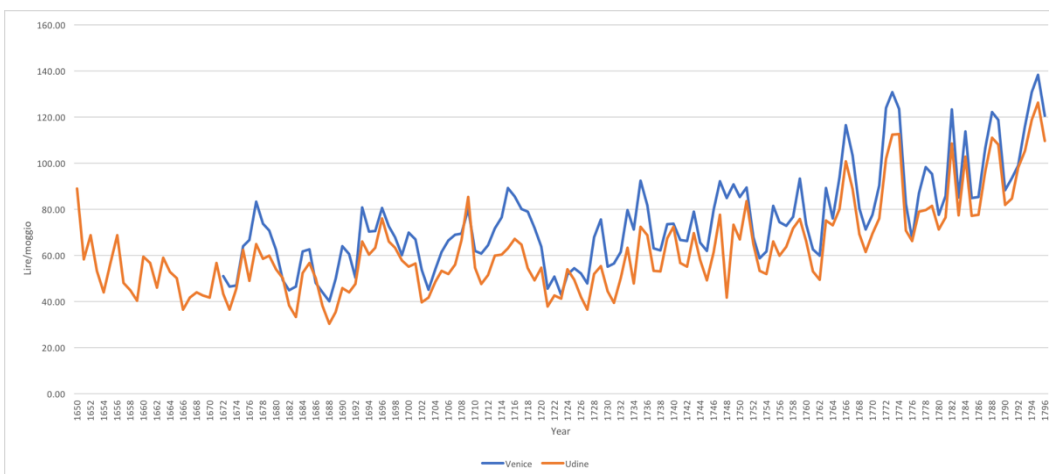


Figure 2. Wheat prices in Udine and Venice from 1650 to 1796. Data are expressed in Venetian Lire per moggio.

If we compare the two series (Figure 2),<sup>16</sup> we can see that they follow a similar path. This impression is confirmed by the correlation between the data, from which we obtain a value of 0.95. After an initial period of decreasing prices that we can appreciate through the data from Udine, both series present a moment of strong turmoil in the trend of wheat prices between the 1670s and the early 1720s. From this moment onwards, an ascending path begins that continues until the end of the century. It is worth noting the strong volatility in the last part of the eighteenth century, beginning in the 1760s. This is one of the reasons that convinced Toaldo to promote the study of meteorology to benefit agriculture and farmers in their search for better production strategies.

How well do data from the *Provveditori e Collegio alle Biave* and from Udine represent wheat prices that can be found in our trust accounts? To find out, we calculated the correlation between these two series and the prices found in the *Giudici di Petizion* records. Unfortunately, among the three decades investigated in this study, only the last one, the 1770s, can provide us with enough data to implement this analysis. The information we have for the 1670s and 1720s is too sparse to be consistent. Based on the data in our possession, covering a time span from 1767 to 1782, the correlation with the Toaldo series for Venice and the data

<sup>16</sup> Additional price charts in logarithmic scale can be found in the appendix.

for Udine is quite high. With respect to the data for Venice the coefficient is 0.86, while with respect to Udine it is 0.85.

To further investigate the validity of our data, we compared them with data available for other areas of Italy. We used data for Lombardy (Figure 3) and Tuscany (Figure 4). The Lombard series is based on the data collected for Milan by Aldo De Maddalena,<sup>17</sup> while the Tuscan series is based on data for Pisa gathered by Paolo Malanima.<sup>18</sup> The highest correlation values are those between the State of Saint Mark and Tuscany: the coefficient is 0.85 in the comparison between Udine and Pisa, and 0.88 between Venice and Pisa.<sup>19</sup> The values we get using Milanese prices are lower. In comparison with Udine, we obtain a result of 0.77, and with respect to Venice, the coefficient is slightly higher, at 0.79.

However, it should be noted that comparison with the Lombard city is possible only for the period 1701–1796,<sup>20</sup> while with Tuscany it is possible

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<sup>17</sup> De MADDALENA Aldo, *Prezzi e mercedi a Milano dal 1701 al 1860*, Milan, Banca Commerciale Italiana, 1974.

<sup>18</sup> MALANIMA Paolo, *Aspetti di mercato e prezzi del grano e della segale a Pisa dal 1548 al 1818*, “Ricerche di Storia Moderna”, n. 1, 1976, pp. 288-327.

<sup>19</sup> As noted by Paolo Malanima, such a high correlation between the various series should not suggest an early form of market integration between Veneto and Tuscany (or between Veneto and Lombardy, given the data), as there was no commercial trade of wheat between the two states. During this period, the grain needed for the sustenance of the Venetian Republic was entirely produced in the territories of the *Serenissima*. External supplies, fundamental for the city in the centuries before, decreased their importance starting with the fifteenth century, the period in which Venice conquered the mainland. At the same time, restrictive regulations were favoured, while exports to foreign countries were forbidden by law. Starting in 1591, copying rules like those applied in other Italian states, even just bringing large quantities of grain near the borders of the state became prohibited. The similarity between various price ranges must therefore be attributed to other factors, for instance, similar productivity levels accompanied by a similar demand structure. See: MALANIMA Paolo, *Pre-Modern European Economy. One Thousand Years (10th-19th Centuries)*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2009, pp. 191-192; DAL PANE Luigi, *La politica annonaria di Venezia*, “Giornale degli Economisti e Annali di Economia”, n. 5-6, 1946, pp. 331-353.

<sup>20</sup> We only have grain data for this period, while for the previous period we have data for bread. See: De MADDALENA Aldo, *Prezzi e aspetti di mercato in Milano durante il secolo XVII*, Milan, Università Commerciale ‘Luigi Bocconi’, 1949.

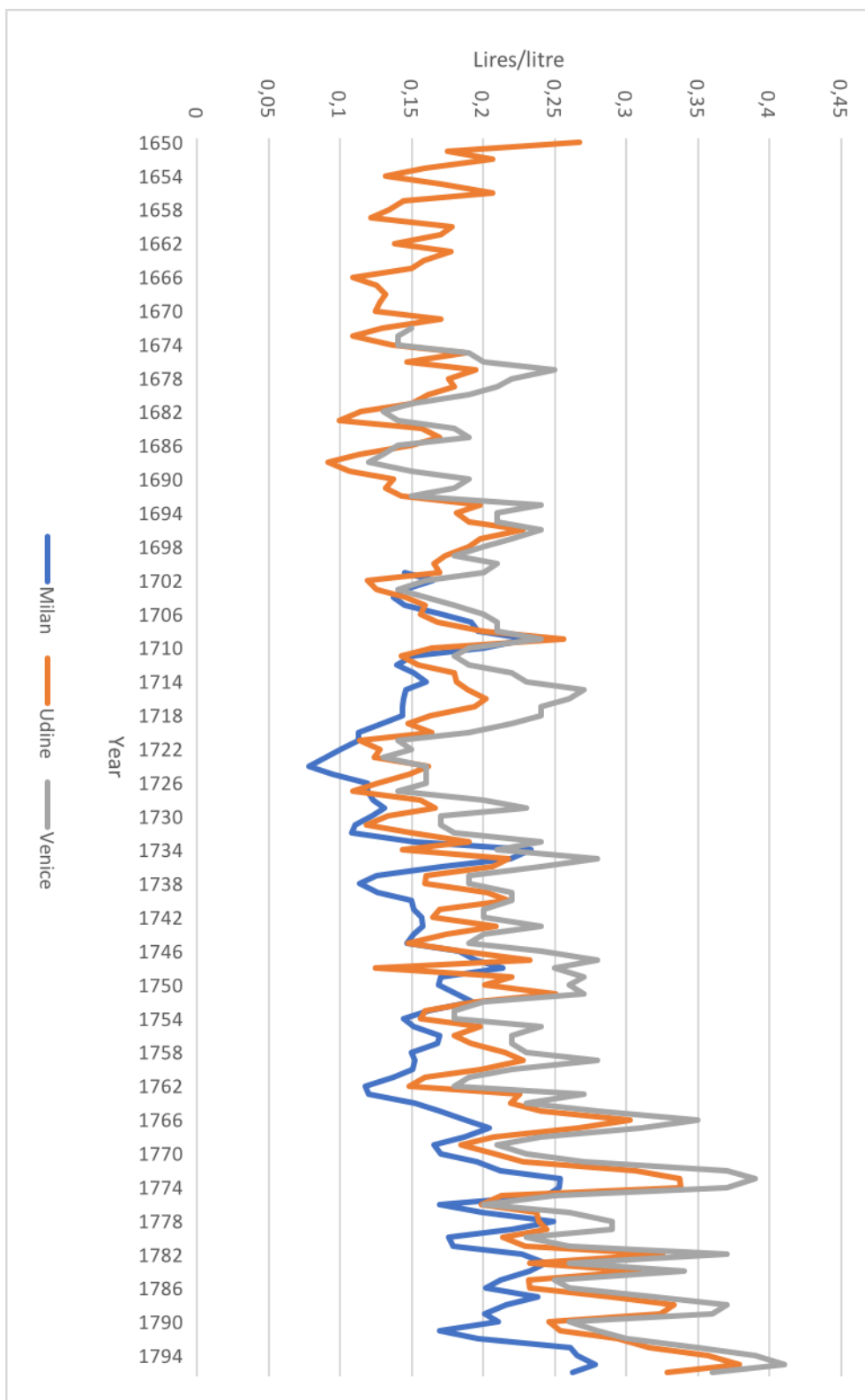


Figure 3. Wheat prices in Milan, Udine, and Venice from 1650 to 1796. Prices in Venetian Lires for Udine and Venice, and Milanese Lires for Milan.

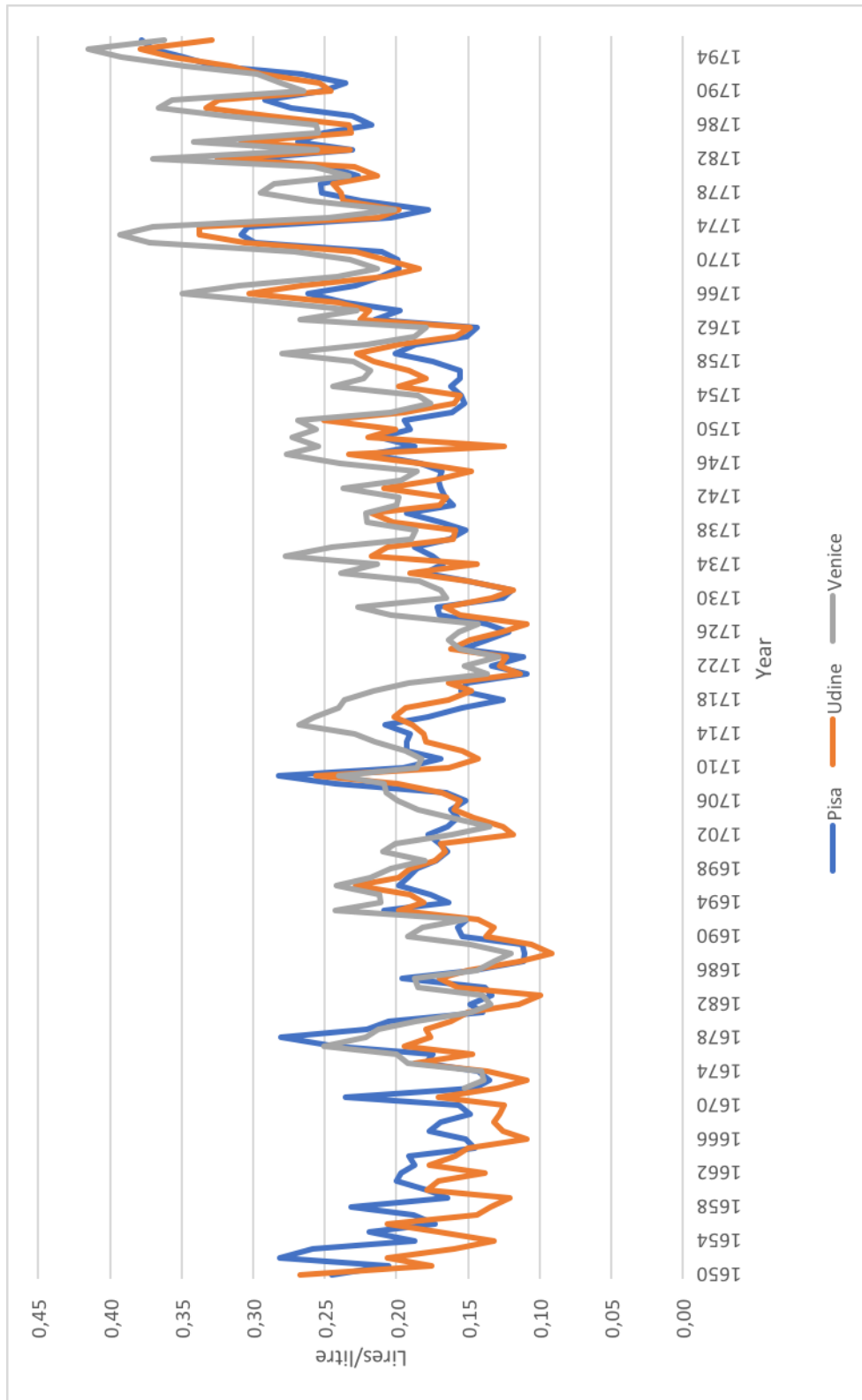


Figure 4. Wheat prices in Pisa, Udine, and Venice from 1650 to 1796. Prices in Venetian Lires for Udine and Venice, and Florentine Lires for Pisa.

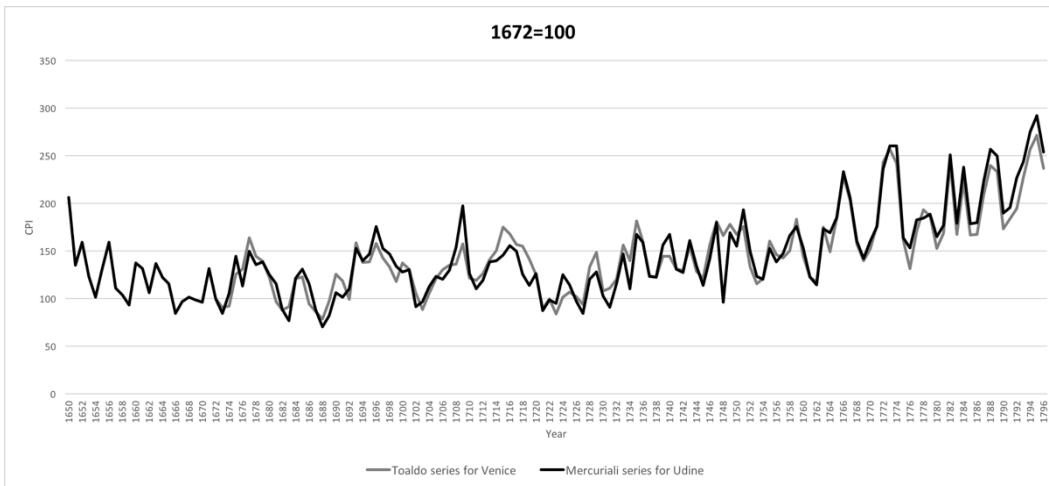


Figure 5. CPI calculated according to wheat prices for Venice and Udine from 1650 to 1796.

to run the analysis for the entire period between 1650 and 1796. The Tuscan and Lombard series also describe the general U-shaped trend shown above: a decline in prices from the 1650s to the 1670s; a phase of turbulence that characterizes the change of century and that lasts until the second decade of the eighteenth century; and finally, a climb to the end of the century. Ultimately, we can be quite optimistic that the two series under review can be useful in building a consumer price index.

### A CPI for the *Serenissima*

Once we have identified and verified the quality of our price data, we can calculate a consumer price index. In this case, we will calculate two, one using the Toaldo series for Venice and another relying on data for Udine. The first step is to choose the base year, the year that serves as a benchmark when comparing with other data. We chose to use as a base the year 1672, the first in which we have both price series. The full values of the calculated CPI can be seen in Figure 5. We have previously seen how between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the prices went through a general ascending parabola. But how much did they change? Calculating the percentage change in CPI between 1672 and 1796, we can see how the prices in these 124 years rose between 136 per cent and 153 per cent, where the first value is



calculated on data from Venice and the second on data from Udine.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the price for a certain quantity of grain over 120 years not only doubled, but it almost cost two and one-half times as much. Does this mean that all consumer prices in Venice and in the Venetian mainland doubled in that period? We cannot give a firm answer to this question due to the lack of quantitative data, but we can advance some reflections based on some ‘impressionist’ data in our possession. Because these documents were created after the death of the breadwinner, among the most frequent expenses in the first phase of each trust are those related to the suffrages that were intended to facilitate a faster passage from purgatory to paradise for the deceased. Around the 1670s, the average price for a suffrage was 1.5 lire. A century later, the average price for a similar mass went up to 1.73 lire—an increase of just over 15 per cent. From the immaterial to the material, stockings were an essential item of clothing, and the expenses for these goods were quite frequent. The fabric with which the stockings were made is not always specified in the source, and for this reason we must limit ourselves to providing some indication of the maximum. In the middle of the seventeenth century, a pair of stockings cost 6 lire on average, while a century later the price had risen to 7.6 lire (approximately 27 per cent increase). The price of shoes, another frequently purchased item, saw a 46 per cent increase during the course of the century, with an average price of 5.6 lire in the seventeenth century and 8.18 lire in the eighteenth century.

These observations seem consistent with those of Patrick O’Brien. In a study on agricultural and industrial price indices in England between 1660 and 1820, the British scholar finds that the inflationary trend in industrial prices was lower than that of agricultural prices. From the 1740s onward, the divergence between the two consumer price indices was particularly marked, with a difference of 100 points around 1800.<sup>22</sup> We can therefore assume that even in Venice a similar situation occurred, although certainly with different figures. In any case, we will return in

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<sup>21</sup> The calculation using nominal prices does not differ from these figures. We obtain a 140 per cent variation between 1672 and 1797 using the data for Venice, while in the same period nominal prices in Udine saw an increase of 153 per cent.

<sup>22</sup> O’BRIEN Patrick, *Agriculture and the home market for the English industry, 1660–1820*, “The English Historical Review”, n. 100, 1985, pp. 773-800, in particular Appendices A and B.

the next pages to the path followed by agricultural and industrial prices and the impact of these differences in material living standards on Venetian households between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Going back to our data, although in any of the examples shown there is a price variation like that observed for wheat, this does not mean that we should completely reject a CPI constructed on grain data. We just need to bear in mind that other goods have had different price trends and that probably through a wheat-based CPI we are analysing patterns of expenditures with a lens that describes the worst-case inflation scenario.

### **Data analyses by divisions**

As shown in the second chapter, the HiCHEP classification system is subdivided into three levels: divisions, groups, and classes. We will start analysing data from the most general categories, the 16 divisions, to appreciate the broader and more general movements in the consumption patterns of early modern Venetian families. We focus first on the percentage of spending for the divisions (Table 3).

It is important to emphasize the different weight of Division 16 (Unidentifiable expenses), which includes all expenses that could not be assigned to a precise category of spending: about 19 per cent for the 1670s, 6 per cent for the 1720s, and 8 per cent for the 1770s. The most accurate decade is the middle one, which unfortunately is also the one for which we have a smaller number of documents. The sample's narrow extent, which is half the size of that available for the seventeenth century and a third of that for the eighteenth century, is thus partially offset by the better quality of the data. In the 1720s, for three families out of seven, Division 16 values are equal to or less than 1 per cent.

DIVISION	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
	<i>n=14</i>	<i>n=7</i>	<i>n=21</i>
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	4.25%	34.91%	8.78%
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	0.76%	2.87%	0.40%
3 - Clothing and footwear	8.23%	18.81%	3.84%
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock, and fuels	3.86%	8.02%	6.70%
5 - Furnishings, household equipment, and services	2.55%	2.91%	1.41%
6 - Health	1.09%	0.92%	0.71%
7 - Transport	1.01%	0.16%	0.73%
8 - Communication	0.09%		0.08%
9 - Recreation and culture	0.08%	0.19%	0.34%
10 - Education	1.42%	2.31%	1.56%
11 - Catering and accommodation services	0.82%	0.00%	0.24%
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services	2.91%	1.70%	1.96%
13 - Social protection and support services	13.54%	3.31%	24.49%
14 - Financial and legal services	12.75%	14.72%	20.17%
15 - Taxes and fees	3.33%	3.18%	5.73%
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	18.94%	6.05%	7.90%

*Table 3. Percentage of expenditures per division during the entire period of the trust. Median values.*

The situation for the 1670s is very different: out of 14 families, only one has a Division 16 value less than 1 per cent, and overall only four are below 10 per cent; at the same time, in three cases we have values above 50 per cent. The decade of the 1770s is relatively homogeneous, where in more than half of the cases we have values ranging between 5 per cent and 12 per cent, and only two (out of 21) are accounts for which more than 50 per cent of the expenses are not uniquely associated with a specific HiCHEP division.

Bearing this in mind, we begin by identifying the three divisions for each period in which the higher proportion of wealth was invested: for the decade of the 1670s these comprise Division 3 (clothing and footwear), 13 (social protection and support services), and Divisions 14 (financial and legal services); for the 1720s, Divisions 1 (food and non-alcoholic beverages) stands out, followed by Divisions 3 and 14; in the 1770s, we have Divisions 1, 13, and 14. In the seventeenth century, Division 1 also ranks highly, and the results of Division 4 are always very important. Overall, these results are not surprising, and they are in line with what we know about the basic structure of early modern consumption, where garments, expenses for the dwelling, and above all food represented the core expenses of a family. What may be surprising is the quite low percentage of food spending during both the 1670s and the 1770s. The reason is certainly not to be found in an exceptional wealth of Venetian families,<sup>23</sup> but in the characteristics of the trust as a legal institution on the one hand, and in the nature of the sources on the other.

First, there is the possibility that expenditures on food are not counted in the books of accounts simply because of a directive by the trustee. In most cases, guardians were close relatives of the beneficiaries. We find mothers, sisters, brothers, children, and uncles. While it is true that the *Petizion* judiciary created a rigid system of rules and controls to prevent trustees from stealing the patrimony of their beneficiaries, it is also true that the intentions of the trust's managers were not

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<sup>23</sup> Let us recall that per Engels Law, spending on food decreases as income increases. Bearing in mind that a seventeenth-century Veronese notary invested at least 50 per cent of its income in food, percentages below 10 per cent as those found here would therefore imply some extremely high levels of wealth. TAGLIAFERRI Amelio, *Consumi e tenore di vita di una famiglia Borghese del '600*, Milan, Giuffrè, 1968.

always bad. It could happen that the guardian decided not to count the expenses for general subsistence, due to the good feelings and the good relationship he had with his relatives. These cases, though present, remain nevertheless limited.<sup>24</sup>

Second, it should be remembered that the documents in our possession are not always detailed, and much information is provided only at the aggregate level and often combining very different items under a single label. Expenses for food and beverages, and sometimes also for clothing expenditures, are often grouped under generic formulas such as “for the pupil’s livelihood”, “for his/her needs”, “for his/her occurrences”, or “for his/her expenses”. Entries like these have been catalogued into Division 13 (social protection and support services), which in fact has significantly high values in the 1670s and the 1770s. The countercheck is that in the 1720s we found high values for Divisions 1, 2, and 3, while a very low one for Division 13. It can be argued that Division 13 includes social protection and support services for both family members and people who are outside the family and that the expenses for the latter category can raise (and bias) the values of this category. By abandoning for a moment the general analysis, let us consider, for the 1670s and 1770s, the two groups that make up this division: 13.1, dedicated to social protection for household members; and 13.2, dedicated to the support of external members. In all cases in which Division 13 has consistently high values and spending percentages for food, beverage, and clothing are very low, the weight of Group 13.1 is dominant.

It is noteworthy that this is always particularly evident in the documents of noble families,<sup>25</sup> while for non-nobles it only rises in the second half of the eighteenth century (Tables 4 and 5). Why is this? For the accounts of noble families, we can suppose that trustees, having to handle a rather significant number of entries, were

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<sup>24</sup> See for instance: ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conto, 985, c. 2.

<sup>25</sup> It should be emphasized that a part (that we are not able to fully quantify) of the food supply for noble families was based on products produced on the farms of their property in the mainland. However, even taking into account this element, Giuseppe Gullino showed how in the period 1706–1738 the Pisani dal Banco family spent on average 30 per cent of its budget in food. GULLINO Giuseppe, *I Pisani dal Banco e Moretta. Storia di due famiglie veneziane in età moderna e delle loro vicende patrimoniali tra 1705 e 1836*, Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano, 1984, p. 204.

more encouraged to group some expenses to optimize time and space. For spending on food and clothing, categories that are the most frequent, such behaviour seems completely understandable. Due to the large number of items to be processed, behind the aggregation of expenses there could have been the motivation to minimize the possibility of errors. It should also be said that this pattern could reflect the completely opposite purpose: in providing only aggregate data, it might have been easier to mask any fraud on the part of the trustee.

For the eighteenth century, this trend can also be linked to the birth of the general budget in a form that we could call modern. Beginning late in the first half of the eighteenth century, it is possible to trace in the archives an increasing number of budgets written in a more rational and orderly manner, even if they are less detailed. Expenditures and revenues over a given period (usually a year) are grouped into homogeneous macro-categories, marked with a simple and concise description, and followed by the amount paid or received. Although the budgets in this form represent an improvement in accounting procedures,<sup>26</sup> they contribute to worsening the quality of data at the granular level. We now look at spending trends in the long run. Does resource allocation change over time? Unfortunately, we face the problems related to the high incidence of Division 13 in the first and last decade of our sample, with its (highly probable) impact on Divisions 1, 2, and 3. We therefore focus our attention on the remaining divisions, which should not present this bias. We can see a positive and almost continuous trend in Divisions 9, recreation and culture; 14, financial and legal services; and 15, taxes and fees. The increase in spending on cultural and recreational goods and services reflects the vibrancy of the Venetian cultural scene between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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<sup>26</sup> The new technique was so effective and efficient in the eyes of contemporaries that even the budgets relating to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the *Scuola Grande di San Rocco*, an important charity institution of the city, were completely reworked in the second half of the eighteenth century following the new norms.

DIVISION	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
	<i>n=4</i>	<i>n=1</i>	<i>n=8</i>
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	2.66%	0.67%	2.65%
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	0.51%	0.21%	0.68%
3 - Clothing and footwear	4.34%	0.00%	1.89%
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock, and fuels	2.53%	5.05%	6.13%
5 - Furnishings, household equipment, and services	1.47%	3.17%	2.77%
6 - Health	2.61%	0.92%	1.51%
7 - Transport	0.57%	0.20%	0.55%
8 - Communication	0.00%	0.00%	0.07%
9 - Recreation and culture	0.08%	0.00%	1.31%
10 - Education	0.03%	0.00%	0.18%
11 - Catering and accommodation services	0.00%	0.00%	0.75%
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services	3.15%	1.70%	0.58%
13 - Social protection and support services	33.67%	27.42%	27.96%
14 - Financial and legal services	4.16%	14.72%	17.70%
15 - Taxes and fees	3.56%	17.27%	7.01%
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	24.55%	28.66%	5.63%

*Table 4. Percentage of expenditures per division during the entire period of the trust: noble households. Median values.*

DIVISION	Decade		
	1670s <i>n=10</i>	1720s <i>n=6</i>	1770s <i>n=13</i>
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	28.99%	35.21%	8.80%
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	1.78%	4.43%	0.01%
3 - Clothing and footwear	10.45%	20.06%	3.90%
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock, and fuels	6.13%	9.44%	6.99%
5 - Furnishings, household equipment, and services	4.18%	2.65%	1.04%
6 - Health	0.55%	3.30%	0.67%
7 - Transport	1.44%	0.13%	0.91%
8 - Communication	0.09%	0.00%	0.09%
9 - Recreation and culture	0.10%	0.19%	0.05%
10 - Education	1.43%	2.31%	2.99%
11 - Catering and accommodation services	0.82%	0.00%	0.18%
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services	1.93%	1.59%	2.01%
13 - Social protection and support services	2.61%	2.24%	22.74%
14 - Financial and legal services	14.68%	17.79%	20.17%
15 - Taxes and fees	3.33%	2.89%	3.94%
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	12.37%	1.02%	8.65%

*Table 5. Percentage of expenditures per division during the entire period of the trust: non-noble households. Median values.*



We can take as an example the book industry. After a difficult time during the seventeenth century, Venetian printers and publishers were able to resume the ancient splendour by again exporting their products to countries in Europe and the Levant, also taking advantage of the contemporary difficulties of publishers in Lyon and Antwerp.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the hundreds of theatres continued to enjoy great fortunes, and only the depopulation of the city during the Napoleonic age led to signs of crisis in this area.<sup>28</sup> These are certainly positive signals in the Venetian socioeconomic panorama; this advance in ‘leisure culture’ has been seen by some scholars as one of the most important components of the new consumer society that was emerging in the eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup> The increase for expenditures in Division 4 (housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock, and fuels) is significant: these accounted for almost 4 per cent in the 1670s, they increased to 8 per cent in the 1720s, and then they stabilised at the end of the eighteenth century at 6.7 per cent, with an overall gain between the 1670s and the 1770s of 3 per cent. It is curious to note that at the same time of this increase, there were reductions in expenses for furnishings and household appliances (Division 5), as well as those for personal care and effects (Division 12). Considering the increases in spending on leisure and real estate investments, the expectation was that even these categories should reflect an ascending parabola.

At least at the aggregate level, there does not seem to be a general trend in the consumption strategies of the Venetian families. However, isolating data for noble families from those for non-noble families, it is possible to draw some interesting observations, even though changes between one period and another are still limited to a few points or to a few decimals. Nobles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries invest heavily in real estate (Table 4). Expenses in Divisions 4 (housing,

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<sup>27</sup> INFELISE Mario, *Book Publishing and the Circulation of Information*, in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797*, edited by Eric Dursteler, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2013, pp. 658-665.

<sup>28</sup> FINCARDI Marco, *I luoghi delle relazioni sociali*, in *Storia di Venezia. L'Ottocento e il Novecento*, edited by Stuart J. Woolf, Rome, Treccani, 2002, p. 490.

<sup>29</sup> See: PLUMB John H., *The Commercialization of Leisure in Eighteenth-century England*, in *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, edited by Neil Mc Kendrick, John Brewer, and John H. Plumb, London, Europa Publications, 1982, pp. 265-286.

maintenance of the dwelling, livestock, and fuels) and 5 (furnishings, household equipment, and services) significantly increase. This is probably linked to the increase in Division 14 (financial and legal services), where we find the interest paid on the loans obtained to carry out the work or to buy new properties. Also remarkable is the investment in recreation and culture (Division 9), an evident signal of the cultural vivacity of the aristocratic Venetian elites.

Non-nobles, however, do not invest in their properties, but in personal goods and human capital (Table 5). Between the 1670s and 1720s, taking advantage of the downward trend in prices, spending on food and wine (Divisions 1 and 2) increases as well as spending on recreation and culture (Division 9). They even double the expenses for clothing and footwear (Division 3). In the long run, between the 1670s and 1770s, spending on education (Division 10) also doubles, reaching a value of 3 per cent, and spending on financial and legal services rises to 6 per cent (here too, interest on loans has to be repaid).

Until now we have only analysed the percentage of spending in the various categories, but now we want to look at spending in monetary terms, making use of the two CPIs built on wheat prices, discussed earlier. For this kind of analysis, the use of spending data for the entire period of the trust, as we have done so far, would provide unclear information. Data would be strongly biased due to the different average duration of the *Commissarie* in the three decades here analysed. In fact, on average a trust had a duration of 70.5 months in the 1670s, 56.4 months in the 1720s, and 67.8 months in the 1770s. To address this problem and offer a more precise set of figures, we have decided to calculate the amount of expenses in the 16 divisions per month per beneficiary.<sup>30</sup> As before, we have used median data.

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<sup>30</sup> Information about the number of beneficiaries is not always available. Thus, for this calculation, our sample consists of 11 households for the 1670s, seven for the 1720s, and 19 for the 1770s.

Division	1670 n=11			Decade 1720 n=7			1770 n=19		
	Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine	Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine	Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	15.57	13.23	13.17	15.74	13.37	13.31	3.11	2.64	2.63
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	0.18	0.16	0.16						
3 - Clothing and footwear	7.60	6.46	6.43	6.83	5.80	5.78	6.60	5.61	5.58
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock and fuels	3.07	2.61	2.60	4.29	3.65	3.63	24.64	20.94	20.84
5 - Furnishing, household equipment and services	2.31	1.96	1.95	1.06	0.90	0.90	7.97	6.77	6.74
6 - Health	0.00	0.00	0.00				2.52	2.14	2.13
7 - Transport	0.37	0.31	0.31	0.03	0.02	0.02			
8 - Communication									
9 - Recreation and culture	0.09	0.08	0.07						
10 - Education				0.94	0.80	0.80			
11 - Catering and accommodation services									
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services	3.01	2.56	2.54	0.40	0.34	0.34	4.93	4.19	4.17
13 - Social protection and support services	4.60	3.91	3.89	1.08	0.92	0.91	98.66	83.84	83.42
14 - Financial and legal services	8.14	6.92	6.88	5.09	4.32	4.30	58.82	49.99	49.74
15 - Taxes and fees	3.53	3.00	2.98	0.74	0.63	0.63	22.44	19.07	18.97
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	9.13	7.76	7.72	0.94	0.80	0.79	70.38	59.81	59.51
Total amount	57.60	48.95	48.70	37.14	31.56	31.40	300.07	254.99	253.72

Table 6. Value of expenditures in decimal Venetian lire per month per beneficiary. Nominal and deflated data for the entire distribution. For the CPI, 1672=100.

Division	1670 n=4				Decade 1720 n=1				1770 n=7			
	Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine		Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine		Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine	
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	40.86	34.72	34.55		8.09	6.88	6.84		7.46	6.34	6.31	
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	3.13	2.66	2.64		2.57	2.18	2.17					
3 - Clothing and footwear	27.90	23.71	23.59		0.05	0.05	0.04		7.39	6.28	6.25	
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock and fuels	14.59	12.40	12.33		61.21	52.01	51.76		24.64	20.94	20.84	
5 - Furnishing, household equipment and services	27.95	23.75	23.64		38.35	32.59	32.42		23.67	20.11	20.01	
6 - Health					11.16	9.48	9.43		3.74	3.18	3.17	
7 - Transport	6.79	5.77	5.74		2.38	2.02	2.01		0.38	0.32	0.32	
8 - Communication												
9 - Recreation and culture												
10 - Education	0.27	0.23	0.23									
11 - Catering and accommodation services												
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services	33.53	28.49	28.35		20.54	17.46	17.37		4.93	4.19	4.17	
13 - Social protection and support services	500.44	425.25	423.13		332.19	282.28	280.88		135.63	115.25	114.68	
14 - Financial and legal services	42.45	36.07	35.89		178.35	151.55	150.80		48.94	41.59	41.38	
15 - Taxes and fees	41.09	34.91	34.74		209.21	177.78	176.89		27.28	23.19	23.07	
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	239.43	203.45	202.44		347.20	295.04	293.57		70.38	59.81	59.51	
Total amount	978.43	831.43	827.29		1211.30	1029.31	1024.18		354.45	301.20	299.70	

Table 7. Value of expenditures in decimal Venetian lire per month per beneficiary. Nominal and deflated data for noble households. For the CPI, 1672=100.

Division	1670 n=7			Decade 1720 n=6			1770 n=12		
	Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine	Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine	Nominal data	CPI Venice	CPI Udine
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	16.88	14.34	14.27	18.39	15.63	15.55	11.49	9.77	9.72
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	1.53	1.30	1.29				0.18	0.16	0.16
3 - Clothing and footwear	7.36	6.25	6.22	9.04	7.68	7.64	6.12	5.20	5.17
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock and fuels	9.58	8.14	8.10	2.15	1.82	1.81	2.28	1.93	1.93
5 - Furnishing, household equipment and services	3.05	2.59	2.58	0.53	0.45	0.45	2.31	1.96	1.95
6 - Health	0.44	0.37	0.37				0.00	0.00	0.00
7 - Transport	0.79	0.67	0.67	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.37	0.31	0.31
8 - Communication	0.02	0.01	0.01						
9 - Recreation and culture	0.22	0.19	0.18				0.04	0.03	0.03
10 - Education	0.80	0.68	0.68	1.07	0.91	0.91	0.08	0.07	0.07
11 - Catering and accommodation services	0.18	0.15	0.15						
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services	1.75	1.48	1.48	0.21	0.18	0.18	0.98	0.83	0.83
13 - Social protection and support services	5.40	4.59	4.56	1.07	0.91	0.90	0.59	0.50	0.49
14 - Financial and legal services	5.19	4.41	4.39	4.61	3.92	3.90	4.59	3.90	3.88
15 - Taxes and fees	1.24	1.06	1.05	0.37	0.31	0.31	0.15	0.12	0.12
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	4.09	3.47	3.45	0.72	0.61	0.61	2.74	2.33	2.32
<b>Total amount</b>	<b>58.49</b>	<b>49.70</b>	<b>49.45</b>	<b>38.18</b>	<b>32.44</b>	<b>32.28</b>	<b>31.91</b>	<b>27.12</b>	<b>26.98</b>

Table 8. Value of expenditures in decimal Venetian lire per month per beneficiary. Nominal and deflated data for non-noble households. For the CPI, 1672=100.

Through these data, we want to know how the cost for the maintenance of a trust beneficiary changed over time. It is in fact interesting to see if the changes in resource allocation we have just noticed occurred in a context of expenditure expansion, or instead in a context of contraction of the expenses.

We begin with a view on the whole distribution. As we can see from Table 6, both nominal and real data show a similar pattern. We observe a contraction of the monthly per-person spending between the 1670s and the 1720s, and then a significant increase in the second half of the eighteenth century. Looking for instance at the Venetian real prices (i.e., the nominal prices deflated with the CPI based on the Venetian market data), we see how the cost of the monthly provision for a pupil goes from 48.95 lire in the seventeenth century to 31.56 lire in the 1720s, and then jumps to 254.99 lire in the 1770s. In 50 years, between the 1720s and the 1770s, this expense increases eightfold. So the first impression is that there is a substantial enrichment of Venetian society, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century. It should be pointed out that the cost contraction we notice in the 1720s is probably due to the lower presence of noble households in the sample compared to the other two decades, rather than to the downward trend in prices recorded during this period. On the other hand, the jump in the 1770s does not seem distorted by problems of social composition of the sample, which is basically the same as that of the 1670s. In both of these decades, the ratio between noble and non-noble families is 0.6.

We now look at the same figures but dissect the nobles from the non-nobles. The resulting image goes exactly in the opposite direction to what we have just seen through data on the entire distribution. As for the nobility (Table 7), we can see how the monthly spending per beneficiary first rises between the 1670s and the 1720s, and then drops drastically in the 1770s. In the long run, there is a drop of 2.7 times in spending (always indexed for constant values). For the non-nobles (Table 8), however, there is a constantly negative trend, and this leads to expenses at the end of the eighteenth century 1.8 times lower than those of the seventeenth century.

This apparent incongruity reveals an interesting phenomenon. The rise of the median level of expense for the entire distribution and the simultaneous drop for its two social components indicates that a strong polarisation process is underway

within society. Apparently, between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, in both groups the tails of distribution are stretching, making their internal composition more heterogeneous. Thus, society is becoming richer at the price of enhanced differences between the two social bodies.

Changes in resource allocation are therefore happening in the context of strong changes in the economic structure of Venetian society. Thus, it is necessary to ask whether the lack of a net and defined trend in the evolution of consumption strategies is due to this phenomenon of socioeconomic polarisation, or whether there are other elements that must be considered. We will return to this at the end of the chapter.

### **Data analysis by groups and classes**

After having appreciated the broader and more general movements, we can go to a more detailed analysis using the two subdivision levels of the HiCHEP system, namely the 48 groups and 110 classes (to which we have to add the 16 sub-classes used for a more detailed study of the materials of which garments were made).

As indicated above, division-level analyses do not always show net and clear movements in consumption patterns, and sometimes the differences between one decade and the other are limited to a few decimals. At the levels of group (Tables 9, 10, and 11) and class (Appendices 5, 6, and 7), this phenomenon is further accentuated, and this makes an analysis of many of the entries of these two subdivisions a sometimes pedantic exercise.

Division	Group	1670s	Decade 1720s	1770s
		n=12	n=4	n=21
1	01.1 – Food	1.67%	14.92%	7.81%
	01.2 – Non-alcoholic beverages	0.01%		0.03%
	01.3 – Food and non-alcoholic beverages used as a mean of payment	0.43%	0.58%	0.21%
2	02.1 – Alcoholic beverages	0.64%	2.87%	0.40%
	02.2 – Tobacco		0.21%	
	02.3 – Alcoholic beverages and tobacco used as a mean of payment	0.20%	0.00%	
3	03.1 – Clothing	6.83%	8.46%	3.33%
	03.2 – Footwear	0.92%	0.86%	0.24%
4	04.1 – Rentals for housing	1.58%	1.45%	2.35%
	04.2 – Building, maintenance, and repair of the dwelling	3.48%	2.68%	1.80%
	04.3 – Fuels	0.35%	0.36%	0.71%
	04.4 – Livestock	0.19%	3.03%	3.97%
5	05.1 – Furniture and furnishings, floor coverings, wall coverings, works of arts	0.35%	0.17%	0.13%
	05.2 – Household textiles	0.64%		0.21%
	05.3 – Glassware, tableware and household utensils	0.40%		0.03%
	05.4 – Tools and equipment for house and garden	0.27%	0.57%	0.14%
	05.5 – Goods and services for household maintenance	2.29%	2.54%	1.81%
6	06.1 – Medical products, appliances and equipment	1.09%	0.27%	0.34%
	06.2 – Outpatient services	0.11%	0.13%	1.08%
7	07.1 – Purchase of modes of transport	0.09%		0.49%
	07.2 – Operation of personal transport equipment	0.83%	0.17%	0.68%
	07.3 – Transport services	1.01%	0.10%	0.52%
8		0.01%		
	08.1 – Postal services	0.09%		0.08%
9	09.1 – Major durables for recreation and culture	0.07%		0.02%
	09.2 – Recreational items and equipment	0.01%		0.05%
	09.3 – Pets	0.10%		
	09.4 – Recreational and cultural services	0.05%		0.11%
	09.5 – Books, newspapers and stationery	0.07%	0.02%	0.07%
	09.6 – Holidays			2.61%
10	10.1 – Education	0.86%	3.09%	1.56%
11	11.1 – Catering services	3.57%		0.18%
	11.2 – Accommodation services			0.07%
12		0.43%		
	12.1 – Personal care	0.09%	0.02%	0.26%
	12.2 – Prostitution	1.23%		0.53%
	12.3 – Personal effects	0.60%	0.47%	0.33%
13	12.4 – Funeral expenses and requiem masses	2.14%	2.10%	1.20%
	13.1 – Social protection and support services to family members	6.90%	5.52%	16.99%
14	13.2 – Social protection and support services to non-family members	2.35%	0.48%	4.12%
	14.1 – Investments	2.56%	3.92%	2.11%
	14.2 – Interests	0.72%	19.61%	10.97%
	14.3 – Pawns	1.21%	0.98%	2.35%
	14.4 – Insurance services	0.01%		
15	14.5 – Legal services	3.76%	1.71%	4.67%
	15.1 – Tithes and income taxes	2.17%	8.43%	4.95%
	15.2 – Fees and contributes for the membership of a guild, a confraternity, etc.	0.97%	3.47%	0.31%
16	15.3 – Other taxes and fees	0.46%	1.66%	0.52%
	16.1 – Unidentifiable expenses	19.84%	28.66%	7.90%

*Table 9. Percentage of expenditures per group during the entire period of the trust: entire distribution. Median values.*



Division	Group	1670s	Decade 1720s	1770s
		<i>n=4</i>	<i>n=1</i>	<i>n=7</i>
1	01.1 – Food	1.59%	0.08%	2.65%
	01.2 – Non-alcoholic beverages			0.01%
	01.3 – Food and non-alcoholic beverages used as a mean of payment	0.43%	0.58%	0.24%
2	02.1 – Alcoholic beverages	0.31%		0.68%
	02.2 – Tobacco		0.21%	
	02.3 – Alcoholic beverages and tobacco used as a mean of payment	0.20%	0.00%	
3	03.1 – Clothing	3.74%	0.00%	1.86%
	03.2 – Footwear	0.29%		0.10%
4	04.1 – Rentals for housing	0.81%	0.02%	3.56%
	04.2 – Building, maintenance, and repair of the dwelling	3.48%	4.67%	1.54%
	04.3 – Fuels	0.09%	0.36%	0.26%
	04.4 – Livestock	0.19%		
5	05.1 – Furniture and furnishings, floor coverings, wall coverings, works of arts	0.22%	0.17%	0.12%
	05.2 – Household textiles	0.08%		0.29%
	05.3 – Glassware, tableware and household utensils	0.16%		0.03%
	05.4 – Tools and equipment for house and garden	0.03%	0.57%	0.05%
	05.5 – Goods and services for household maintenance	2.24%	2.42%	2.21%
6	06.1 – Medical products, appliances and equipment	2.47%	0.24%	0.26%
	06.2 – Outpatient services	0.15%	0.24%	1.46%
7	07.1 – Purchase of modes of transport	0.09%		
	07.2 – Operation of personal transport equipment	0.09%	0.20%	
	07.3 – Transport services	0.43%	0.00%	0.24%
8	08.1 – Postal services	0.01%		0.07%
9	09.1 – Major durables for recreation and culture			
	09.2 – Recreational items and equipment			
	09.3 – Pets			
	09.4 – Recreational and cultural services	0.02%		0.12%
	09.5 – Books, newspapers and stationery	0.08%		0.05%
	09.6 – Holidays			1.25%
10	10.1 – Education	0.03%		0.18%
11	11.1 – Catering services			0.17%
	11.2 – Accommodation services			0.07%
12	12.1 – Personal care	0.02%	0.02%	0.26%
	12.2 – Prostitution			
	12.3 – Personal effects	1.04%		0.65%
	12.4 – Funeral expenses and requiem masses	2.07%	1.68%	0.42%
13	13.1 – Social protection and support services to family members	13.39%	26.72%	21.42%
	13.2 – Social protection and support services to non-family members	10.01%	0.71%	3.82%
14	14.1 – Investments	0.39%	3.92%	2.19%
	14.2 – Interests	0.72%	8.31%	3.67%
	14.3 – Pawns		0.98%	3.17%
	14.4 – Insurance services			
	14.5 – Legal services	2.64%	1.51%	3.01%
15	15.1 – Tithes and income taxes	3.21%	16.23%	8.24%
	15.2 – Fees and contributes for the membership of a guild, a confraternity, etc.	0.80%		0.13%
	15.3 – Other taxes and fees	0.12%	1.04%	0.68%
16	16.1 – Unidentifiable expenses	24.55%	28.66%	5.09%

*Table 10. Percentage of expenditures per group during the entire period of the trust: noble households. Median values.*

Division	Group	1670s	Decade 1720s	1770s
		n=8	n=3	n=14
1	01.1 – Food	1.76%	29.79%	8.32%
	01.2 – Non-alcoholic beverages	0.01%		0.06%
	01.3 – Food and non-alcoholic beverages used as a mean of payment	1.37%		0.21%
2	02.1 – Alcoholic beverages	1.78%	2.87%	0.01%
	02.2 – Tobacco			
	02.3 – Alcoholic beverages and tobacco used as a mean of payment			
3	03.1 – Clothing	9.26%	14.70%	3.90%
	03.2 – Footwear	1.27%	0.86%	0.50%
4	04.1 – Rentals for housing	2.18%	2.87%	2.35%
	04.2 – Building, maintenance, and repair of the dwelling	2.12%	0.69%	1.85%
	04.3 – Fuels	0.82%		1.32%
	04.4 – Livestock		3.03%	3.97%
5	05.1 – Furniture and furnishings, floor coverings, wall coverings, works of arts	1.09%		0.15%
	05.2 – Household textiles	2.31%		0.21%
	05.3 – Glassware, tableware and household utensils	0.65%		0.02%
	05.4 – Tools and equipment for house and garden	0.60%		0.20%
	05.5 – Goods and services for household maintenance	2.89%	2.65%	1.41%
6	06.1 – Medical products, appliances and equipment	0.55%	0.30%	0.36%
	06.2 – Outpatient services	0.06%	0.01%	0.42%
7	07.1 – Purchase of modes of transport		0.38%	0.49%
	07.2 – Operation of personal transport equipment	1.19%	0.14%	0.68%
	07.3 – Transport services	1.32%	0.12%	0.60%
8	08.1 – Postal services	0.09%		0.09%
9	09.1 – Major durables for recreation and culture	0.07%		0.02%
	09.2 – Recreational items and equipment	0.01%		0.05%
	09.3 – Pets	0.10%		
	09.4 – Recreational and cultural services	0.06%		0.10%
	09.5 – Books, newspapers and stationery	0.05%		0.07%
	09.6 – Holidays			3.97%
10	10.1 – Education	1.43%	3.09%	2.99%
11	11.1 – Catering services	3.57%		0.18%
	11.2 – Accommodation services	0.43%		
12	12.1 – Personal care	0.31%		0.24%
	12.2 – Prostitution	1.23%		0.53%
	12.3 – Personal effects	0.60%	0.47%	0.06%
	12.4 – Funeral expenses and requiem masses	2.98%	2.51%	1.61%
13	13.1 – Social protection and support services to family members	1.09%	4.38%	16.99%
	13.2 – Social protection and support services to non-family members	0.50%	0.26%	5.04%
14	14.1 – Investments	9.11%		2.02%
	14.2 – Interests	1.16%	30.91%	11.86%
	14.3 – Pawns	1.21%		1.93%
	14.4 – Insurance services	0.01%		
	14.5 – Legal services	9.40%	12.79%	5.55%
15	15.1 – Tithes and income taxes	1.79%	0.62%	3.57%
	15.2 – Fees and contributes for the membership of a guild, a confraternity, etc.	2.00%	3.47%	0.42%
	15.3 – Other taxes and fees	0.62%	2.27%	0.52%
16	16.1 – Unidentifiable expenses	15.89%	15.74%	8.38%

*Table 11. Percentage of expenditures per group during the entire period of the trust: non-noble households. Median values.*

Therefore, we focus our attention on the groups and classes of four divisions, to better highlight some phenomena that seem particularly interesting and noticeable. Specifically, we will study the ‘internal movements’ of Divisions 1, 3, 5, and 9. Before starting, it should be remembered that not all documents belonging to our sample could be used for group and class analysis. Expenses in some documents are in fact expressed in a too vague and general way to be catalogued through a code of either group or group and class. For the decade of the 1670s, from a total of 14 households, only 12 were analysed at the group level, and only 11 at the class level. For the 1720s, we initially considered seven families at the division level, and here we look at four at the group level and three at the class level. Finally, all 21 families initially analysed for the 1770s were also studied at the group level, but only 18 were examined also at the class level. A comprehensive summary detailing noble and non-noble families taken under consideration is presented in Table 12. With this premise, we begin to look at what happens in Division 1 (food and non-alcoholic beverages). In the previous pages, we said that this is one of the categories in which, in all three decades here considered, families spend one of the largest portions of their wealth. However, we have also pointed out how the spending percentage is too low to be realistic and how this problem is probably the result of a conflict with Division 13 (social protection and support services). In any case, we can make some consideration on the composition of the food consumption basket, especially for the decades of the 1670s and the 1770s. Not surprisingly, the class of foods in which more money is spent (01.1.1) contains bread, cereals, and flour-based products (and which also include flours). In the 1670s, it accounts for 50 per cent of the budget for food, rising to 62 per cent in the 1770s. In the seventeenth century, expenditures on vegetables (01.1.7) and meat (01.1.2) are also important, with 16 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. A century later the meat virtually disappears (it represents only 3 per cent), and bread is mainly accompanied by milk, cheese, and eggs (01.1.4), which absorb a good 18 per cent of the budget. In the 1770s, the expenditures on oils and other fats (01.1.5) are also important, at 12 per cent.

### Households analysed at division level

Households	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
total	14	7	21
nobles	4	1	8
non-nobles	10	6	13

### Households analysed at group level

Households	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
total	12	4	21
nobles	4	1	8
non-nobles	8	3	13

### Households analysed at class level

Households	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
total	11	3	18
nobles	4	1	6
non-nobles	7	2	12

*Table 12. Number of households analysed at division, group, and class level. Total number and number of households per social group.*

We can notice an apparent impoverishment of the diet of the Venetian population between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Consumption of bread and flours increases, but animal proteins (by flesh) are replaced by those derived from eggs and dairy products. This is probably linked to the rise in prices of agricultural products at that time, and it finds confirmation in recent studies on caloric consumption in the Italian peninsula between the modern and the contemporary age. In the second half of the eighteenth century, when the wheat price is rising, we

witness a worsening of living conditions, which also caused a subsequent marked decrease in the average stature of people.<sup>31</sup>

However, not all of the food that was bought by the household was consumed by its members but a part, albeit small, was used as a means of payment. Looking at the data for the entire distribution, for these expenses our families invest 0.43 per cent of their budget in the 1670s, 0.58 per cent in the 1720s, and 0.21 per cent in the 1770s. It is interesting to note that this trend is exactly opposite to that of agricultural prices, which as we have seen previously is U-shaped. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, taking advantage of the downward course in agricultural prices, some families decided to pay a larger portion of their debts in kind because it was cheaper than in the past. However, as prices rose again, this means of payment became economically inconvenient and therefore its use was greatly reduced. Although the use of payments in kind is often considered to result from a shortage of money circulating in the market, data show that here the use of barter is not the result of need but rather a household expedient: using the cheapest means of payment at a particular moment in time and within a particular economic cycle. The products used as trading commodities are greatly varied. The most popular are cereals and their derivatives, such as wheat, maize, flour, and bread, but we also find oil, cheese, salt, millet, spelt, and grapes. In some cases, pieces of meat, fish, or special foods such as nougats were used to repay larger debts or to make payments to professional figures such as school masters, commercial brokers, or priests.

Among the most exotic foods that are used as a means of payment there is certainly sugar, present in the budgets of both the seventeenth century and the first half of the following century. During the eighteenth century, however, this commodity disappears in favour of two more desired colonial goods—chocolate and coffee, which in this period see a rapid spread in Venetian households. However, the history of coffee and chocolate begins in the lagoon already in the mid-seventeenth

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<sup>31</sup> A'HEARN Brian, *Anthropometric evidence on living standards in Northern Italy, 1730–1860*, “Journal of Economic History”, n. 63.2, 2003, pp. 351-381; MALANIMA Paolo, *Cibo e povertà nell'Italia del Sette e Ottocento*, “RiSES – Ricerche di Storia Economica e Sociale”, n. 1–2, 2015, pp. 15-39.

century. Around 1645, the first European public café opened its doors right in the city of Saint Mark.<sup>32</sup> Soon the consumption of these new hot drinks became so popular and profitable that in the 1670s the republic began to create a monopoly regime for the selling of “coffee, chocolate, and [of] many other carefully-invented drinks”.<sup>33</sup> Throughout the seventeenth century, however, their consumption remained confined to public places such as coffeehouses. The consumption of coffee and chocolate at home in Venice, as noted, dates from the eighteenth century. This is highlighted by the low figures for this class (01.2.1, coffee, tea, and cocoa) and by information from after-death inventories.<sup>34</sup>

Looking for objects related to the consumption of colonial products during this period, we immediately notice that these items are completely absent in the documents of the seventeenth century. Coffee machines, chocolate pots, teaspoons, and coffee and chocolate cups appear only during the eighteenth century, and their diffusion is explosive (Figure 6). In 1740, only 15 per cent of families owned such objects, while in 1780 they were distributed among 60 per cent of houses.

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<sup>32</sup> DEBRY George, *Coffee and health*, Paris, John Libbey Eurotext, 1994, p. 10. Other coffeehouses were open in Oxford in 1650, in London in 1652, in Amsterdam in 1665, in Marseille in 1670, in Paris in 1672, in Hamburg in 1677, and in Stockholm in 1690.

<sup>33</sup> ASV, *Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia*, Seconda Serie, 10, f. 9, c. 1.

<sup>34</sup> We collected these data using about 200 inventories from the archive of the *Giudici del Proprio* judiciary. This was a ‘sister’ judiciary of the one of the *Petizion* (they were in fact two of the six so-called “Palace Courts of Law”), which was dealing mainly with civil cases related to dowry issues. Documents can be found in: ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Inventari e stime, 6; ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Inventari e stime, 34; ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Inventari e stime, 63; ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Inventari e stime, 64; ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Mobili, 83, f. 239-241; ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Mobili, 84, f. 242-243; ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Mobili, 127, f. 337; ASV, *Giudici del Proprio*, Mobili, 148, f. 417.

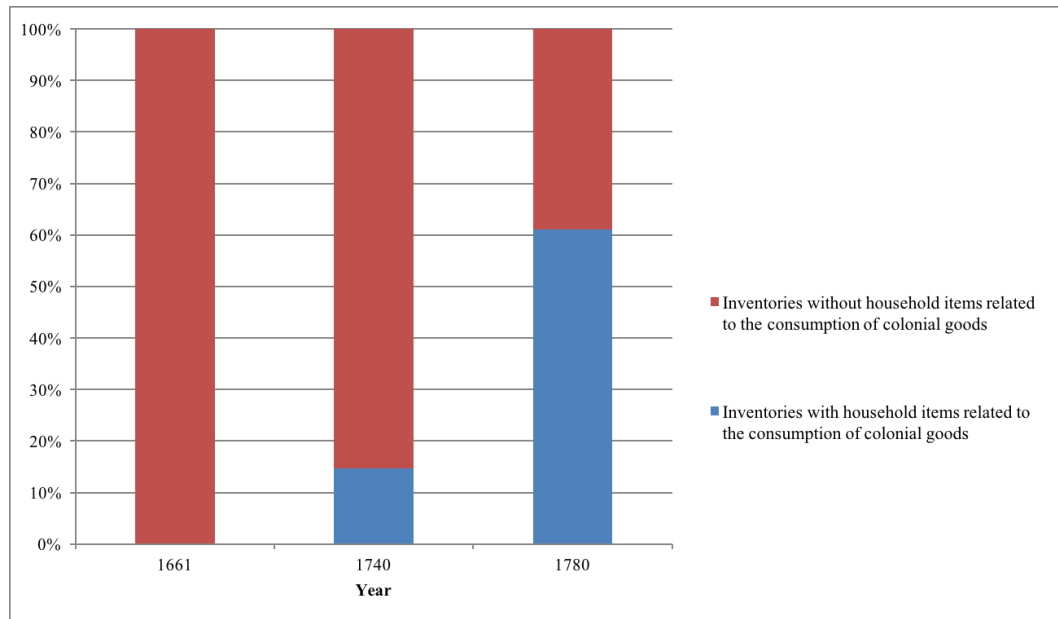


Figure 6. Percentage of Venetian inventories containing household items related to the consumption of colonial goods in 1661, 1740, and 1780.

The relationship between public and private consumption is noteworthy because the trend in Venice seems exactly opposite to the one that we can find in northern Europe. Venice is in fact the first European city to open a coffeehouse, but the diffusion of new colonial hot drinks at home is quite delayed. In contrast, in the cities of the North Atlantic area, the arrival of coffee, chocolate, and tea in houses followed closely the opening of public places for their consumption.<sup>35</sup> The reason for this delay is perhaps to be found in the predilection by the inhabitants of the *Serenissima* for the public space rather than the private one. Therefore, there is a particular form of sociability,<sup>36</sup> which is projected outward from the house rather

<sup>35</sup> WEATHERILL Lorna, *Consumer behaviour & material culture in Britain, 1660–1760*, London-New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 88; McCANTS Anne, *Poor consumers as global consumers. The diffusion of tea and coffee drinking in the eighteenth century*, “Economic History Review”, n. 61, 2008, p. 190; BLONDÉ Bruno and van DAMME Ilja, *Retail growth and consumer changes in a declining urban economy. Antwerp (1650–1750)*, “Economic History Review”, n. 63, 2010, p. 645.

<sup>36</sup> The concept of sociability was conceived by George Simmel and indicates a form of social interaction in which there is “association for its own sake”. SIMMEL George, *The sociology of sociability*, “American Journal of Sociology”, n. 55.3, 1949, pp. 254-261. For a brief overview on recent research on sociability in histories of consumer society and material culture, see: COWAN

than inside it. This is a phenomenon that we can observe while looking also at Divisions 5 (furnishings, household equipment, and services), and 9 (recreation and culture). Looking at the data, we can see how the subcategories that are related in some way to the development of domestic sociality (which we could also define as hospitality) display a negative trend in the long run. Expenditures diminish for furniture (05.1), household textiles (05.2), glassware and tableware (05.4), and major durables for recreation and culture (09.1). On the other hand, we can notice a boom in spending in the group dedicated to holidays (09.6) and a significant increase for the expenditures in recreational and cultural services (09.2). Within the latter, the share for games of chance (09.2.2) remains stable, while the expenses increase for attendance at theatres, opera houses, and concert halls (09.2.1). This feature could be linked to the historic lack of a unique and ‘central’ political and civil share-place in Venice. In comparison with other European countries, in the Republic of Saint Mark there was not a royal court that elites could choose as their favourite place for their social life. This led, in the long run, to the creation of a polycentric system in which meeting spaces for the nobility and their entourage multiplied and spread throughout the city.<sup>37</sup> In the absence of a court, all places became small courts where nobles could entertain their businesses and affairs, both public and private. Probably this had a profound influence on the forms of sociality of other social classes, a sort of trickle-down effect, leading to what we could call a system of ‘spread sociability’, in which every coffeehouse, theatre, and public place became a locus for entertaining a complex network of social relations.<sup>38</sup> This system also survived the death of the republic, so much so that a French traveller of the very beginning of the nineteenth century, Antoine Sergent-Marceau, said that

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Brian, *Public spaces, knowledge, and sociability*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, edited by Frank Trentmann, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 251-266.

<sup>37</sup> FINCARDI Marco, *I luoghi delle relazioni sociali*, pp. 489–490.

<sup>38</sup> In the eighteenth century, we can count in the city of Venice approximately 18 theatres and 200 coffeehouses. DEBRY George, *Coffee and health*, p. 10; DAL BORGIO Michela, *Introduzione*, in *Serenissimi teatri. Attività teatrale a Venezia tra legislazione e spettacolo (secoli XVI-XIX)*, edited by Michela Dal Borgo, Venice, Archivio di Stato, 2012, pp. 3-4.



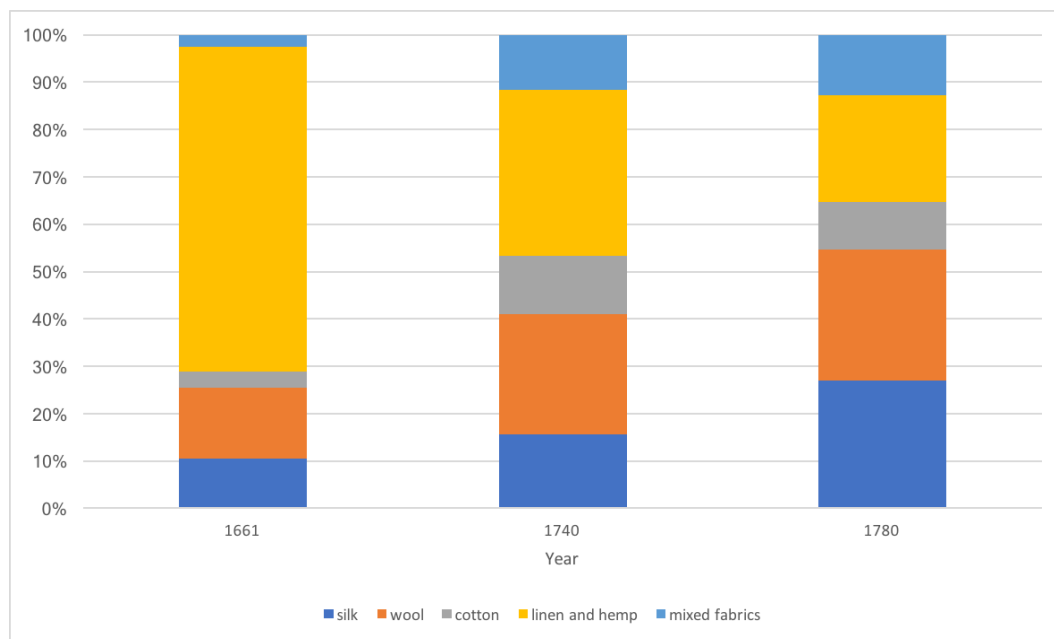
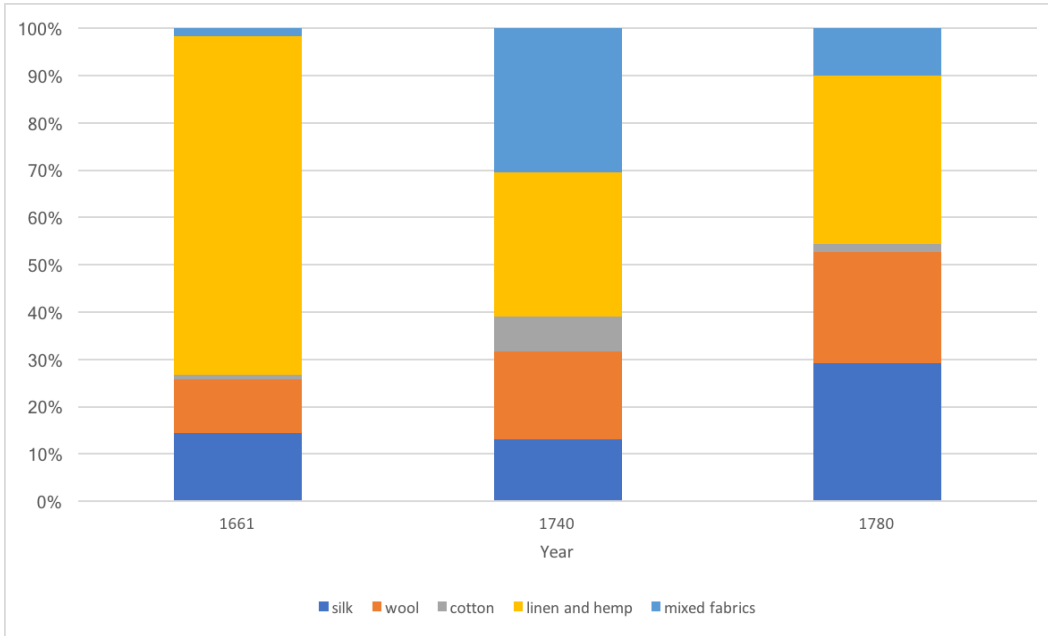


Figure 7. Fabrics utilised for the manufacture of garments in 1661, 1740, and 1780.

“in Venice you live only in Saint Mark square, you have as your own home a coffeehouse in Saint Mark square”.<sup>39</sup>

We now turn to Division 3 (clothing), which allows us to make some important considerations on the evolution of the consumption of textiles. The theory of the consumer revolution as originally conceived by McKendrick stated that, during the eighteenth century, an increasing portion of the population changed its patterns of consumption by purchasing an ever-increasing number of luxury and semi-luxury goods on the market. One of the areas where this change would have been more apparent was clothing. The wardrobe of these new consumers during the eighteenth century would have changed significantly, enriched by fashionable garments made of more and more valuable fabrics. Here we want to see if a change like this happened in Venice as well. To answer, we use Classes 03.1.1 (fabric and clothing materials) and 03.1.2 (garments), and specifically the 16 sub-classes we created to catalogue the materials in which objects are manufactured.

<sup>39</sup> SERGENT-MARCEAU Antoine, *Coup-d'œil sentimental, critique et historique sur Venise. Ms. inédit de 1805*, Geneve-Moncalieri, Slatkine-Centro Interuniversitario sul ‘Viaggio in Italia’, 1981, p. 81.



*Figure 8. Fabrics utilized for the manufacture of garments in 1661, 1740, and 1780. Only noble households.*

At first glance, we can quickly see that in a century the situation changes significantly, both for fabrics and clothing materials and for garments. In the 1670s and in the 1720s, the largest expenses were for linen, hemp, and wool products, while in the 1770s silk absorbs the largest portion of family wealth. This is a phenomenon that unites both noble and non-noble families, as can be seen from data in Appendices 6 and 7.

For both social groups, the transition between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is in fact equivalent to an increase in costs for silks. The most significant leap occurs mainly for fabrics and clothing materials, while it is more limited for garments: fabric spending passes from figures of about 0.2 per cent in the seventeenth century (for both noble and non-noble households) to 1.89 per cent for nobles and 1.02 per cent for non-nobles in the eighteenth century.

Data for cotton, another product that quickly gained ground in the tastes of consumers, are also interesting. First, we note that we find traces of garments made in this fabric (see sub-Class 03.1.2/C) only in the seventeenth century, while they seem to disappear in the following period. This is probably due to our sources, because if we look at the data on cotton fabrics and clothing materials

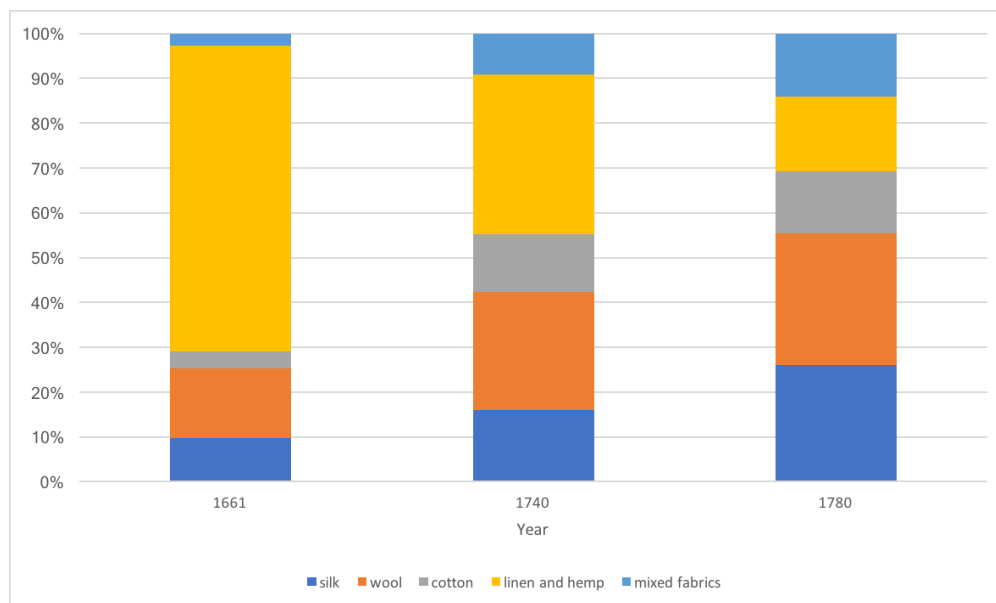


Figure 9. Fabrics utilised for the manufacture of garments in 1661, 1740, and 1780. Only non-noble households.

(03.1.1/C), we can notice how cotton fabrics are increasingly purchased between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At a general level, in the 1670s cotton fabrics accounted for 0.01 per cent of total spending, then passed to 0.03 per cent in the 1720s and reached 0.14 per cent in the 1770s. Nevertheless, cotton is not appreciated in the same way by the families of both social groups. This material is preferred by non-nobles, who purchase much more of it compared to aristocratic households. At the end of the eighteenth century, non-nobles are in fact investing in cotton almost six times the amount of money compared to nobles. Again, these spending trends are confirmed by the data we can collect through after-death inventories (Figures 7, 8, and 9). The documents collected in the years 1661, 1740, and 1780 by the *Giudici del Proprio* show in fact an explosive spread of silk and cotton at the household level, especially at the expense of linen and hemp. This last fibre, the most widely used in the seventeenth century, lost almost two-thirds of its market share over a century. The spread of cotton and the higher preference for it by non-noble households is also confirmed by probate inventories. In the seventeenth century, for non-nobles, cotton garments represent more than 13 per cent of the total amount of clothes at their disposal, and they are present in more

than 60 per cent of the inventories of this social class. Among noble households, cotton remains little loved.

## **Inequality**

As mentioned above, the general impression derived from the analysis of monetary expense patterns is one of a general enrichment of the families in our sample between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, followed by a strong internal polarisation of the various segments of society. In the next pages, we will try to understand more in detail the contours of this phenomenon, and especially its impact on the material living standards of the Venetian population in the early modern period. Thus, we will focus our attention on trends in inequality.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Inequality is a theme that in recent years has attracted the interest of an ever-growing number of scholars, following Simon Kuznet's seminal works published between the 1950s and 1960s. Kuznet's theory links the increase in income inequality with the process of economic (that is industrial, according to the American economist) development. In fact, analysing the socioeconomic evolution of England, Germany, and United States in the last 200 years, Kuznet shows how the beginning of the economic growth, and the consequent increase in income, brings with it a progressive increase of the level of inequality. This will subsequently stabilize and then diminish when the process of growth is well started. The economic historians of the modern age have not failed to contribute to this debate, showing how economic inequality was not a phenomenon born with the industrial revolution, but instead had its roots in the previous period. Among this research, of particular importance are the studies that focus on stagnant or declining economies. These have shown how the correlation between inequality and economic growth was not as strict as Kuznet initially theorized, and that an increase in economic inequality can be traced also in peripheral economies of early modern Europe, that is economies in which the industrial development occurred only at a second moment in time. Of great interest also are the studies that have been concerned with refining the instruments for the analysis of inequality, for example by abandoning the traditional focus on the working class and expanding the spectrum of investigations to the wealthiest strata of society. In this context, our data on Venice can provide an important contribution, bringing new empirical data on the evolution of economic inequality trends in pre-industrial Europe: first, with new observations concerning a Mediterranean economy that between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries was going through a period of strong transition, losing its position at the centre of the old world economy, against the advance of the more dynamic economies of North Atlantic

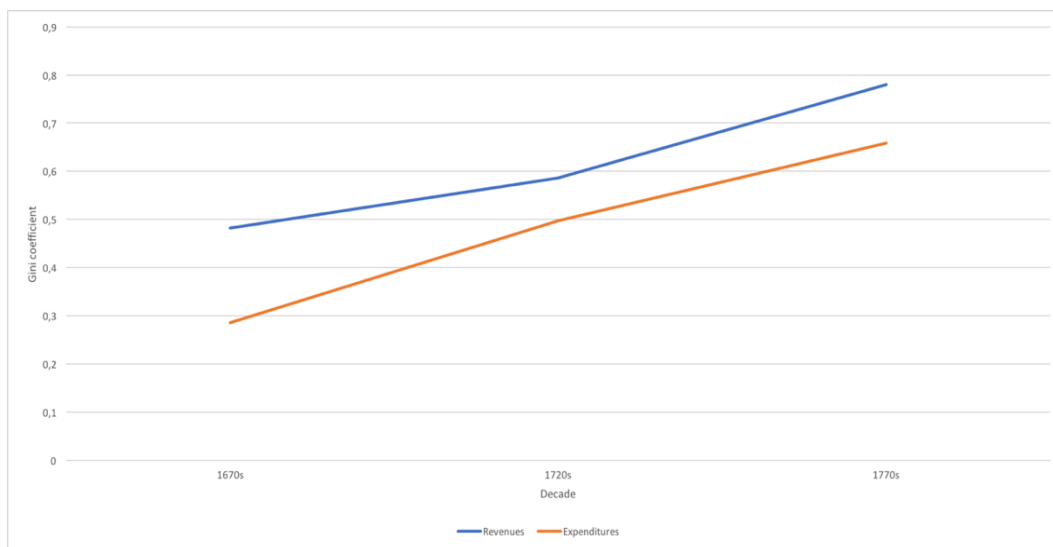


Figure 10. Gini index of inequality calculated with respect to both revenues and expenditures for the decades 1670s, 1720s, and 1770s.

For a more accurate overview, we will consider not only data about expenditures but also about revenues, taking advantage of all the information for household budgets collected by the *Giudici di Petizion*.

We begin with a general analysis, calculating the Gini index (G) for the entire distribution both in terms of revenues and expenditures.<sup>41</sup> The results are shown in

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Europe; and also providing important information on consumption attitudes of the most affluent layers of the society. KUZNET Simon, *Economic growth and income inequality*, “The American Economic Review”, n. 45.1, 1955, pp. 1-28; van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, *Tracing the beginning of the Kuznet Curve. Western Europe during the early modern period*, “The Economic History Review”, n. 48.4, 1995, pp. 643–664; ALFANI Guido, *Economic inequality in Northwestern Italy. A Long Term View (fourteenth to eighteenth century)*, “The Journal of Economic History”, n. 75.4, 2015, pp. 1058–1096; ALFANI Guido and AMMANNATI Francesco, *Long term trends in economic inequality. The case of the Florentine state, c. 1300–1800*, “The Economic History Review”, 2017, n. 70.4, 2017, pp. 1072-1102; RYCKBOSCH Wouter, *Economic inequality and growth before the Industrial Revolution. The case of the low countries (fourteenth to nineteenth century)*, “European Review of Economic History”, n. 20.1, 2016, pp. 1–22.

<sup>41</sup> Regarding revenues, we calculate the Gini coefficient with respect to the figures of average monthly expenditures. So, in the sample considered we only find those households for which we have both the total value of the revenues and the duration of the trust. In total, we have eight families for the decade of the 1670s, seven for the 1720s, and 19 for the 1770s. For the calculation of the Gini coefficient with respect to expenditures, a different approach was followed, controlling also for

Figure 10. First, we start with some preliminary considerations. With no surprise, we can see how the coefficient of income inequality is always higher than that of consumption inequality for the whole period. The distribution of wealth was in fact largely unequal, as most land and other real estate was concentrated in the hands of the aristocracy and numerous religious institutions. There was then a greater capacity for noble families to allocate money into financial and commercial investment (in both the manufacturing and merchant sectors), which led to a further increase in their income flow. About the level of consumption inequality, we can see that the G in the seventeenth is relatively low. However, it should be remembered that this is not an absolute measure of inequality, but a measure of the degree of homogeneity in the data distribution. Bearing this in mind, it is interesting to ask whether the low value found in the 1670s is caused by a general and distributed scarcity, or whether it is the result of an overall high level of expenditure. Because the average spending per beneficiary is always quite high, the latter option seems correct. Calculating this value in litres of wheat per day per beneficiary, we find values ranging from three to 24 litres, and in seven cases out of 10 the daily expenses performed by the trustees are for nine litres of wheat.<sup>42</sup> This figure is interesting because in about the same period an Italian building labourer had a wage of 9.3 litres of grain per day.<sup>43</sup> Of course, it should be remembered that our sample comprises families from the middle-high layer of the social ladder, and that the G value of 0.29 is representative only of this group. When computed with data for the entire population, the value of consumption inequality would inevitably be higher (but this reasoning is equally valid for income inequality).

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the composition of the household. The total amount of expenses was first divided by the number of months for which the trust lasted and then by the number of beneficiaries, thus calculating an average monthly spending per capita. In this case, the sample consists of 11 households for the 1670s, seven for the 1720s, and 19 for the 1770s. This decision is motivated by the fact that expenditures are heavily influenced by the number of beneficiaries, while they do not directly affect the amount of revenues.

<sup>42</sup> The calculation was performed using the wheat price series for Venice.

<sup>43</sup> van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, *Wages and the standard of living in Europe, 1500–1800*, “European Review of Economic History”, n. 2, 1999, p. 185.

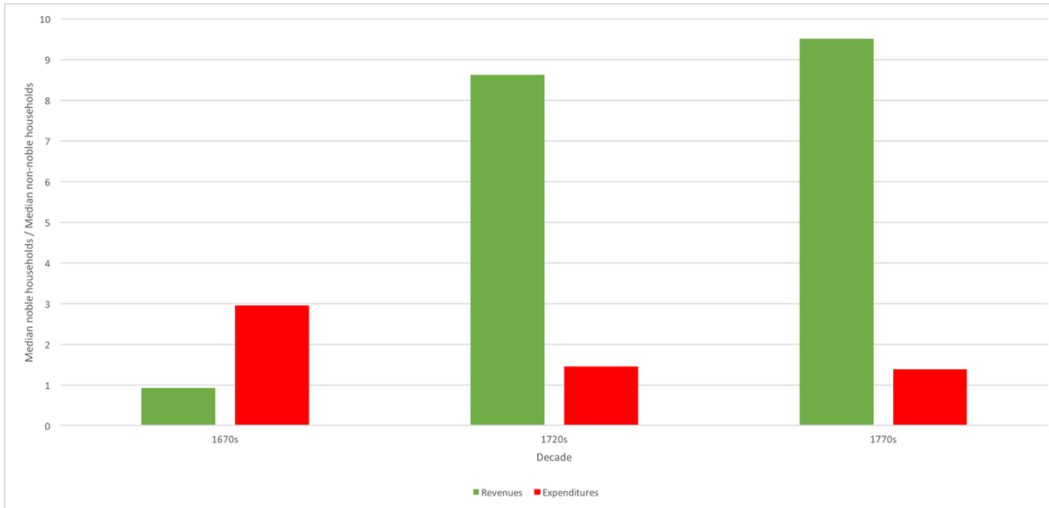
Proceeding with the analysis, we can observe that in the long run the level of both inequalities increases considerably: 0.30 points for revenues and 0.37 points for expenditures. The increase in consumption inequality is particularly significant because, in less than a century, there is a leap in the coefficient from a value of 0.29, low inequality, to a value of 0.66, indicating a rather accentuated level of inequality.<sup>44</sup>

It is also interesting to note that the increase in inequality did not follow the same path or timing for both indicators. In terms of expenditures, inequalities increase homogeneously between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,<sup>45</sup> while if we look at revenue data we see a great difference between the first and second 50-year period: between the 1720s and the 1770s  $G$  grows by double. So we have some families that are enriched with respect to others thanks to greater revenues, and others that progressively see their material living standards increasing thanks to a significant growth in their spending capacity. What are the layers of the population that benefit from these changes? Of what social category are families that push up the levels of inequality? Is this a phenomenon completely attributable to members of a particular group, or is it a more blurred and composite phenomenon? To try to answer these questions, we investigate more deeply the inequality between groups, abandoning the general analysis that takes into consideration the entire population. As mentioned in Chapter 2, we are not able to pinpoint the families belonging to our sample on the social ladder. We barely know the occupation of the deceased breadwinner, we hardly know the past economic history of the family, and we have little information about their comprehensive wealth. We will proceed with the approach used in the preceding paragraphs, comparing noble and non-noble

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<sup>44</sup> We recall for the sake of completeness that a value of  $G$  equal to 0 means absolute equality, while a value of 1 means maximum inequality. If these figures are compared, with all the caveats, with those of today's world, values of 0.29 and 0.66 are very similar to those of Austria on the one hand and South Africa on the other. See: *World Development Indicators 2013*, Washington D.C., World Bank, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Between the 1670s and the 1720s there is an increase of 0.21 points, while between 1720s and the 1770s we see an increase of 0.16 points.



*Figure 11. Ratio of medians of revenues and expenditures calculated between noble and non-noble households for the decades 1670s, 1720s, and 1770s.*

households. This distinction is certainly not completely satisfactory, but it is still useful to provide some insights into the socioeconomic dynamics at the time. For the analysis of inter-group inequality, we calculated the ratio of the medians between the revenues of noble households and those of non-noble households for our three decades, then repeated the procedure with respect to expenditures.<sup>46</sup> Results are presented in Figure 11. We start by looking at data about revenues. As shown, incomes of noble families see a substantial increase over the course of the century compared to non-noble ones. In the seventeenth century, their revenues on average were even lower than those of non-nobles, but over 100 years the situation was radically overturned. In the 1720s, the coffers of the noblemen were eight and a half times over what entered the pockets of non-nobles, and this ratio increased in the following half-century to reach 9.52 times the value. For expenditures, the situation is the opposite. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the trustees of patrician families spent triple for their beneficiaries what was spent by non-noble families, but just 50 years later this value dropped by one and a half points. At the end of the eighteenth century, the ratio went further down by a few decimals, with aristocratic expenses just 1.39 times higher than those of non-noble families. So we face two very different phenomena. On the one hand, noble households are

<sup>46</sup> As with the Gini coefficient, we have used for the calculation of this index average monthly revenues, and average per capita expenditures.



increasing the income gap with respect to non-nobles, and this seems to be the explanation for the increase in the general level of inequality seen earlier through the Gini index. In fact, the monthly incomes of noblemen are progressively increasing throughout the period, with a significant leap especially between the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, while those of non-nobles are first declining (until the 1720s) and then growing with lower speed.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, the answer for consumption inequality seems to be more complex. The significant increase in income availability by the nobles is in fact not reflected in a similar increase in the ratio of medians of expenditures with respect to non-noble households, as would be expected. The median of noble households' per capita expenses increases by 6.79 times over the course of a century, while in the same period that of non-noble households increases by 15.58 times. The patrician class is thus unable (at least if considered as a whole) to transform the new flow of revenues into spending capacity, something that the non-nobles are able to do. However, we ask whether for the latter this rise in spending is necessarily synonymous with a decrease in the level of inequality. It is true that the gap in the cost of living is reduced, but this is not necessarily a signal of an improvement in material living standards. Indeed, sometimes it may even be the sign of a worsening. The wealthiest people in fact spent much of their wealth on luxury goods and services, while for the poorest such expenses were less present, in lieu of spending on staples. For this reason, any increase in the relative price of staples with respect to other types of goods led to an increase in inequality. An increase in the relative price of wheat, for instance, led to higher profits for the rich who were landowners and producers of grains, and in the meantime, thanks to the fall in real wages, it allowed them to spend less for hired labour.

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<sup>47</sup> We find a rather significant drop in revenues (about 35 per cent) between the 1670s and the 1720s, but this is abundantly over in the next half-century. In the decade of the 1770s, the monthly incomes of these families are in fact 22 times higher than in the 1720s and 14 times that of the 1670s.

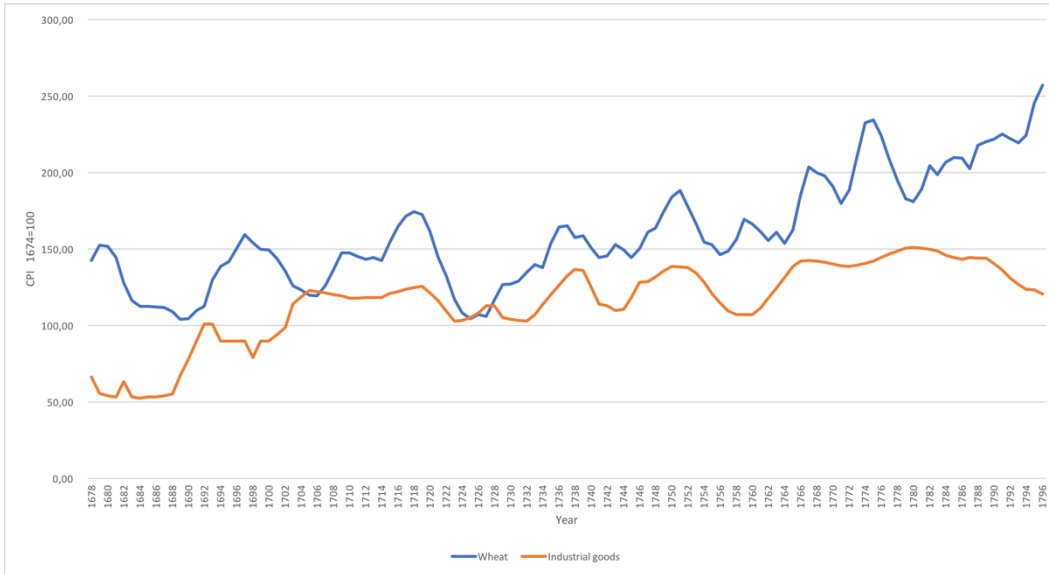


Figure 12. Indices of agricultural and industrial prices 1674–1796, smoothed by five-year moving averages.

At the same time, less rich households had to invest a larger amount of their wealth for the purchase of food, which affected the share of spending destined for non-food products. In other words, an increase in the price of staples with respect to industrial goods improved the lifestyle of the most prosperous households and worsened that of the weakest.

For an index of inter-group inequality able to adjust the value of consumption baskets by the movements in relative prices of agricultural and industrial goods, we will use the concept of ‘real inequality’ (RE) developed by Hoffman et al. in 2002.<sup>48</sup> The concept behind this tool is to use data on actual patterns of consumption of different strata of society to find out how much was spent on food and how much was spent on industrial products, services, and luxuries. Each portion is then associated with a specific price index, to obtain a more accurate cost of living indicator for each different segment of the population. By comparing the data between them, we can measure the trend of inequality over time.

To calculate RE, we need three elements: actual schemes of consumption; a price index for agricultural products; and a price index that represents industrial goods,

<sup>48</sup> HOFFMAN Philip T., JACKS David S., LEVIN Patricia A., and LINDERT Peter H., *Real inequality in Europe since 1500*, “The Journal of Economic History”, n. 62.2, 2002, pp. 322-355.

services, and luxuries. Schemes of consumption were obtained through the HiCHEP classification system by making some changes: taxes, investments, and fees have been excluded, so Division 15 was eliminated, while only legal expenses were kept from Division 14 (financial and legal services). The other divisions have not been changed.

As an index of agricultural prices, we use the Venetian wheat CPI based on the data collected by Giuseppe Toaldo (discussed previously). As mentioned, we have few data on prices of industrial goods, luxuries, or services for the city of Venice in the early modern period. Therefore we use the series available for Milan, another great city in northern Italy,<sup>49</sup> which between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had a population ranging between 110,000 and 125,000 inhabitants, a little less than that of Venice (circa 135,000 inhabitants).<sup>50</sup> Among the series collected by Aldo De Maddalena for Milan, the prices of woollen clothes and bricks, products for which we have homogeneous and continuous series covering the entire time span of our interest, were used to construct our ‘industrial’ price index.

Figure 12 shows the trend of the two indices. Agricultural prices are getting higher than the industrial ones, especially in the eighteenth century. At the end of the seventeenth century, the gap between the two indices is significant—around 75 points. In the first decades of the eighteenth century, this difference greatly diminishes (so much so that it completely disappears on a couple of occasions), but already around the 1740s the gap widens again, and at the end of the century it exceeds 120 points. It is interesting to note that the general trend does not look far from that observed in the same period in England, for instance, even if the two economic structures were abundantly different from each other.<sup>51</sup>

We can now proceed with the calculation of real inequality. We took the patterns of consumption obtained with the HiCHEP system of all the families of our sample, and for each one we multiplied data from Divisions 1 and 2 by the wheat CPI, and data from Divisions between 3 and 12, and Division 14 by the industrial CPI.

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<sup>49</sup> DE MADDALENA Aldo, *Prezzi e aspetti*; DE MADDALENA Aldo, *Prezzi e mercedi*.

<sup>50</sup> MALANIMA Paolo, *Italian Urban Population. The Database*. Available at: <http://www.paolomalanima.it>

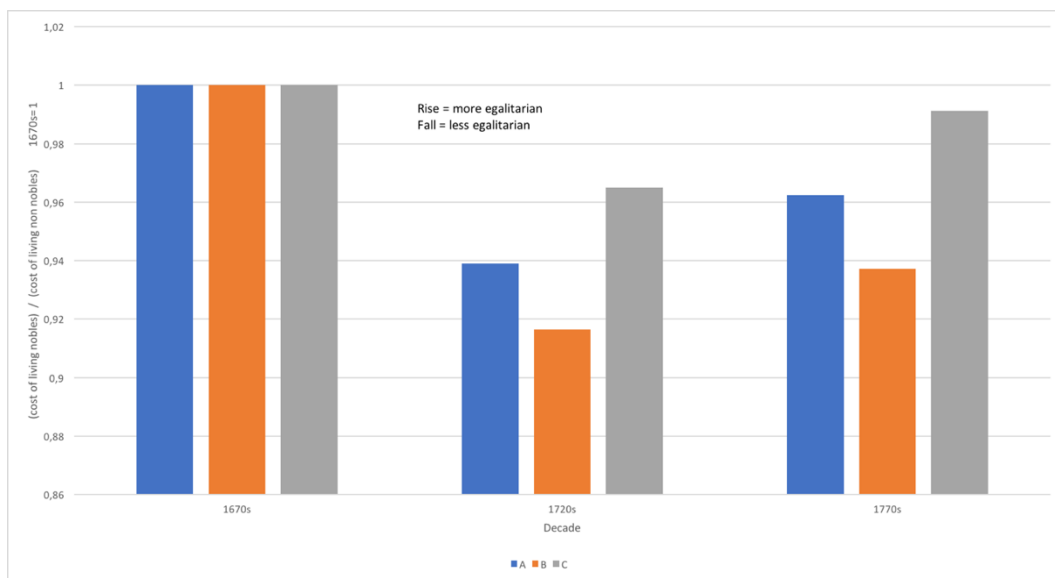
<sup>51</sup> O'BRIEN Patrick, *Agriculture and the home market*.

Divisions 13 and 16 were handled separately: the first group of expenditures covers social protection and support services, which, as seen above, masks the costs for food, beverages, clothing, and to a lesser extent other articles for the needs of the beneficiaries, while Division 16 contains all the unidentifiable expenses. We do not know exactly the weight of staples compared to industrial goods in these two divisions, and of course we cannot ignore them in the overall calculation. We therefore analysed three different scenarios, in which agricultural and industrial goods have different weights: in scenario A, the components have equal weight; in scenario B, agricultural goods weigh 60 per cent compared to 40 per cent for industrial ones; while in scenario C the opposite is true, so that staples account for 40 per cent while industrial goods account for 60 per cent.<sup>52</sup>

As seen in Figure 13, all three scenarios, even with different nuances, paint the same kind of image, which is certainly much more complex than it initially seemed. The analysis of the ratio of medians of expenditures was suggesting a progressive decline in inequality between the two groups, while the index of real inequality shows that between the 1670s and the 1720s there was an increase in inequalities between the patricians and the non-nobles. During this period, RE falls from a minimum of four percent (scenario C) to a maximum of eight percent (scenario B).

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<sup>52</sup> It should be noted that for scenarios B and C other proportions have been tested, like 70-30 and 80-20 for the first, and 30-70 and 20-80 for the second. Under these assumptions, the results of scenario B are always consistent with those that will be discussed later in the text, while the results for scenario C provide very different figures, where a continuous and progressive decrease in inequality between the two groups can be noticed. However, this is a poorly credible outcome, and probably it is the result of the poor data quality of Divisions 1 and 2 for noble households. As we can see in Table 2, the percentage of spending of aristocratic families in food and beverages is always very low, and its maximum value in all three decades does not exceed 4 per cent of the total. It is likely that much of the expenditure on staples is to be found in Division 13, whose values are always around 30 per cent. Therefore, if we hypothesize, as in scenario C, that food expenditures are mostly represented by the third (proportions of 30-70) or the fifth (proportions of 20-80) part of the value of Divisions 13 and 16, we are strongly underestimating them. For this reason, we chose to use the 60-40 proportion for scenario B and 40-60 for scenario C where biases due to data quality should be greatly mitigated.



*Figure 13. Movements in the cost of living in noble households, relative to the cost of living in non-noble households, for the decades 1670s, 1720s, and 1770s.*

However, in the following 50 years, between the 1720s and the 1770s, we notice a slight rise of the coefficient of two or three percentage points, signalling a mitigation of consumption inequalities. However, while comparing RE performances with the price series previously described, we notice that in the third decade of the eighteenth century this indicator increases despite the fact that the gap between agricultural and industrial prices tends to shrink. The opposite situation occurs with regard to the 1770s. Compared to the previous period, the scissor between the two series of prices tends to widen more and more, and this is also due to the great volatility of grain prices in the 1770s (discussed previously). Given these conditions, it would be reasonable to expect a decrease in inter-group inequality in the 1720s and an increase in the 1770s, but as seen before, this does not happen and society appears more inegalitarian at the beginning and less inegalitarian at the end of the eighteenth century.

This is an interesting phenomenon, which may be related to revenue trends. Non-noble revenues fall by about 35 per cent between the 1670s and the 1720s, while between the 1720s and the 1770s they quickly grow until they abundantly overcome the levels of the end of the seventeenth century. So, despite the favourable price cycle, the lower availability of money would have forced non-noble families to tighten their consumption patterns by increasing their spending on food.

Subsequently, taking advantage of the higher income availability, these households would change their behaviours by increasing the share spent on industrial goods and services. These assumptions are confirmed by data presented in Table 3, which show how the expenditures for staples (which we can mostly ascribe to Divisions 1, 2, and 13) represent 35.38 per cent in the 1670s, 41.85 per cent in the 1720s, and 31.55 per cent in the 1770s. This shows that the choice on what consumption strategies to adopt is mainly driven by the flow of revenues rather than by the flow of prices.

However, it remains to be clarified why the ratio of medians and the calculation of real inequality show a decrease in the economic differences between social classes in the second half of the eighteenth century, while the G for the entire distribution shows instead the image of a less egalitarian society. The analysis between groups does not seem sufficient to explain this inconsistency, and therefore it seems necessary to proceed through a study of intra-group inequality. For this reason, we calculated the Gini coefficients with respect to both revenues and expenditures, considering first only the sample of noble households and then only the non-noble households. Obviously, there are no Gini coefficients for the nobles for the 1720s, when the sample consisted of only one family, since the calculation was not feasible. The results are shown in Table 13. We look first at the revenues side. Previously, we saw how inequality increases steadily between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and how this occurrence appears to be largely driven by noble families. Information on intra-group income inequality shows an even more complex and nuanced situation, characterized by a process of deep polarisation in this segment of society.

<b>Gini Index</b>				
<b>Decade</b>	<b>Nobles</b>		<b>non-Nobles</b>	
	<b>REV</b>	<b>EXP</b>	<b>REV</b>	<b>EXP</b>
<b>1670s</b>	0.03	0.03	0.51	0.28
<b>1720s</b>			0.54	0.52
<b>1770s</b>	0.69	0.60	0.48	0.51

*Table 13. Intra-group inequality calculated through the Gini index both for revenues and expenditures for the decades 1670s, 1720s, and 1770s.*

In the seventeenth century, the value of G was just 0.03, while a hundred years later it was 0.69. Therefore, the general increase in income inequality would be a phenomenon not caused by the nobility as a whole, but only by some families who throughout the eighteenth century were able to significantly increase the profits deriving from their investments. It is interesting to note that in the same period among the non-noble families we can trace a very different trend. After a first period in which income inequalities within this group increase, we notice a negative trend, and over the long run we have a tenuous phenomenon of redistribution of wealth. From the consumption side, we see how within both groups there was an increase in inequality. As was the case with revenues, the gap within the noble class, which in the seventeenth century was virtually non-existent, came to rather high levels at the end of the following century. The Gini coefficient ranges from 0.03 to 0.60, and thus from nearly perfect equality to pronounced inequality. Among non-noble families, the deviation is less pronounced, 0.22 points, but is certainly significant. Therefore, thanks to these data we can explain the apparent incongruity between the general growth of inequality and the decreasing trend between the ratios of medians of expenditures between noble and non-noble households. The increase of consumption inequality is thus a phenomenon caused by a polarisation in the patterns of spending of both groups (and this also confirms the considerations we made by observing monetary spending patterns). Not only were a small group of nobles able to distance their peers more and more, as seen for revenues, but the same phenomenon can be seen within the group of non-nobles. The advance of what we might call a “non-noble élite” is so acute that some families are able to overcome the spending power of an even growing number of aristocratic families.

Considering the distribution of households based on expenditures and looking at the composition of the top of it, say the top 30 per cent, we see how in the 1670s non-noble families represented 30 per cent of the total, while in the 1770s they were 50 per cent.

The situation of non-noble households is generally noteworthy. As seen, in the long run they realize an increase in their revenues, alongside a (tenuous) process of redistribution of wealth. However, increasing inequalities in consumption emphasize that only some families have the ability, or the willingness, to turn this increase in financial availability into an increase in consumption. Explaining this behaviour would be quite interesting, though with our information it is unfortunately not possible. It would be interesting to pinpoint the non-noble families within the social ladder with more accuracy to understand whether the lesser economic initiative is characteristic of some specific groups or whether it is a widespread behaviour.

Overall, the main conclusion we draw from this inquiry on inequality is that the evolution of consumption is endogenous. At the household level, the macroeconomic conjuncture seems to have a far greater impact on revenues than on expenditures, altering, in positive or negative terms, the value of incoming wealth. However, the strategies to be taken to address the new status quo respond to internal logic, guided by the preferences, expectations, or even the fears of the various household components, and which sometimes may seem anti-economic. As seen previously, during a favourable economic cycle characterized by low agricultural prices, a family may decide to increase its spending on staples instead of diverting more money into industrial products or services. Under the same conditions, a family can be more prudent and cautious in managing its finances, while another one can be more dynamic and ready to take advantage of opportunities offered to them. The ongoing economic polarisation of society that we can see in the seventeenth century is the most obvious sign of the coexistence of these two behaviours. The impression is that, at least for the richer segments of society (and in particular for non-noble households), the level of inequality is caused more by the different degree of risk appetite of families than by the macroeconomic conjuncture.



## IV

### **Beyond the big narratives**

Historiography on consumption, and particularly the one on the consumer revolution, has accustomed us to big narratives. Both theoretical and empirical studies have often offered broad conclusions, showing (or sometimes just hypothesising) wide and compact trends, with neat and well-marked changes in consumer behaviour and in purchasing dynamics. However, we showed how for the Venetian case study the situation appears to be more complex. Looking at the previous pages, one could observe how the evolution of consumption practises between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries looks nuanced and sometimes characterised by little defined contours.

We can hardly attribute this apparent rigidity of Venetian consumption in the long run to an immobility of the socio-economic scene of the city of Saint Mark. Venice, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is one of the ten biggest cities in Europe, it is a well-connected commercial port within the Mediterranean world, it is a city where new fashions and trends from the rest of the continent easily find space, and is the capital of a mainland state that is rapidly developing from the economic point of view. How can these two elements, apparently contradicting each other, coincide? In our opinion, the rigidity in consumption that we can see with a quantitative analysis would not be related to a lack of opportunities for Venetian consumers to improve their consumption patterns, but it would rather be connected to the extreme variety of goods and services available in the *Serenissima* for the people. In a context where choice is so wide, each household can act in a completely different way, depending on its own preferences and strategies. This is something that a mere quantitative approach tends to mask. Therefore, the lack of large movements in consumer strategies is not caused by a stiffness in consumer behaviour, but by a huge variety of the latter who end up ‘flattening’ the figures in a general quantitative analysis.

At the beginning of this study, we have chosen the household as the main object of our investigation trying to confirm or deny those big trends in purchasing and consumption patterns detected and well documented in northern Europe. However, in our study the household has powerfully come back to the centre of our attention, showing us that some dynamics can hardly be bridled and defined schematically: from detail to general, and back to detail.

In the following pages, we will take a step back trying to return complexity to the analysis through a more qualitative handling to show the variety and the enormous differentiation of consumption habits. This also allows us to have a look at the determinants that could influence resource allocation that, as we will see, were often quite unconnected with the macroeconomic conjuncture. Given the impossibility of treating in detail all our budgets, we decided to analyse three of them. Some of the more complete and detailed documents have been chosen, and above all we have tried to select families with different levels of wealth and belonging to different layers of the social ladder. Then, we will show the family of an artisan, a 'bourgeois' family from the Mainland which is probably active in commerce, and one of the wealthiest and most influential patrician families of eighteenth-century Venice.

### **A tale of two brothers**

In the early months of 1655 Nicolò Olini died, leaving his two sons Francesco and Nicolò orphans. The *Giudici di Petizion* activated in a short time a Trust that was overseen by the brother of the deceased, Giovanni Olini. The Trust was active from April 1655 to December 1672,<sup>1</sup> and throughout this period Giovanni created a

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<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to specify that in the Venetian calendar the year started on the first of March and ended at the end of February. Consequently, the months of January and February had the same year indication as the previous December. In the text, all dates are expressed *more veneto*, that is with the Venetian custom.

particularly detailed account of his management, carefully recording the various expenses incurred on the behalf of his two nephews.<sup>2</sup>

We do not know for sure the age of Francesco and Nicolò, affectionately named Nicoletto in the documents, at the time of the death of their father. We know that their mother is still alive, even though she is rarely mentioned in the papers, and that the trustee begins to provide for the education of the two orphans between 1655 and 1656. We know that the *Petizion* judges was entrusting to the father's family the protection of orphans if and only if they were older than five or six years. Otherwise the law assigned the care of the children to the mother or, in case she was no longer alive, to the maternal grandmother. We also know that the children started to attend school when they were six or seven years old. From these elements, we can therefore deduce that the two orphans, in April 1655, were both around six years old.

The first to receive books and notebooks for school is Francesco in the summer of 1655, while for Nicoletto the trustee buys the first books one year later. If we hypothesise equal treatment for both brothers, it is likely that Francesco was about one year older than his brother.

The Olini family was not native to Venice, but in the lagoon city they had strong economic and commercial interests. In October 1655, Giovanni Olini informed us that he had paid nearly 800 lire to “become a citizen” and citizenship was necessary in order to obtain economic privileges: after 15 years of residence it was in fact possible to obtain the citizenship *de intus*, which allowed for practicing commercial activities just within the boundaries of the city. After 25 years it was possible to get that *de intus et de extra*, which allowed for entering even the more lucrative trade with the East, as well as to get the same tax exemptions as ‘native’ merchants.<sup>3</sup> The ties with the Mainland are still strong for the Olinis and particularly strong are the ties with the territory of Treviso, in the eastern part of the Veneto region, the likely area of origin of the family. Francesco will be sent to study with a tutor in Conegliano, while Nicoletto will later become a priest in Treviso.

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<sup>2</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conto, 984, budget dated 10 April 1655.

<sup>3</sup> BELLAVITIS Anna, *Family and society*, in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, edited by Eric R. Dursteler, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2013, p. 332.

For the first few years, the education of the two brothers follows a similar path and we cannot identify a different pattern in the expenses for their instruction. Both received notebooks, ruled notebooks, music notebooks, pens, and ink bottles. The trustee also bought them grammars, dictionaries, arithmetic books, and a variety of reading books. Among these there were the *Fiori di Virtù (Flowers of Virtues)*, books used since the fourteenth century for the education of children. These were anthologies of moral texts through which the children learned how to read the proper Tuscan language and at the same time, through examples of righteousness and morbidity, showed them the most consistent behaviours to keep in society<sup>4</sup> (or at least that was what the tutors were hoping, but we will see in our case the good intentions of Giovanni Olini will be largely overturned by one of the nephews).

Nicoletto's school achievements, however, were not particularly brilliant, and so his uncle was convinced to send him to a convent in Trieste, a few hours away from Venice, hoping that the peaceful monastic life would be more suitable for him with respect to the more parlous world of commercial activities. In May 1664 Nicoletto arrived in a monastery of Dominican friars, where he remained until 1668, so that he could complete the period of study required to become a priest. After the first year, useful to test the novice's vocation, a pre-academic three-year course was devoted to 'material students', those who after studies would devote themselves to the care of souls. There was also a path dedicated to 'formal students', who were devoting their life to teaching.<sup>5</sup> The subjects of study for future priests were rhetoric, dialectics, natural philosophy, metaphysics, and of course theology.<sup>6</sup> The importance given to studies in the Dominican rule was very high, and it is not by chance that the first purchases made by the trustee for Nicoletto were notebooks, paper, writing material, but especially books:<sup>7</sup> a catechism, Cicero's epistles, the

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<sup>4</sup> VOLPI Gaetano and GAMBÀ Bartolomeo, *Fiore di virtù ridotto alla sua vera lezione*, Milan, Giovanni Silvestri, 1842, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> PENONE Daniele, *I Domenicani nei secoli*, Bologna, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 1998, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> VERRECCHIA Anacleto, *Giordano Bruno. La falena dello spirito*, Rome, Donzelli, 2002, pp. 28-29.

<sup>7</sup> Great help for the reconstruction of the complete titles of the books and for more information about them is given by the catalogues of the *Marciana* library of Venice. The *Marciana* is the first example of a public library in Europe. The idea was born in the fourteenth century, when the *Serenissima*

*Ciceronianus* by Erasmus of Rotterdam, and a “*Donato*”. The latter is probably a text by Girolamo Donà, a Venetian patrician friend of many Renaissance scholars such as Ermolao Barbaro, Poliziano, and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who put beside his life as a competent diplomatic man the one as capable humanist. The Donà wrote of Greek philosophy and patristic, and its translation of *De Anima* by Alexander of Afrodisia, one of the greatest commentators of Aristotle of the ancient times, had great circulation at the time and became quite famous.<sup>8</sup> Given the importance of the Aristotelian doctrine in the Dominican formation, it does not seem to be foolhardy to think that Donà’s book that Nicoletto received at the beginning of his trip into the monastic life was the very translation of *De Anima*.<sup>9</sup> Over the years, Nicoletto will then buy some music books, a breviary, and a *Ufficio della Settimana Santa (Holy Week Office)* with some silver decorations. The latter is a kind of handbook to the offices of the Easter, in which all ceremonies, psalms, and songs are described, explained and translated from Latin to Italian.<sup>10</sup> In December 1667, a few months before leaving the monastery, we also find the

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tried to buy from Francesco Petrarca his rich private book collection. Some misunderstandings with the lagoon’s cultural environment and the gradual approach of Petrarca with Francesco da Carrara the Elder, lord of Padua and enemy of the *Commune Veneciarum*, caused a dissolution of the agreement (and among other things, the library of Petrarca will be later completely lost). A century later, the Greek cardinal Bessarione left his library of more than 700 codes to the Republic as a sign of gratitude for having battled the Turkish advance in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. This legacy was the primordial nucleus of the *Marciana*. From 1603 every printer operating in Venice was obliged to deposit a copy of each printed book at the Saint Mark square library. See: LABOWSKY Lotte, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 9, Rome, Treccani, 1967, *ad vocem* Bessarione; ZORZI Marino, *La libreria di San Marco. Libri, lettori, società nella Venezia dei dogi*, Milan, Mondadori, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> RIGO Paola, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 40, Rome, Treccani, 1991, *ad vocem* Donà Girolamo.

<sup>9</sup> The study of Aristotle was, in any case, extremely important for everyone who was aspiring to become a man of culture. It is not a coincidence that Dante in *The Divine Comedy* calls the Greek philosopher “the master of the sapient throng”. ALIGHIERI Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, New York, Collier & Son, 1909, *Inferno*, IV, 131.

<sup>10</sup> See for instance: *Ufficio della Settimana Santa latino e italiano spiegandone le cerimonie solite praticarsi*, Turin, 1791.

purchase of a Bible. Among the latest buys there was also the “*Contarini Stories*”, which we supposed to be a copy of *Il vago e dilettevole giardino Historico, Poetico e Geografico* by Luigi Contarini, which is a collection of biographies of illustrious men of the past, in which contemporaries could mirror themselves “to amend their miserable journey”.<sup>11</sup>

But a novice’s life was not just made of books. Let us therefore understand what the lifestyle of a young man was in a seventeenth century monastery. The cell of Nicoletto was rather bare, following the obligation of poverty prescribed by the rule of the Order,<sup>12</sup> and at his arrival it only contained the bed frame: the novice brought with him a mattress, a canvas to protect it, and a blanket. The personal items at his disposal were few and of modest value. We find two brushes, two combs, a pair of scissors, a candle, a urinal, and 11 pounds of soap. His uncle also sent out three small crates, one of which came with two large bottles inside, destined to contain the wine needed for consumption during meals.

Upon entering the monastery, Nicoletto was also equipped with all the necessary clothes. We find expenses for more than 350 lire in white and black fabrics, mostly wool both of heavy and light weave, to pack the recognisable Saint Dominic dress in both its winter and summer version. To complete the outfit, and the expenses, we also find a belt and a rosary to hang on to it. They will not be the only clothes available to Nicoletto during the four years he will stay in Trieste. In September 1665, a cost of 111 lire was paid for the realisation of a priest dress; in August 1667 he was given a friar dress. A little later, in September 1667, the monastery received 229 pounds of sugar, worth 538 lire, as a form of payment for some clothes, to which another 62 lire to pay the tailor were added.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> CONTARINI Luigi, *Il vago e dilettevole giardino historico, poetico, & geografico*, Vicenza, 1615, p. vi. Translation is mine.

<sup>12</sup> *Liber constitutionum et ordinationum fratrum ordinis praedicatorum*, Rome, Curia Generalitia, 2017, art. IV, pp. 30-32.

<sup>13</sup> Despite the vow of poverty, the expenses we have just described are quite high. To give an example, in those same years the daily wage of a construction worker was just over 4 lire per day, and that of a baker did not exceed 1.5 lire per day. Then, a construction worker would have to invest 267 days of salary, basically a year of work, to buy the same garments of Nicoletto, while a baker would have to spend for the same clothes the fruit of 677 days of his work. For data on wages, see:

The setting in the convent should not have been easier for Nicoletto, and at the beginning the conventual life had to be rather boring. Shortly after entering the monastery he will ask for two musical instruments, a violin and a monochord, and some pentagrams to learn how to play them. Also, getting used to new eating habits should not have been initially easy for him. In fact, in the first months of his residence he received from his uncle sugar, *mostarda*,<sup>14</sup> various spices including pepper and cinnamon, pistachios, biscuits, marzipan, and various kinds of fruits. This does not mean that his diet in the convent was particularly poor. We know from an annotation of 1667 that one year of rent cost the Olini family 80 ducats, equal to 496 lire. Assuming a daily expense of 26 soldi and knowing that a litre of wheat was sold at just under 3 soldi in that year,<sup>15</sup> we find that 8.6 litres of grain could be purchased with the daily diary required by the convent. This is a sizeable sum if we think that in the same period the salary of a mason in northern Italy had a purchasing power of 9.3 litres of grain a day and that this was enough to maintain an entire family.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, we cannot understand much more about Nicoletto's life during those years as the expenses that can be safely retrieved for his maintenance are rather small: some modest amount of money to spend for his own needs, the barber's wages to shave his head with the typical tonsure, some objects of devotion, and little else.

In March 1668, after having offered a dinner to the new novices, Nicoletto returns to the territories of the Republic of Venice as a priest. He went first to the foothills area and then he moved to the city of Treviso. In these years, Nicoletto's life remains rather moderate: we find some books, bed linens, soap, a priest dress, and some other clothes, as well as the inevitable expenses for the barber.

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PEZZOLO Luciano, *Il fisco dei Veneziani. Finanza pubblica ed economia tra XV e XVII secolo*, Sommacampagna, Cierre, 2003, p. 197.

<sup>14</sup> A typical North-Italian condiment made with candied fruit dipped in a mustard-flavoured sauce.

<sup>15</sup> This figure was obtained using the price series of Udine collected through the Mercuriali. See Chapter III for more information.

<sup>16</sup> van ZANDEN Jan Luiten, *Wages and the standard of living in Europe, 1500-1800*, "European Review of Economic History", n. 2, 1999, p. 185.

The years in the convent and those as a priest had not strengthened the faith in Nicoletto, either in the Lord or in his uncle who probably had sent him there to keep him away from family affairs. Proof that his vocation was not adamant comes to us from the events following the early May of 1670, when the trustee is forced to rush into Treviso to detain his nephew from marrying “a so-called Prima”. Attempts must be void, because a few days later Nicoletto was conducted forcibly to talk with a priest, and later he will receive a visit from his mother. Neither the sermons of the religious nor the maternal demands were useful to let him abandon the marriage ideas. After a short stay in the family home in Venice, Nicoletto returns to Treviso and from there he began a legal war with his uncle, made of intimations at the office of the *Giudici di Petizion*, notarial acts, and consultations with legal experts. It should be pointed out that at the same time the subsistence of Nicoletto is still paid by his uncle, who can of course not rule out his obligations as trustee. In April 1672, the procedures for the dissolution of the Trust began: two copies of the budget were made, which were then deposited in the *Petizion* archive; someone is charged to review the budget, probably to check the completeness and correctness of the accounts; the capitals of the family are transferred to a new deposit, probably headed by Nicoletto and Francesco. In December of the same year, a notary was commissioned to carry out the divisions of property between the two brothers, and then a folder containing the new property certificates was given to each of them. Since then, the budget stopped recording the expenses.

The life of his brother Francesco was very different, beginning with his education. As mentioned earlier, Francesco was sent to perfect his studies with a Jesuit tutor in Conegliano, where he will stay for at least three years between 1662 and 1665.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> It is not a surprise that Francesco was sent to study with a tutor belonging to a religious order, given the importance of the latter in the educational system of Venetian urban elites. However, it is noteworthy that Francesco received his education from a Jesuit tutor at the beginning of the 1660s. In 1606, following a serious jurisdictional dispute between the Papal State and the Republic, Pope Paul V hurled an Interdict on the *Serenissima*. Through this instrument, masses and other religious celebrations were banned on the ground of the entire Republic. One of the implications of this war was the expulsion of Capuchins, Theatines, a branch of the Franciscans (the *minori riformati*), and Jesuits from the Venetian territories. After the resolution of the conflict in 1607, these religious orders were allowed to return with the exception of the Jesuits, who were banned for another fifty



If Nicoletto's books were largely religion, philosophy, and morals, quite different were those of Francesco. Religious texts such as the Gospels, or those of philosophy, such as Cicero's epistles or two manuscripts by Jean Louis Vives,<sup>18</sup> are certainly not lacking. However, epic poems and history books stand out in his library. In a few months, Virgil, "*Reali di Franza*" (*Royals of France*), "*Meschin*", "*Cronaca Veneta*" (*Chronicle of Venice*), "*Cronachetta*" (*Little Chronicle*), and two other books of history are bought. Given the 'civil' footprint of Francesco's education, we can hypothesise that Virgil's text is the *Aeneid*. The *Royals of France*<sup>19</sup> are instead a work by Andrea da Barberino, a poet living between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and it is a prose composition of the chivalric cycle on the court of Charlemagne. The *Meschin*, on the other hand, is the *Guerrin Meschino*, completed again by Andrea da Barberino around 1410, and it is another epic-chivalric poem belonging to the Carolingian cycle. The *Chronicle of Venice* may, however, refer to the *Cronaca Veneta Sacra e Profana*, published in the seventeenth century by Pietro Antonio Pacifico.<sup>20</sup> It is an almost encyclopaedic text that provides the most disparate news about the city and its illustrious past citizens: a description of the most important public buildings, the list of the works of art that adorned the various churches, the dresses worn by the doge and by the *dogressa*,<sup>21</sup> biographical news of the great patricians of the past, some anecdotes about the history of the city and its institutions. Similar is the theme of the text entitled *Little*

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years until 1657. The fact that after just five years after the end of the ban Francesco was sent to a Jesuit tutor indicates that in a short time the Society of Jesus knew how to quickly reorganise its presence both in the territory and within the Venetian education system. BARZAZI Antonella, *Formazione del patrizio e ordini religiosi: modelli a confronto*, in *Formazione alla politica, politica della formazione a Venezia in Età moderna*, edited by Andrea Caracausi and Antonio Conzato, Rome, Viella, 2013, pp. 37-42.

<sup>18</sup> Between them we have "the epistles of Vives", which can refer to his *Epistolarium* or to the text titled *De epistulis conscribendi*.

<sup>19</sup> BARBERINO Andrea di, *Libro chiamato Reali di Franza, nel quale si contiene la generatione de tutti li re, duchi, principi, e baroni de Franza, e de li paladini con le battaglie da loro fatte*, Venice, 1537.

<sup>20</sup> PACIFICO Pietro Antonio, *Cronaca veneta sacra e profana, ossia un compendio di tutte le cose più illustri ed antiche della città di Venezia*, Venice, 1751.

<sup>21</sup> The wife of the doge.

*Chronicle*, which could refer to the anonymous *Cronichetta venetiana*, which describes the most important monuments in the city and gives a brief account of what happened during the reign of every doge.<sup>22</sup>

The study of classical literature, of epic poems, but also of the history of the Republic, was considered necessary for young people to make the best of themselves, to express themselves effectively in society, and to increase their respect and dedication to public institutions. These were lessons that supplemented the training received for the exercise of trade.<sup>23</sup>

The life of Francesco outside the study room was also different: more social and worldly than his brother. In January 1664, when he was still in Conegliano, Francesco spent in fact some money to buy a horoscope for himself and a few days later he bet on the lottery. For a young man at that time attending theatres and operas was certainly fundamental and in fact in that time he began his theatre attendance, both during the lyrical and the prose season. Francesco must have also practiced hunting with his friends for some time. Between 1666 and 1667 the purchases of gunpowder and ammunition for a firearm are quite frequent.

If the attendance at theatres was a necessary step to fully enjoy the civic society of the *Serenissima*, it should not be forgotten that Venetian theatres played an important role in the Italian and international musical and dramaturgical scene.

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<sup>22</sup> *Cronichetta venetiana dove brevemente di contengono la edification di Venetia, le vite di tutti li serenissimi Dogi con quanto è successo sotto i loro dogado, li habiti che portano li antichi, il numero dei patriarchi*, Venice, 1599.

<sup>23</sup> LANE Frederic C., *Storia di Venezia*, Turin, Einaudi, 2005, pp. 259-260.

<b>Division</b>	<b>Percentage of expenditure</b>
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	4.25%
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	
3 - Clothing and footwear	10.45%
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock and fuels	3.86%
5 - Furnishing, household equipment and services	4.18%
6 - Health	0.02%
7 - Transport	1.01%
8 - Communication	0.15%
9 - Recreation and culture	2.17%
10 - Education	0.30%
11 - Catering and accommodation services	
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services	9.93%
13 - Social protection and support services	55.08%
14 - Financial and legal services	2.00%
15 - Taxes and fees	0.26%
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	6.36%

*Table 14. Percentage of expenditure per division during the entire period of the trust. Olini household.*

We cannot therefore exclude that the attendance at the theatres by Francesco has been guided by a certain intellectual sensitivity and taste for art. This aspect, among other things, would be confirmed by the importance of spending on books, musical instruments, and pieces of art for his own consumption. There are at least eleven books that Francesco acquires after having completed his education, to which two musical instruments, a monochord and a flute, and some engravings of which we do not know the subject, were added. His *gusto* for things can be appreciated from other expenses, such as an expensive gold watch of over 700 lire in March 1670, or the silverware set that he will carry on a journey to Rome, which will take place in the autumn of 1671. The latter consists of a fork, a spoon, and a knife with a Flemish blade all equipped with a silver handle.

In the previous pages, we have seen how different the expenses were for the two Olini brothers by their uncle, and how wide the range of goods purchased was during the years. This variety of goods is a signal of a variety of products available

on the market already in the seventeenth century Venice: if we look at clothing materials alone, for example, we can trace no less than 17 different fabrics acquired over time; while if we consider books we find almost 60 different titles.

We now look for a moment at this budget from the quantitative point of view. If we examine how resources are allocated using the HiCHEP system at Division level (Table 14), we can see how the wide diversification in consumption behaviour is completely obscured. Data shows a family where 70 per cent of the resources are assigned to food, clothes, and daily maintenance for the two brothers. These data give the impression of a household characterised by a rigid and traditional consumption pattern (we could almost say poor), while the lifestyle of the Olinis was extremely varied, diverse, rather rich, and for Francesco also worldly. Moreover, calculating the amount of money the trustee spent for both his nephews, we can see that there are no substantial differences. During the 17 years in which the trust was active, Giovanni Olini spent (in total) about 8000 lire for both Francesco and Nicoletto: an equal treatment in substance, but certainly not in shape, that can only be appreciated through a closer analysis of the budget.

### **The economic structure supporting a household**

Although the budgets collected by the *Giudici di Petizion* are extraordinary sources to study the consumption patterns of the households, sometimes they allow us to take a broader look at all the economic and social activities in which the household itself was involved. The latter are forcibly excluded in the calculation of the HiCHEP classification system, since they are not strictly part of the consumption sphere of the family unit. Among the documents in our possession, the case of the Trust instituted after the death of Piero Bertasi, a cooper who died on 20 November 1663, is exemplar. After his death, his brother takes over not only the management of the family, consisting of the widow and three children (a male and two females), but also the reins of his economic activity. The budget in our possession, the only one remaining for this Trust in the *Petizion* archive, covers the four years that range

from November 1665 to January 1669.<sup>24</sup> During this period, we can track the expenses incurred by the trustee for the grandchildren and his sister-in-law, and also have an invaluable insight into the operation of the shop.

The papers reveal nothing on how the shop had been run in the past. We do not know for sure whether the Bertasi workshop was run only by Piero or if he had set up a company with his brother, even if the second hypothesis seems most likely. The Capitulate of the Venetian cooper guild foresaw that in case of the death of a master craftsman, his wife, if she wanted to carry on the activity had the right to hire one (and only one) master, so that this latter would teach the work to the male children of the deceased until they had reached the age of 17.<sup>25</sup> We do not have the papers for the period immediately after Piero's death, which would be useful to reconstruct the way in which the handover was done but in our budget there are no master craftsmen recorded in the payroll. We can therefore suppose that the brother of Piero had already obtained the title of master and that he was already working in the shop. The assignment to him of the Trust's management, and above all to the nephew Franceschetto, by the *Giudici di Petizion*, would respond to a double logic, both patrimonial and corporative. On the one hand, asset management is given to members of the family of the breadwinner respecting the usual rules. On the other hand, the role of the Bertasi family is consolidated within the coopers' guild guaranteeing the operations of the shop even in the years to come. In his work, Piero's brother was obviously not alone and next to him we find over the years many workers, as well as an apprentice. As well-known, the shop's environment during the *Ancien Régime* was a rather fluid working reality, highly sensitive to the dynamics and swings of the market and of the workforce. In the four years under analysis here, of the workers who alternate themselves at the manufacturing desks that we can safely identify 13 and many others, which remain anonymous, as those that are only employed for a few days in case of necessity. Among the workers just mentioned, the only one we find in the shop for the whole period from 1665 to 1669

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<sup>24</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conto, 983, c. 1.

<sup>25</sup> See chapter LXXXVI of the Capitulate of the Art of Coopers in: MONTICOLO Giovanni, *I Capitolari delle Arti veneziane sottoposte alla Giustizia e poi alla Giustizia Vecchia dalle origini al MCCCXXX*, vol. II, part I, Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano, 1905, p. 430.

is Francesco di Giacomo Bertasi who probably, as one can guess from his last name, was a relative of the shop holders. Francesco di Giacomo is not only the worker who remains at the service of the shop longer than those years, but he was also the one who works for more days during a month. His working month is in fact on average 21 days and his service, apart from religious and civil holidays, was in practice daily.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the master and Francesco di Giacomo, there is always another “full time” journeyman in the workshop, whose commitment is less than that offered by Francesco di Giacomo, with a working month of 17 or 18 days on average.<sup>27</sup> In this role, at least three people alternate over time and among them only the last one, Carlo, remains in the shop with the same role for more than a year. In 1667 the business of the workshop experienced a period of strong growth and to meet the increase in production needed to face the demand of the market another full-time employee was put in the payroll.<sup>28</sup> Except for this particularly flourishing period, the workshop was composed of the master, two full-time workers, to which were added several men according to the needs at the time. On several occasions, we also find some new barrels that were given to other Venetian craftsmen. In January 1666 and November 1667, for example, the Bertasi ordered some barrels from Antonio Feltrin, who had his workshop in the parish of San Geremia. Both purchases were made in periods of strong production for the workshop. Therefore, in case of necessity the Bertasi were not only taking

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<sup>26</sup> At the end of the sixteenth century, the holidays in which there was some ceremony where the members of the government of the Serenissima were supposed to participate (in different ways and forms) numbered about 86. To these latter we must of course add those days in which official ceremonials were not expected. It seems reasonable to suppose there were at least a hundred festive days over a year. See: MUIR Edward, *Civic ritual in Renaissance Venice*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 78.

<sup>27</sup> We use the term ‘full time’ to define a constant work commitment over a month, certainly not to define the number of working hours in a day. The standard working day was in fact about 13 or 14 hours, and this was true in all manufacturing sectors. However, Murano kiln workers were working for ‘only’ 12 hours per day, due to the special process of glass production. CAIZZI Bruno, *Industria e commercio della Repubblica Veneta nel XVIII secolo*, Milan, Banca Commerciale Italiana, 1965, p. 39.

<sup>28</sup> In this year, the shopkeeper pays 706 days of work to their journeymen, against 625 of the previous year, and 591 of 1668.

advantage of temporary labourers, but they had also the ability to outsource part of their work to other craftsmen.

As mentioned earlier, the artisan's workshop is thus a particularly dynamic working reality, a mirror of a vibrant and fluid labour market, made up of a great number of workers ready to make their skills available in a new shop also only for a few days a year. The high mobility of work is a phenomenon that has been traced back to several productive sectors of modern Europe,<sup>29</sup> and which is accompanied by a strong insecurity for workers. A few days of work could not be sufficient for the sustenance of an individual (and not even of a possible family, even if they were generally unmarried individuals), so they had to be involved in other economic activities to survive.

It should also be stressed that the strong turnover of workers within the Bertasi workshop is not accompanied by any specific seasonal pattern. The workload followed only the trend of the demand, which appears to not be related to the succession of meteorological seasons like other productive areas.

Just as there is no pattern in the temporality of hiring, there is also no form of wage differentiation among the workers of this workshop. Francesco di Giacomo is always paid 50 soldi per day, while all the other workers will have a 40 soldi reward for one day of work.<sup>30</sup> We do not know if the 10 more soldi per day granted to Francesco di Giacomo can be considered a premium skill or if they are a sort of 'family premium', but surely the wage uniformity that distinguishes all the other workers is surprising. In a workshop, even in a cooper's one, the tasks to be performed were many and they required different degrees of experience and ability. The salary was generally the result of a bargaining aimed to recognise the skills of

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<sup>29</sup> CARACAUSI Andrea, *Dentro la bottega. Culture del lavoro in una città d'età moderna*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2008, pp. 35-40;

<sup>30</sup> These are daily wages generally in line with those of journeymen operating in other productive sectors. In fact, during the same period, a journeyman in the building sector earned an average of 35.41 soldi, while one at work in a Murano glassware earned 50.70 soldi. See: TRIVELLATO Francesca, *Fondamenta dei vetrai. Lavoro, tecnologia e mercato a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento*, Rome, Donzelli, 2000, p. 66; ZANNINI Andrea, *L'economia veneta nel Seicento. Oltre il paradigma della "crisi generale"*, in *La popolazione italiana nel Seicento*, Bologna, CLUEB, 1999, p. 495.

the worker, and the higher these skills were the more they needed to be remunerated. In the Bertasi shop this does not happen, and for instance in 1668 Carlo, who will work for 214 days, received the same wage as Menego, who spent less than two months in the shop, or the same as an anonymous journeyman called to help just for one single day. This failure to acknowledge the different abilities of workers appears to be a very interesting topic to deal with, but through the documents in our possession we cannot go further with our analysis.

Returning to the composition of the workshop, in October 1666 the master and the journeymen were joined by a *garzone* (apprentice) named Andrea. The latter is regularly enrolled in the Guild on the 12th of October, through a contract signed at the *Giustizia Vecchia* judiciary where the contractors looked at the type of work the apprentice had to learn, the structure to which it was allocated, the duration of the period of apprenticeship, and the kind of compensation the new recruit was supposed to receive. The wage generally consisted of a part in cash and a part in kind. Even if we do not have the contract, we can get some details from the trustee's budget. We know that Andrea Busa, this the name of the apprentice, was orphaned by his father Giovanni and that his birthplace was Bassano del Grappa, a town at the foot of the Alps and situated in the heart of the Venetian Mainland. We do not know if before being enrolled by the Bertasi, Andrea was still living in Bassano or had already moved to the capital, but the first hypothesis is certainly not to be discarded. The strong geographical mobility of workers, whether they were journeymen or apprentices, was no less pronounced than the turnover in the workshop mentioned earlier, and appears to be one of the distinguishing features of labour history in the early modern period.<sup>31</sup> However, we do not know precisely the age of our apprentice, but usually the entrance to the workshop was at 14 years old. In general, after four years the *garzone* could get the status of journeyman and thus receive a salary based on his actual production capacity.<sup>32</sup> As already mentioned,

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<sup>31</sup> ASCOTT Diana E. and LEWIS Fiona, *Motives to move. Reconstructing individual migration histories in early eighteenth-century Liverpool*, in *Migration, mobility and modernization*, edited by David J. Siddle, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000, p. 91.

<sup>32</sup> As often happens, rules in the *Ancien Régime* had fluid boundaries and these data should be taken as a guideline. As Daniele Beltrami showed, the average age for access to those guilds not related



during the apprenticeship the salary was decided in advance and was generally accompanied by a part in kind. During the period considered here, the only wage granted to Andrea is that of February 1668 and consisted of 24 lire. Much more frequent are the expenses to dress him. As soon as he arrived at the workshop, Andrea received a “work shirt” and two others will be bought for him in a couple of years. Always in the period of his stays in shop, he was given a pair of socks, a shirt, two pairs of pants, and three pairs of shoes. Other than these, the Bertasi spent some money for repairing his shoes and for washing his clothes. In April 1667 we also find some legal expenses. It was not uncommon for apprentices to be involved in trials, perhaps against an old master from whom they had left. If we have previously seen how it was common practice for a worker to change a shop with a certain frequency, the same was in fact true for apprentices.

In the Bertasi budget, the activity of the workshop appears in complete symbiosis with the life of the family. Now, we want to know if, and how, a change in the business volume of the workshop impacted the family’s living conditions. As we said, 1667 was a particularly fortunate year for the cooper shop and it was characterised by a strong increase in production. The first effect on the Bertasi family expenses was an increase in spending in monetary terms. Between 1667 and 1668 they spent in consumption from 60 to 200 lire more per year than the previous (and the following) period. Surprisingly, they increased mostly their spending share in food, in absolute contradiction with what the Engels law states. In percentages (Table 15), the Bertasis spent about 40 per cent of their total budget on food and another 6.5 per cent (on average) on wine. In 1667, both these percentages increased significantly: compared to the previous year, we find a 7.5

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to the sale of staple goods (greengrocers, grain and flour sellers, oil sellers), nor the production of consumer goods (tailors, chapels, dyers, printers, blacksmiths), nor offering basic services (hairdressers, barbers) was 13.75 years old, while young people remained in a shop for 4.38 years on average. BELTRAMI Daniele, *La composizione economica e professionale della popolazione di Venezia nei secoli XVII e XVIII*, “Giornale degli Economisti e Annali di Economia – Nuova serie”, n. 1-2, 1951, p. 74.

Division	Years				
	1665	1666	1667	1668	1669
1 - Food and non-alcoholic beverages	33.59%	40.54%	47.90%	40.62%	41.63%
2 - Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	5.57%	7.44%	9.97%		3.47%
3 - Clothing and footwear	1.05%	2.64%	3.96%	3.26%	1.05%
4 - Housing, maintenance of the dwelling, livestock and fuels	54.37%	38.19%	33.09%	39.83%	30.15%
5 - Furnishing, household equipment and services	1.35%	2.03%	0.34%	1.23%	2.50%
6 - Health				0.02%	
7 - Transport	0.13%	0.36%		0.24%	
8 - Communication					
9 - Recreation and culture			0.05%	0.06%	
10 - Education	2.47%	1.99%	1.43%	0.92%	1.04%
11 - Catering and accomodation services		3.57%			
12 - Personal care and effects, and miscellaneous services		0.16%	0.20%	1.34%	0.06%
13 - Social protection and support services		0.78%			
14 - Financial and legal services	0.33%	0.18%		2.57%	4.00%
15 - Taxes and fees		0.97%	2.72%	9.72%	0.37%
16 - Unidentifiable expenses	1.14%	1.14%	0.35%	0.18%	15.73%

Table 15. Percentage of expenditure per Division of the Bertasi household, 1665-1669.

per cent increase on food and a 2.5 per cent increase on wine. In the following year, with the return of an ordinary rhythm of production for the shop, both costs returned to pre-boom levels. Does the increased financial availability of the family also result in a change in the diet composition? We cannot fully answer this question, because the trustee changed the way he registered food expenses over time. For the first year he had accurately recorded all the various expenses incurred, but starting from September 1666 many expenses are simply catalogued as “for *companatico*”.<sup>33</sup> The most affected by this change are the references to meat, fish, fruit, and vegetables, which in some years even disappear from the budget. However, the fate of eggs, dairy products, oil and other fats is different, which are always considered separately from the trustee. Thanks to this fact, we know that between 1667 and 1668 the consumption of these products doubled, and then returned to more usual levels in 1669.

The increased financial availability not only improved the Bertasi diet, but also their wardrobe. In 1667, clothing and footwear expenses increased by more than one percentage point over the previous year, before declining again in the following years. In particular, the payments for the purchase of new clothing materials and for the payment of a tailor are increasing. We do not know for sure whether in addition to this increase in expenses there has been a qualitative improvement in the materials purchased. The few indications in our possession seem to suggest that

<sup>33</sup> A generic term that refers to any food that accompanies bread, and then potentially to every food.

the family purchases, even between 1667 and 1668, have always been kept on somewhat modest levels by buying cloths of linen or hemp, or woollen cloth of medium-low quality.

It is interesting to note that while expenses for food and garments are increasing, we can observe a simultaneous contraction in those for the home, both for the maintenance and the furnishing of the latter. It seems that the family wants to take advantage of the temporary increase in the revenues to rapidly and quickly improve the basic living conditions of the family members, guaranteeing to them better garments and (especially) better food. About this, there is not only the decision to invest more in some primary consumptions, but also the will to converge other resources available for this spending. This is probably an 'instinctive' reaction by the household dictated by the discontinuity and unpredictability of the economy during the *Ancien Régime*, which led families to take advantage of every good year in anticipation of more uncertain times.

### **The past, the present, and the future of a household**

One of the biggest issues of using the budgets collected by the *Giudici di Petizion* for the study of the evolution of pattern of consumption in the early modern period lies in the inability to know with certainty what the lifestyle of the family was before the death of the breadwinner, and generally its socio-economic condition. Data on the deceased heads of the household are generally scarce: we know their name, whether they are noble or not, and sometimes we can go back to their profession. However, we do not know what their education was, and what their tastes were, their preferences, their habits, and their manner of living.

This information is unfortunately quite difficult to recover in the great majority of cases, but the situation improves if we look at the noble families. Aristocratic families, thanks to their important role in the social, political and economic landscape, have left us a number of precious documents that allow us to deepen the analysis of consumer behaviours, having a more precise idea, though not

exhaustive, of the material life style of the household before the death of the breadwinner.

Among the nineteen families that compose our sample for the 1770s we have one of the wealthiest and most illustrious families of the city, the Pisani *da Santo Stefano*.<sup>34</sup> The budget in our possession concerns the family of Almorò III Alvise,<sup>35</sup> son of the 114<sup>th</sup> doge of the *Serenissima* Alvise Pisani. This budget covers a period of 12 years, from February 1766 to May 1779. It is a rather precise and detailed account, kept by Alvise's brother, Zuanne Francesco. The latter certainly knew how to draw up a proper budget as he was nominated *Procuratore di San Marco*, a magistrate who, among other things, also dealt with the management of some Trusts, like the *Giudici di Petizion*. The Procurators of Saint Mark were among the most prestigious offices in the Republic, and according to some scholars they were second only to that of doge. However, Zuanne Francesco was not the only member of the family to get such an important assignment. Almorò III Alvise himself received this office in the 1750s, and previous Procurators included their uncle Carlo, their paternal great-grandfather Almorò, and their maternal great-grandfather Andrea Contarini. Additionally, the two male sons of Almorò III Alvise will be named Procurators in the future. Being a *Procuratore* was a principal charge within the Republic and the continued presence of members of this branch of the Pisani family shows how their influence and wealth continued between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We talk about wealth because the basic requirement to aspire to the office of Procurator of Saint Mark was not only having a strong capacity during an entire career serving in various administrative and diplomatic offices of the state, but also belonging to a family with a solid and recognised affluence. Having to handle and manage large amounts of money, the Republic

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<sup>34</sup> For the history of the Pisani *da Santo Stefano* see also: GALLO Rodolfo, *Una famiglia patrizia. I Pisani ed i palazzi di S. Stefano e di Stra*, Venice, Reale Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie, 1945. The eighteenth-century events of the other two branches of the Pisani, the *dal Banco* and *Moretta*, were effectively narrated by Giuseppe Gullino in: GULLINO Giuseppe, *I Pisani dal banco e Moretta. Storia di due famiglie veneziane in età moderna e delle loro vicende patrimoniali tra 1705 e 1836*, Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano, 1984.

<sup>35</sup> ASV, *Giudici di Petizion*, Rendimenti di Conto, 1009, notebook not numbered nor dated.

wanted to prevent some noblemen in economic difficulties from being tempted to solve their financial problems by using the funds of the judiciary. But the high number of Pisani *da Santo Stefano* who served as *Procuratore* is not the only sign of the great wealth of this family. Alvise, before being elected doge in 1735, was ambassador in France at the court of Louis XIV. The charge of a Venetian ambassador to a foreign court was a particularly costly job, and that of ambassador in France was even more expensive given the magnificence of the Versailles court, because he was obliged to anticipate all the expenses he was incurring during his diplomatic stay. Alvise Pisani accepted the assignment in 1699, but before him nine Venetian patricians refused the duty considering it too expensive for their finances. In France, Alvise Pisani did not pay too much attention to the expenses, showing that he was endowed with “abundance of riches and a prodigal soul”,<sup>36</sup> and this probably contributed to the establishment of a relationship of mutual esteem and friendship between him and Louis XIV, such that the Sun King was the baptismal godfather of Almorò III Alvise (the dead breadwinner of our budget) in 1701.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps Versailles was the inspiration for the construction of the new country villa in the Mainland, along the Brenta river, which has become one of the favourite holiday places for the lagoon aristocracy. Villa Pisani, today also called ‘the National’, is in fact the largest of the villas on the Brenta *riviera* (with its 114 rooms, recalling its creator and first owner, who was the 114<sup>th</sup> doge of the Republic) and certainly one of the most refined. After the fall of the *Serenissima* it will soon become Napoleon’s residence, and then summer residence of the emperors of Austria. At the same time, the future doge was also concerned with the renovation of the palace in Venice, entrusting the works to Gerolamo Frigimelica, who already had prepared the initial projects for the villa Stra,<sup>38</sup> with space for a rich library-museum, whose spaces were modelled taking inspiration from the Marciana library of Saint Mark square and whose book collection will greatly benefit from the

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<sup>36</sup> *Serie di dogi di Venezia intagliati in rame da Antonio Nani giuntevi alcune notizie biografiche estese da diversi*, vol. I, Venice, Tipografia di Giambattista Merlo, 1840, *ad vocem* Luigi Pisani.

<sup>37</sup> CALICHIOPOLI Giovanni Maria, *Per l'ingresso di sua eccellenza Luigi Pisani kavalier, e procurator di San Marco. Orazione*, Venice, 1753, p. vii

<sup>38</sup> BRUSEGAN Marcello, *I palazzi di Venezia*, Rome, Newton & Compton, 2007, pp. 287-294.

acquisitions made by the family members in their multiple diplomatic missions abroad. Over time, the Pisani library will become one of the major cultural tourism destinations in the eighteenth-century city, giving the family further prestige.<sup>39</sup>

This is the context in which Almorò III Alvise was born and grew up: a family that enjoyed a leading position in the political, economic, and cultural life of its city, which could ensure its family members easy access into every institution of the state, and which provided him with an advantageous wedding with Paolina Gambarà. The fortunes of the Pisani did not end with the death of the doge, and in the next thirty years Almorò III Alvise knew how to make his father's riches grow and his capabilities. He had a brilliant political career, culminating, as already mentioned, with the election to Procurator of San Mark.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, he cared for the family heritage by completing the works at the palaces of Venice and Stra, and he had the same prodigality of his father in the cultural field, commissioning, for instance, the fresco of the dance hall of the villa in Stra to Gianbattista Tiepolo. Overall, he could keep the Pisani family at the top of the Venetian patrician hierarchy, even though in this same period some initial signs of economic weakness started.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> RAINES Dorit, *La biblioteca-museo patrizia e il suo 'capitale sociale'. Modelli illuministici veneziani e l'imitazione dei nuovi aggregati*, in *Arte, storia, cultura in Friuli nell'età del Tiepolo*, edited by Caterina Furlan, Udine, Forum, 1996, pp. 63-84. The library became so rich and so frequented (it was open to the public three mornings a week, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), that a librarian needed to be hired. This work was held, among others, by Antonio Giovanni Bonicelli who compiled a three-volume catalogue that fortunately survived with the library itself, which was sold at the beginning of the nineteenth century to repay the heavy debts that the Pisani family had contracted in the meantime. See: BONICELLI Antonio Giovanni, *Bibliotheca Pisanorum veneta annotationibus nonnullis illustrata*, Venice, Typis Antonii Curti, 1807.

<sup>40</sup> He was first part of the *Collegio sopra l'Arsenale*, an institution charged to monitor and control the activities of the Arsenal; then a member of the Council of X, the secret services of the Republic; governor (*rettore*) in Brescia; and, before assuming the office of *Procuratore di San Marco*, he was *Provveditore Generale all'Armar*, attending the materials and the personnel of the Navy, both in disarmament and in activity. On the *cursus honorum* of Alvise Pisani: CALICHIOPOLI Giovanni Maria, *Per l'ingresso*, pp. viii-xv.

<sup>41</sup> The prodigality in the artistic and political sphere, and a luxurious lifestyle ended by slowly blowing the Pisani family. In the first half of the eighteenth century, for example, the declarations

This is the situation of the Pisani *da Santo Stefano* family at the death of Almorò III Alvise in 1669. Let us now concentrate on what happened next, thanks to the budgets in our possession, trying to understand whether the death of the prodigal breadwinner had some impact on the lifestyle of his descendants. First, we must describe the composition of the family. Almorò III Alvise and his wife Paolina Gambarà had five children, two males and three females: Alvise, Francesco, Elena, Elisabetta, and Marina. At the time of her father's death, the latter were barely adolescents. Alvise was in fact 16 years old, while Francesco was just 10, and Marina even younger. The wealth and social prestige of the family does not recoil in the short term, and a prime indication of this is given by the flourishing matrimonial policy that Paolina and her brother in law Zuanne Francesco could guarantee to all five beneficiaries of the Pisani Trust. The latter will in fact all have extremely favourable marriages with members of some of the most influential noble families in the city of Venice. Alvise will marry Giustiniana Pisani, the only and last heir of the rich branch of *Santa Maria del Giglio*;<sup>42</sup> Francesco will marry Pisana Mocenigo, whose father, Alvise Mocenigo II, served as the major charge of *Luogotenente of Friuli*;<sup>43</sup> Elena will be the bride of Andrea IV Da Lezze, whose uncle was ambassador for the *Serenissima* in Istanbul;<sup>44</sup> Elisabetta married Andrea da Mula, belonging to one of the oldest families in the city;<sup>45</sup> and, finally, Marina will be the wife of Nicolò Corner, who will soon become, after the fall of the

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for the Tenth passed from 35122.3 ducats in 1712 to 34702.3 ducats in 1740. The situation in the long run worsened so much that the family was forced to sell in 1807 the villa in Stra to the State in a vain effort to cover the debts. GULLINO Giuseppe, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 84, Rome, Treccani, 2015, *ad vocem* Pisani Alvise; GULLINO Giuseppe, *Venezia. Un patriziato per cinque secoli*, Sommacampagna, Cierre, 2015, pp. 226-227.

<sup>42</sup> GULLINO Giuseppe, *Un patriziato*, p. 226.

<sup>43</sup> TALASSI Angelo, *Poesie varie*, vol. II, Venice, presso Antonio Zatta, 1789, p. 351. The *Luogotenente del Friuli* was the governor of the Friuli region.

<sup>44</sup> DE PELLEGRINI Giovanni, *Notes and documents related to the family of da Lezze. An heraldic, historical, and genealogical study*, Norwich, Agas H. Hoose, 1900, pp. 15, 17; GALTAROSSA Massimo, *Il personale della legazione veneziana*, "Hilâl. Studi Turchi e Ottomani", n. 3, 2013, p. 81.

<sup>45</sup> *Dizionario storico-portatile di tutte le venete patrizie famiglie*, Venice, presso Giuseppe Bettinelli, 1780, p. 131

Republic, the first president of the Municipality, established under French control in May 1797.<sup>46</sup>

If the Pisani's finances had a strong bearing on determining marriage strategies, it is also true that weddings inevitably ended up with a major influence on family consumption strategies. There are two marriages visible through our budgets, the one of Elena in 1774 and the one of Alvisè in 1775, and the latter represents a turning point in the economic history of the Pisani family.

First, we start looking at some of the main categories of spending before 1775. Expenses for the maintenance of the family are, as expected, particularly high. Just the expenses for the meals exceed 3,000 ducats per year, and to these we must add, on average, about 650 ducats for the wine, and another 1800 ducats for the firewood (for heating both the palace in Venice and the summer villa in Stra). Although food habits were certainly characterised by luxury and sophistication, as was normal for an important affluent family like the Pisani in which the prodigality was certainly not defective, we must not charge all this exaggerated food spending to family members. The 3000 ducats per year were used to also cover the food expenditure for the servants. While we unfortunately do not know the exact number of servants, we know that between 1768 and 1774 the domestic service costs about 5000 ducats per year. This figure does not include the expensive services of doctors, surgeons, and lawyers, which are counted separately, but only the salaries of the small army of waiters, chefs, gondoliers who worked and lived in the palace, plus the wages of those who were occasionally employed for some specific tasks, such as bricklayers, masons, carpenters. For instance, seventy years before another branch of the Pisani family, the *dal Banco*, spent little more than 1900 ducats to pay 22 people.<sup>47</sup> Adjusting for inflation, we can therefore suppose that the *da Santo Stefano* branch surpassed 30 employees in the first part of the 1770s. However, servicemen not only received food from their masters, but also appropriate clothes.

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<sup>46</sup> GULLINO Giuseppe, *Un patriziato*, p. 218.

<sup>47</sup> GULLINO Giuseppe, *I Pisani dal Banco e Moretta*, pp. 201-204.



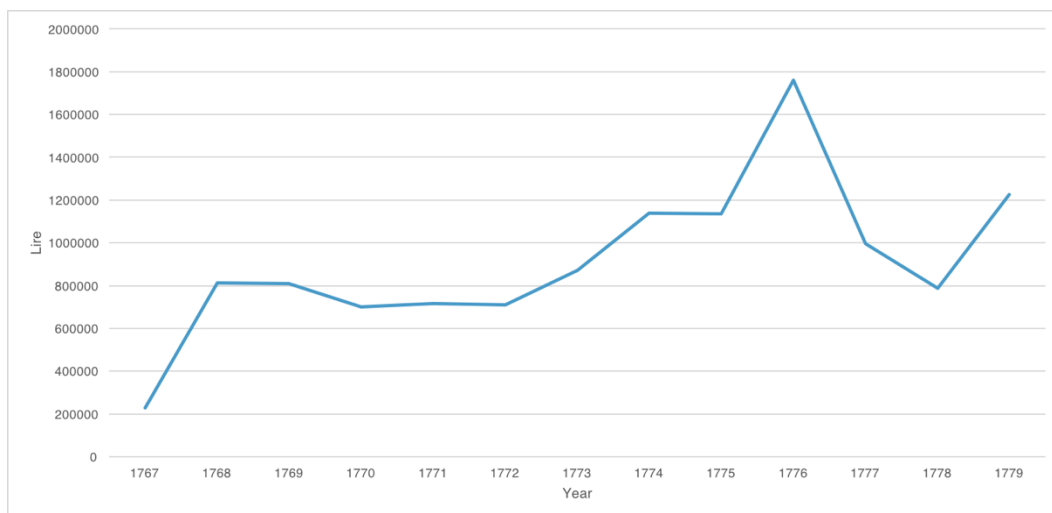


Figure 14. Expenses of the Pisani family between 1667 and 1779 expressed in lire.

Even on this, the Pisani spare no expense, and so annually the “livery expenses” abundantly exceed 1000 ducats. We are talking only about the staff of Venice, as we have no precise references for the people working in the Mainland. It is therefore possible that during the summer vacation periods the Pisani were not the only ones to move, but most of their servants followed them.

These figures are prodigious. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, Alvisè’s marriage is a significant turning point for the family economy, which in 1775 will greatly increase the expenses (Figure 14), despite the high costs incurred for the marriage of Elena to Andrea da Lezze just one year before.<sup>48</sup>

First, the palace of Venice was completely restored and renovated to accommodate the new family. Between 1768 and 1774 furniture and reparation costs hardly reached a thousand ducats per year, while in the two-year period 1775-1776 more than 50000 ducats were spent.<sup>49</sup> Then, the newly renovated and lavishly furnished rooms needed to be decorated, and during this time another 50000 ducats are spent

<sup>48</sup> Elena will receive a dowry of 16000 ducats, to which another three tranches of 2000 ducats each given to her in the following years must be added. Moreover, in 1774 his marriage cost the other family 12638 ducats.

<sup>49</sup> The year 1776 represents a record year: more than 31000 ducats were spent on furniture, nearly 7000 were undergoing renovation work, and another 2800 ducats were added to cover the wages of other skilled workers.

on “golds and silvers”, most of which were probably precious silver decorative objects to make the lives of the spouses and of their relatives more comfortable. The care of the ‘new’ palace and of the new family obviously needed new manpower, and in fact after the wedding of Alvise we can see a significant increase in the expenses incurred for domestic services. As seen above, before the wedding of Alvise staff salaries amounted to about 5000 ducats, but the figure rose to more than 6300 ducats between 1775 and 1779. This obviously also impacted expenses for food and wine, which are subject to simultaneous growth. It should be noted, however, that the wage costs increase by 27 per cent, and those for meals increase by 60 per cent from one period to the other. It is therefore conceivable that the numerous parties organised by the Pisani, both in Venice and in Stra, may have been a major element in determining this expansion. This passion for worldliness is also evident in the changes in holiday spending, which after Andrea’s marriage double the values they had in the previous period. However, these are not the only elements that show us how social and worldly life takes on an increasingly evident importance in the lives of the heirs of Almorò III Alvise. Among these, the most noticeable are the expenses for the library, which, as seen above, had been strongly demanded by the doge Alvise and that greatly contributed to the prestige of the family. The doge grandchildren were not sharing the same love for literature that had united the rest of the family, so that after the marriage of Alvise the library spending is practically nil. At the same time, however, the costs for renting (or purchasing) stages in the city’s theatres is rising. Probably in these years Alvise and his brothers are acquainted with Carlo Goldoni, who will become their close friend. In fact, Goldoni will dedicate to Francesco one of his pieces and the Venetian playwright, in his Parisian period, will frequently attend the house of Alvise, in the meantime appointed ambassador of the *Serenissima* in France.<sup>50</sup> Apparently, the grandchildren considered the social visibility given by the participation in the many shows that the city offered more important than the one given by owning one of the richest private libraries of the time.

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<sup>50</sup> GALLO Rodolfo, *Una famiglia patrizia*, pp. 83-85.

However, Alvisè's wedding was also the time when the family was trying to boost its investments, perhaps even to meet the rising expenses. Thanks to the data about the payments for tithes, we can see how the Pisani, starting from 1774, had increased their landholdings in the Mainland. In the previous period, ordinary tithes were about 9600 annually, while from 1774 onwards they rose to just over 12,000, equivalent to an increase of 28 per cent.

However, this attempt to counterbalance the rise in consumption, which, as seen, reached remarkable levels was not met with success. The wealth of the family, which had already shown some signs of weakness at the turn of the century, with the passing of time ended up deteriorating more and more, bringing the Pisani to a swift and ruinous decline that came in the early years of the nineteenth century.

## **Conclusions**

In the previous pages, we have tried to bring the household, the single household, back to the centre of our attention. We have shown how much complexity and how much vivacity is hidden behind the budget of each family. Moreover, in these pages we have been able to highlight some aspects that, within a quantitative study on consumer patterns, are usually 'smoothed', and then lost, during data processing. In particular, we want to emphasise three of them. First, we lose the internal dynamics of the household. As we have seen through the example of the Olini brothers, a budget describing a 'traditional' pattern of consumption can instead hide a complex variety of behaviours. Moreover, behind an apparent equality of spending between the various family members we can find very different, and sometimes almost antithetical, allocation strategies. In such cases, the greatest risk is to underestimate the family's well-being level, assuming a backwardness in material living standards in households that are living in a state of comfort.

Second, we are usually not considering the momentary changes in living standards due to sudden, and unexpected, external shocks. In this regard, the case of the Bertasi family showed us how an unexpected increase in the available capital has twisted the traditional way in which resources are distributed among the various

spending categories, even if only for a short period of time. With the Bertasi we have shown a case of positive shock, and therefore an increase in financial availability for the family, but the same is also valid in those cases where we witness a sudden contraction of revenues. We saw what can happen after the loss of the job by the breadwinner, the death of the latter, or a year characterised by a strong increase in inflation (and in the early modern period changes up to 20 or 30 per cent between one year and the next are not unusual). The effects of these shocks may be more or less lasting over time, but not considering them means not highlighting the ability, and the capability, of a household to rapidly adapt its living standards to a new economic context.

Third, we are not taking into account those changes in living standards that are the results of internal and voluntary shocks. The example of Pisani in this case is exemplary. The allocation of resources radically changes following the marriage of one of the beneficiaries. Unlike the previous case, lifestyle changes are the result of a precise plan by the family, which at a precise time in its history decides to adjust its patterns of consumption to achieve a certain goal. Even in this case, we have chosen a ‘positive’ example, but the mechanism would be the same even if the family decides to tighten its consumption patterns or to contract the volume of spending. Once again, the ability of a household to freely choose its own consumption strategy emerges, on the basis of its own internal logics which are not necessarily driven by the macroeconomic conjuncture.

What should not be forgotten is that a household is not a granitic object, but a living entity constantly evolving or devolving, able to act, react, and plan its behaviours through its own rationality, which is different and unique for each family unity.

Finally, by highlighting such limits of general quantitative research we certainly do not want to reduce its scope and meaning. Quantitative analyses are in fact crucial to understanding the general flows in patterns of consumption. However, it seems necessary to stress the necessity, especially in a study based on family budgets, to step back and return to the household. In this way, quantitative analyses can be better contextualised and problematised, in order to guarantee deeper and more complex results. These two approaches should not be conceived as antagonistic, but

as complementary. This is a necessary operation especially in studies on consumption as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon.



## The modernity of flexibility

We started this study by asking whether, between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, Venice had its own consumer revolution, and thus if the *Serenissima* variations in consumption and purchase strategies were similar to those surveyed in the rich and developed economies of the north-Atlantic area.

Apparently, after our analysis of consumer dynamics revealed by the household budgets collected by the *Giudici di Petizion*, the answer must be negative. As we have seen, in the last two centuries of the early modern period the evolution of consumption practices looks nuanced and sometimes characterised by little defined contours. In addition, if we look at data available for the non-nobles alone, which should be the class that most alters its consumption trying to emulate the aristocracy, the situation seems to suggest even an involution of their consumption practices. The amount of spending in some of the new consumer goods, such as personal items and objects related to domestic sociality, is for instance undergoing a contraction.

Moreover, the process of redistribution of wealth that would accompany and drive the changes in consumer behaviour, fundamental in the theory of the consumer revolution, is completely missing. On the one hand, income inequalities remain largely stable with respect to non-noble and they increase considerably if we look at the patrician class. On the other hand, consumption inequalities are increasing for both categories. Overall, we can trace a process of strong polarisation within society.

However, these same analyses have also contributed to paint an image of consumption and of the consumer society of Venice which is particularly complex and multifaceted. We have showed how the logics of consumption do not respond to logics of subsistence that for a long time have been hypothesised for the

preindustrial period, but how they are driven by a not uniform, and above all flexible consumption culture.

The modernity of Venetian consumption did not lie in a general shift in consumer behaviour from a particular set of goods to another, but in the high degree of flexibility that characterised Venetian consumers, regardless of their social class. In fact, every consumer had the ability to modify and adapt his or her own consumer strategies over time, but always keeping as a guideline his or her set of beliefs, preferences and desires. It is noteworthy that in this framework, the macroeconomic conjuncture can eventually influence but never completely determine consumer choices. Venetian society between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appears to have been especially articulated, faceted and segmented, and every actor behaved in a unique way. This was a society very similar to that of today: a mass-consumption society where, nevertheless, there was not a mass of uniform consumers. Yesterday like today, the main feature of modern consumption can be identified in “the experience of choice as a generalized social phenomenon”.<sup>1</sup>

What are the reasons behind this flexibility in consumption that characterised Venetian society? Overall, we can trace two main sets of justifications. The first is of a cultural order. The *Serenissima* appears to have been highly responsive and receptive to new stimuli coming from the market, both internal and external. Venetian consumers were not only able to recognise the new trends and possibilities, but they were also able to quickly consider them as actual options of consumption and then translate them into action. Signs of this can for instance be identified in the frequency with which the modes changed in clothing, always ready to follow the dictates that came from the rest of the continent;<sup>2</sup> or the velocity at which coffee became a widespread social phenomenon among the population of the lagoon, quite ahead of other European countries. This open mentality is probably the most obvious cultural heritage of the commercial nature and past of Venice. The city of Saint Mark was for centuries the commercial leader of the Mediterranean

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<sup>1</sup> GABRIEL Yannis and LANG Tim, *The Unmanageable Consumer*, London, Sage Publications, 2006, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance: DAVANZO POLI Doretta, *Abiti antichi e moderni dei Veneziani*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 2001.



trades, and it was still living with commerce. Then, it was a cosmopolitan city where merchants and traders from all over the Mediterranean and from many regions of Europe met and exchanged their goods, their products, and their ideas. Venice was accustomed to diversity and its population was able to benefit and take advantage of it, as well of the open and multicultural atmosphere. Probably, another signal of this cultural opening relies in the predilection for the Venetian population for the public space, rather than the private, as a place to entertain and for social interactions.

The cultural openness and responsiveness to market stimuli demonstrated by Venetian consumers must not, however, be confused with the simultaneous presence of a full 'commodified society'. Consumption was still largely characterised by cultural struggle and moral anxiety within society. The luxury debates, in this regard, are illustrative. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, luxuries and semi-luxurious objects (and then most of the new consumer goods) were not only condemned by religious ethics as instruments of vice that diverted men and women from the bliss of eternal life, but their consumption was also accused by the public morality of destabilizing society, corrupting manners and increasing inequalities.<sup>3</sup> In Venice, the cultural framework of consumption moved, therefore, in two opposite directions. On the one hand, it allowed the consumer to act on the market in the way he or she preferred and to adopt his or her preferred strategies. On the other hand, that same cultural framework set him or her boundaries, albeit mostly moral,<sup>4</sup> to his or her actions. The process of making choices was thus not completely free, but governed by a complex set of logics in

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<sup>3</sup> ALLERSTON Patricia, *Consuming problems. Wordly goods in Renaissance Venice*, in *The material Renaissance*, edited by Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007, pp. 11-46; BERG Maxine, *Luxury, the luxury trades, and the roots of industrial growth. A global perspective*, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, edited by Frank Trentmann, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 179-182.

<sup>4</sup> In the eighteenth century, the Venetian judiciary dedicated to sumptuary laws had lost much of its power, and after 1749 it remained active only to preserve the tradition. DA MOSTO Andrea, *L'Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Indice generale, storico, descrittivo ed analitico*, Rome, Biblioteca dell'Arte Editrice, 1937, p. 207.

which every individual faced a continuous trade-off between opportunities, wishes and values.

The second justification is instead an economic order. The consumer was able to adapt and modify his consumption patterns because there was a wide range of products which were available and affordable on the market. Fundamental in this regard was certainly the Venetian production and manufacturing sector, both for the capital and for the Mainland. As seen in the first chapter, the manufacturers of the Republic were able to find their own path to resist the advances and new products from northern Europe, without abandoning the luxury productions that for centuries had fuelled the economy of the state. The range of goods offered on the market was then particularly large and variegated, and could meet the needs, the tastes, and the economic possibilities of households characterised by very different levels of wealth. Furthermore, we must not forget that Venice in this period was still present in the Mediterranean with its ships, although weakened in comparison with the past, and many foreign merchants were still trading in the Rialto market. All these characteristics contributed to increasing the range of products available to consumers. Moreover, we cannot forget a certain ease of access to credit. Jewish pawn banks, inns and taverns were a widespread network of places where it was possible for people to easily pawn goods to get money to fuel their own consumption. If the city lenders were not enough, it was also possible to turn to the many *Monti di Pietà* in the Mainland that since their foundation in the fifteenth century were very active in lending money to the people of Venice.

Interestingly, this flexibility in consumption appears to be in existence already in the second half of the seventeenth century. Then, compared to Northern Europe, Venice would develop some of the distinctive features of the modern consumer society earlier, without ever having uniform consumer patterns. We need to wonder what the motivations behind this phenomenon are, and if they are to be traced in the same elements that we have outlined to justify the flexibility that characterises the *Serenissima* consumers. Probably the answer must be affirmative. On the one hand, the high receptivity of the Venetian cultural context to new stimuli, fuelled by the presence of a wide range of products on the market, had favoured the

development of a certain consumer independence. On the other hand, it probably prevented consumption patterns from fossilising into particular shapes.

The results of this research are of course not definitive. The number of families in our sample is relatively modest, as well as the number of documents analysed. We then strongly believe that further research is needed to paint a more complete and exhaustive picture of Venetian consumption in the early modern period. The research lines to follow would be many, but we limit ourselves to three of them.

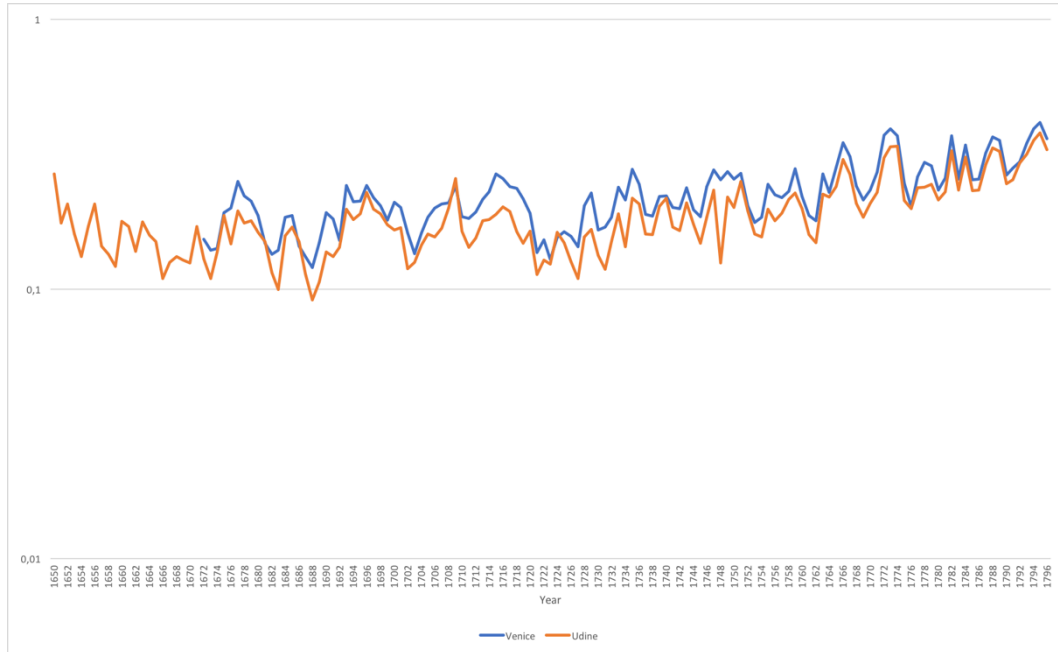
First, it seems necessary to expand the sample not only by increasing the frequency of decades surveyed between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, but also by moving back the investigation in time. As we have seen, the modernity of Venetian consumption can be identified in a marked flexibility of choice exerted by consumers and how this is a feature already present in the seventeenth century. The question is, when does it begin? Can we connect the modernity of Venetian consumption to the Renaissance season or is this a phenomenon that only matured afterwards?

Second, a study devoted to blend the use of the family budgets and the post-mortem inventories available for the same family would be extremely fruitful. In this way, it would be possible to analyse both before the stock of wealth of a family, and its flow of consumption after, in an attempt to understand if, and how, the two elements are interconnected.

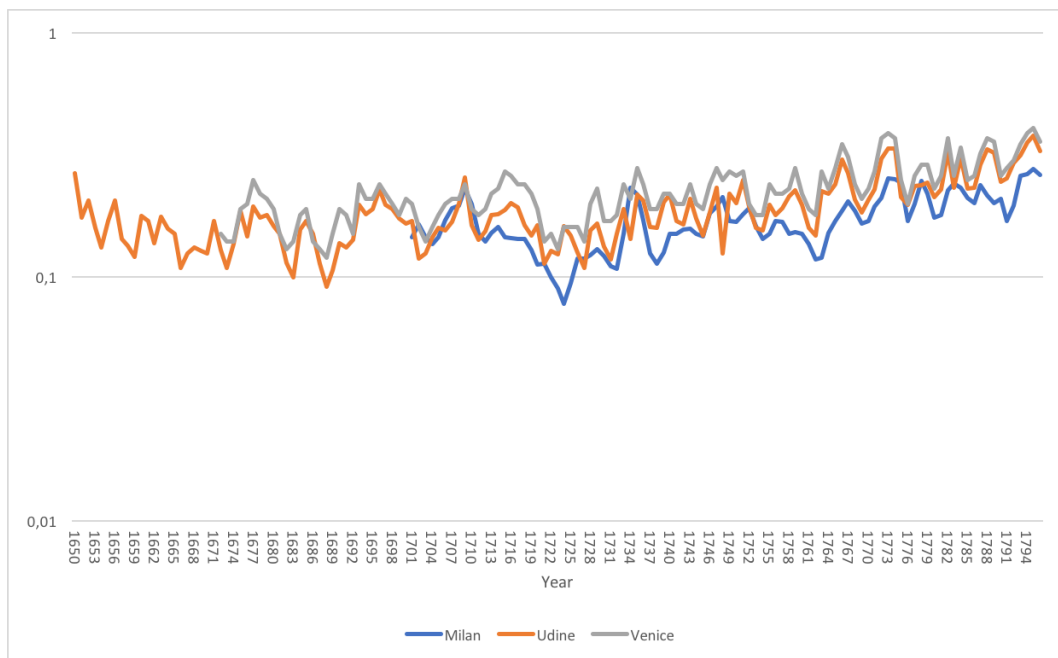
Finally, it would be helpful to better position the families belonging to the sample within the social ladder. By getting information on their income level, their real estate holdings, but also their exact place of residence, or what the deceased occupation was, it would be possible to provide more detailed and precise information about differences in consumption patterns between different social groups, going beyond the simple division between nobles and non-nobles that was used here. Furthermore, it would be possible to show any differentiation in material living standards between different occupational classes, or possibly also between different areas and neighbours of the city. With this kind of information, also the analysis of economic inequalities could be further improved, showing more in-depth dynamics between and within the various groups.



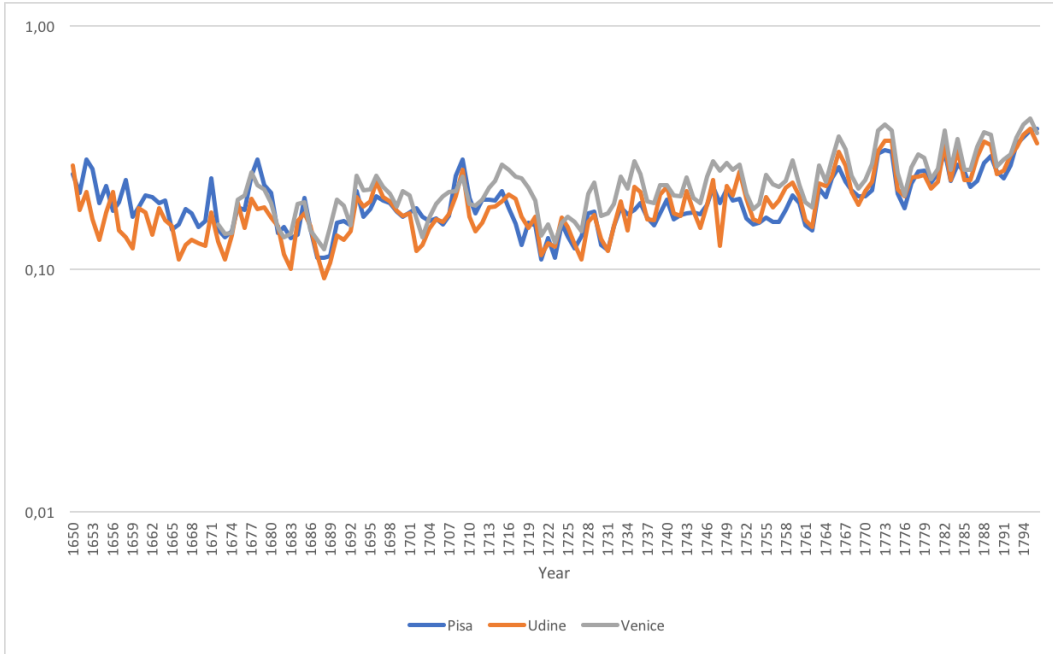
## Appendices



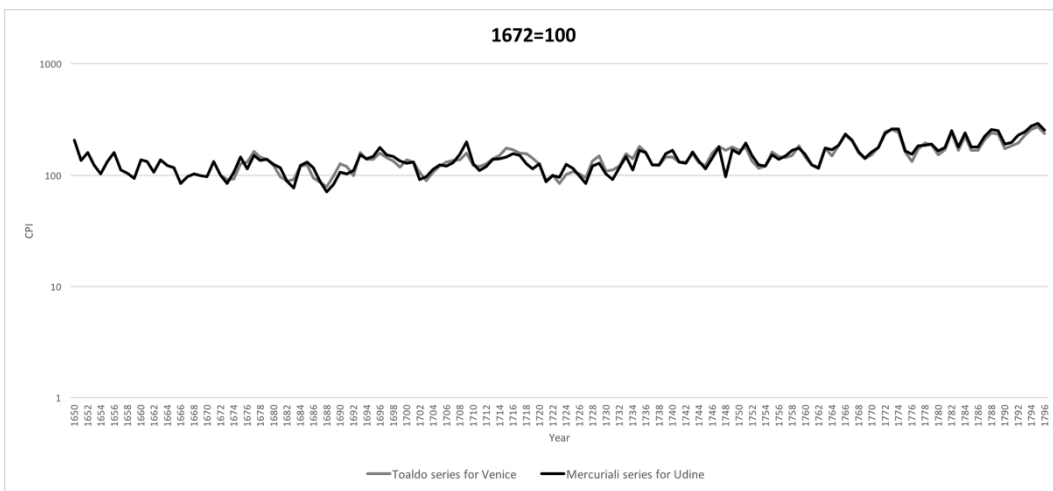
*Appendix 1. Wheat prices in Udine and Venice from 1650 to 1796. Data are expressed in Venetian Lire per moggio (333.27 litres). Log scale.*



*Appendix 2. Wheat prices in Milan, Udine, and Venice from 1650 to 1796. Prices in Venetian Lires for Udine and Venice, and Milanese Lires for Milan. Log scale.*



Appendix 3. Wheat prices in Pisa, Udine, and Venice from 1650 to 1796. Prices in Venetian Lires for Udine and Venice, and Florentine Lires for Pisa. Log scale.



Appendix 4. CPI calculated according to wheat prices for Venice and Udine from 1650 to 1796. Log scale.

*Appendix 5. Percentage of expenditures per class during the entire period of the trust: entire distribution. Median values.*

Class	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
	<i>n=11</i>	<i>n=3</i>	<i>n=18</i>
01.1.1 – Bread, cereals, and farinaceous-based products (ND)	0.46%	0.08%	0.75%
01.1.2 – Meat (ND)	0.12%		0.04%
01.1.3 – Fish and seafood (ND)	0.01%		0.01%
01.1.4 – Milk, cheese and eggs (ND)			0.21%
01.1.5 – Oils and fats (ND)	0.02%		0.15%
01.1.6 – Fruit (ND)	0.03%		0.03%
01.1.7 – Vegetables (ND)	0.15%		
01.1.8 – Sugar, chocolate, ice creams and sorbets (ND)	0.03%		0.03%
01.1.9 – Honey, jam and confectionery (ND)	0.03%		
01.1.10 – Salt and spices (ND)	0.06%		0.00%
01.1.11 – Food products n.e.c. (ND)			
01.2.1 – Coffee, tea and cocoa (ND)			0.05%
01.2.2 – Water, fruit and vegetables juices (ND)	0.01%		
01.3.0 – Food and non-alcoholic beverages used as a mean of payment (ND)	0.52%	0.58%	0.21%
02.1.1 – Wine (ND)	0.49%	1.54%	0.54%
02.1.2 – Spirits (ND)	0.06%		
02.1.3 – Beer (ND)			
02.2.0 – Tobacco (ND)			
2.3.0 – Alcoholic beverages and tobacco used as a mean of payment (ND)	0.20%	0.00%	0.01%
03.1.1 – Fabrics and clothing materials (SD)			
· 03.1.1/H: linen and hemp	0.29%	6.47%	0.30%
· 03.1.1/W: wool	4.05%	4.17%	1.34%
· 03.1.1/S: silk	0.20%	0.05%	1.64%
· 03.1.1/C: cotton	0.01%	0.03%	0.14%
· 03.1.1/M: mixed fibre fabric	0.06%	5.45%	0.10%
· 03.1.1/L: leather			0.63%
· 03.1.1/F: fur			
· 03.1.1/X: other or unknown	0.44%	17.88%	0.47%
03.1.2 – Garments (SD)			
· 03.1.2/H: linen and hemp	1.79%		0.49%
· 03.1.2/W: wool	0.95%	0.34%	0.17%
· 03.1.2/S: silk	0.39%		0.53%
· 03.1.2/C: cotton	0.10%		
· 03.1.2/M: mixed fibre fabric			
· 03.1.2/L: leather			0.02%
· 03.1.2/F: fur	0.24%		
· 03.1.2/X: other or unknown	1.05%	3.55%	0.37%
03.1.3 – Other articles of clothing and accessories (SD)	0.48%	3.20%	0.10%
03.1.4 – Decorations for garments (SD)	0.32%	2.76%	0.05%
03.1.5 – Making of clothing (S)	0.64%	7.63%	0.87%
03.1.6 – Cleaning and repair of clothing (S)	0.28%	0.14%	0.21%
03.1.7 – Used fabrics, clothing material, and garments (SD)	0.31%	0.55%	
03.1.8 – Used accessories and decorations for garments (SD)		0.94%	
03.2.1 – Shoes and footwear (SD)	0.68%	6.77%	0.35%
03.2.2 – Decorations for footwear (SD)	0.05%	0.12%	0.12%
03.2.3 – Making and repair of footwear (S)	0.34%	1.05%	0.06%
03.2.4 – Used shoes, footwear and decorations for footwear (SD)			
03.2.5 – Used decorations for footwear (SD)			

04.1.1 – Rentals paid by tenants for their main residence (S)		3.03%	1.98%
04.1.2 – Other rentals (S)	0.64%		1.35%
04.2.1 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of the main residence (D)	0.10%	0.18%	0.11%
04.2.2 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of secondary residences or of workshops (D)			
04.2.3 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of other properties (D)	0.53%	0.16%	0.09%
04.2.4 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of the main residence (S)	2.55%	0.23%	0.13%
04.2.5 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of secondary residences or of workshops (S)		0.17%	
04.2.6 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of other properties (S)	0.80%		1.39%
04.3.1 – Liquid fuels (ND)			
04.3.2 – Solid fuels (ND)	0.31%	0.36%	0.26%
04.4.1 – Livestock for the household (ND)			
04.4.2 – Livestock not for the household (ND)	0.19%		5.52%
05.1.1 – Furniture and furnishings (D)	0.70%	0.07%	0.05%
05.1.2 – Carpets and other floor coverings (D)		2.58%	
05.1.3 – Wall coverings (D)			
05.1.4 – Works of art (D)	0.33%		
05.1.5 – Repair of furniture, furnishings, floor coverings, wall coverings, and restorations of works of art (S)	0.22%	0.17%	0.04%
05.2.0 – Household textiles (SD)	0.35%		0.23%
05.3.1 – Glassware, tableware, silverware and household utensils (SD)	0.16%		0.02%
05.3.2 – Kitchen utensils (SD)			0.17%
05.4.1 – Tools and equipment for house (SD)	0.13%	0.57%	0.11%
05.4.2 – Tools and equipment for garden (SD)	0.49%		0.09%
05.5.1 – Non-durable household goods (ND)	0.01%		
05.5.2 – Domestic and household services (S)	2.34%	2.42%	1.41%
06.1.0 – Pharmaceutical and other medical products (ND)	1.09%	0.18%	0.34%
06.2.0 – Medical services (S)	0.11%	0.13%	1.08%
06.3.0 – Hospital services (S)			
07.1.1 – Horses and ponies (D)	0.10%		
07.1.2 – Animal-drawn vehicles (D)			0.49%
07.1.3 – Boats and ships (D)		0.38%	
07.2.1 – Spare parts and accessories for personal transport equipment (SD)	0.83%	0.07%	0.47%
07.2.2 – Maintenance and repair of personal transport equipment (S)	0.05%	0.07%	0.21%
07.3.1 – Passenger transport by road (S)	1.34%		0.01%
07.3.2 – Passenger transport by sea and inland waterway (S)	0.07%	0.01%	0.03%
07.3.3 – Combined passenger transport (S)	0.37%	0.09%	0.40%
07.3.4 – Other transport services (S)	0.44%	0.00%	0.13%
08.1.0 – Postal services (S)	0.09%		0.09%



09.1.1 – Music instruments (D)	0.06%		0.01%
09.1.2 – Durables for indoor recreation (D)	0.01%		
09.1.3 – Maintenance and repair of major durables for recreation and culture (S)			0.01%
09.2.1 – Games, toys, and hobbies (SD)	0.01%		
09.2.2 – Gardens, plants and flowers (ND)			0.05%
09.3.0 – Pets (ND)	0.10%		
09.4.1 – Cultural services (S)	0.03%		0.25%
09.4.2 – Games of chance (S)	0.05%		0.04%
09.5.1 – Books (SD)	0.05%	0.02%	1.77%
09.5.2 – Newspapers (ND)			0.06%
09.5.3 – Miscellaneous printed matter (SD)			0.05%
09.5.4 – Stationery (ND)	0.18%		0.06%
09.6.0 – Holidays (S)			3.97%
10.1.0 – Education (S)	0.30%	0.53%	1.56%
11.1.0 – Inns, taverns, cafés and the like (S)			0.18%
11.2.0 – Accommodation services (S)			0.07%
12.1.1 – Hairdressers and barbers (S)	0.43%		0.13%
12.1.2 – Appliances and articles for personal care (ND)	0.09%	0.02%	0.04%
12.2.0 – Prostitution (S)			
12.3.1 – Jewellery (SD)	5.26%		0.35%
12.3.2 – Clocks and watches (SD)	3.24%		0.22%
12.3.3 – Objects related to the consumption of tobacco (SD)	1.53%		
12.3.4 – Other personal effects n.e.c. (SD)	0.35%		0.06%
12.3.5 – Maintenance and repair of personal effects (S)	0.54%	0.47%	0.03%
12.4.1 – Funerary articles and expenditures for the funeral rite (SD)	0.94%	1.68%	2.09%
12.4.2 – Requiem masses (S)	0.75%		0.44%
13.1.0 – Social protection and support services to family members (S)	6.90%	4.38%	21.78%
13.2.0 – Social protection and support services to non-family members (S)	3.46%	0.48%	4.26%
14.1.1 – Investments in public debt or capital (S)	0.73%	3.92%	20.05%
14.1.2 – Investments in private capital (S)	5.16%		1.98%
14.2.1 – Interests paid on public investments (S)	2.99%	1.26%	7.25%
14.2.2 – Interests paid on private investments (S)	2.03%	18.98%	7.81%
14.3.0 – Expenditures paid for the redeem of a pawn (S)	1.21%	0.98%	2.62%
14.4.1 – Business insurance (S)			1.51%
14.4.2 – Property insurance (S)			
14.4.3 – Life insurance (S)			
14.5.1 – Trials, legal proceedings, and other legal services (S)	4.58%	1.71%	4.26%
14.5.2 – Hiring of an attorney or consults with lawyers or legal experts (S)	1.08%		0.49%
15.1.0 – Tithes and income taxes (S)	2.17%	8.43%	4.26%
15.2.0 – Fees and contributes for the membership of a guild, a confraternity, etc. (S)	1.91%		0.42%
15.3.0 – Other taxes and fees (S)	0.46%	1.66%	0.52%
16.1.0 – Unidentifiable expenses	20.75%	28.66%	8.65%

*Appendix 6. Percentage of expenditures per class during the entire period of the trust: noble households. Median values.*

Class	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
	<i>n=4</i>	<i>n=1</i>	<i>n=5</i>
01.1.1 – Bread, cereals, and farinaceous-based products (ND)	0.46%	0.08%	
01.1.2 – Meat (ND)	0.12%		
01.1.3 – Fish and seafood (ND)	0.01%		
01.1.4 – Milk, cheese and eggs (ND)			0.12%
01.1.5 – Oils and fats (ND)			
01.1.6 – Fruit (ND)	0.02%		0.03%
01.1.7 – Vegetables (ND)			
01.1.8 – Sugar, chocolate, ice creams and sorbets (ND)			0.09%
01.1.9 – Honey, jam and confectionery (ND)			
01.1.10 – Salt and spices (ND)			
01.1.11 – Food products n.e.c. (ND)			
01.2.1 – Coffee, tea and cocoa (ND)			0.01%
01.2.2 – Water, fruit and vegetables juices (ND)			
01.3.0 – Food and non-alcoholic beverages used as a mean of payment (ND)	0.52%	0.58%	0.24%
02.1.1 – Wine (ND)	0.31%	0.21%	0.55%
02.1.2 – Spirits (ND)			
02.1.3 – Beer (ND)			
02.2.0 – Tobacco (ND)			
2.3.0 – Alcoholic beverages and tobacco used as a mean of payment (ND)	0.20%	0.00%	
03.1.1 – Fabrics and clothing materials (SD)			
· 03.1.1/H: linen and hemp	0.15%		1.45%
· 03.1.1/W: wool	2.04%		1.34%
· 03.1.1/S: silk	0.23%		1.89%
· 03.1.1/C: cotton	0.00%		0.14%
· 03.1.1/M: mixed fibre fabric	0.06%		0.10%
· 03.1.1/L: leather			0.63%
· 03.1.1/F: fur			
· 03.1.1/X: other or unknown	0.64%		0.54%
03.1.2 – Garments (SD)			
· 03.1.2/H: linen and hemp			
· 03.1.2/W: wool			0.17%
· 03.1.2/S: silk	0.39%		0.21%
· 03.1.2/C: cotton	0.04%		
· 03.1.2/M: mixed fibre fabric			
· 03.1.2/L: leather			0.01%
· 03.1.2/F: fur			
· 03.1.2/X: other or unknown	0.92%		0.50%
03.1.3 – Other articles of clothing and accessories (SD)	0.18%		0.06%
03.1.4 – Decorations for garments (SD)	0.71%		0.05%
03.1.5 – Making of clothing (S)	0.34%		0.77%
03.1.6 – Cleaning and repair of clothing (S)	0.22%	0.00%	0.15%
03.1.7 – Used fabrics, clothing material, and garments (SD)	0.06%		
03.1.8 – Used accessories and decorations for garments (SD)			
03.2.1 – Shoes and footwear (SD)	0.24%		0.10%
03.2.2 – Decorations for footwear (SD)			
03.2.3 – Making and repair of footwear (S)			
03.2.4 – Used shoes, footwear and decorations for footwear (SD)			
03.2.5 – Used decorations for footwear (SD)			

04.1.1 – Rentals paid by tenants for their main residence (S)			1.47%
04.1.2 – Other rentals (S)	0.04%		1.35%
04.2.1 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of the main residence (D)		0.18%	
04.2.2 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of secondary residences or of workshops (D)			
04.2.3 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of other properties (D)	0.53%	0.16%	
04.2.4 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of the main residence (S)		0.37%	0.13%
04.2.5 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of secondary residences or of workshops (S)			
04.2.6 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of other properties (S)	0.99%		1.39%
04.3.1 – Liquid fuels (ND)			
04.3.2 – Solid fuels (ND)	0.09%	0.36%	0.14%
04.4.1 – Livestock for the household (ND)			
04.4.2 – Livestock not for the household (ND)	0.19%		
05.1.1 – Furniture and furnishings (D)	0.06%		0.07%
05.1.2 – Carpets and other floor coverings (D)			
05.1.3 – Wall coverings (D)			
05.1.4 – Works of art (D)			
05.1.5 – Repair of furniture, furnishings, floor coverings, wall coverings, and restorations of works of art (S)	0.03%	0.17%	0.04%
05.2.0 – Household textiles (SD)	0.13%		0.29%
05.3.1 – Glassware, tableware, silverware and household utensils (SD)	0.16%		0.03%
05.3.2 – Kitchen utensils (SD)			0.17%
05.4.1 – Tools and equipment for house (SD)	0.03%	0.57%	0.05%
05.4.2 – Tools and equipment for garden (SD)			
05.5.1 – Non-durable household goods (ND)			
05.5.2 – Domestic and household services (S)	2.24%	2.42%	1.29%
06.1.0 – Pharmaceutical and other medical products (ND)	2.47%	0.06%	0.26%
06.2.0 – Medical services (S)	0.15%	0.24%	1.46%
06.3.0 – Hospital services (S)			
07.1.1 – Horses and ponies (D)	0.10%		
07.1.2 – Animal-drawn vehicles (D)			
07.1.3 – Boats and ships (D)			
07.2.1 – Spare parts and accessories for personal transport equipment (SD)	0.03%		
07.2.2 – Maintenance and repair of personal transport equipment (S)	0.05%		
07.3.1 – Passenger transport by road (S)			
07.3.2 – Passenger transport by sea and inland waterway (S)	0.00%		0.03%
07.3.3 – Combined passenger transport (S)	0.44%		0.67%
07.3.4 – Other transport services (S)	0.21%	0.00%	0.03%
08.1.0 – Postal services (S)			0.08%

09.1.1 – Music instruments (D)			
09.1.2 – Durables for indoor recreation (D)			
09.1.3 – Maintenance and repair of major durables for recreation and culture (S)			
09.2.1 – Games, toys, and hobbies (SD)			
09.2.2 – Gardens, plants and flowers (ND)			
09.3.0 – Pets (ND)			
09.4.1 – Cultural services (S)	0.01%		1.79%
09.4.2 – Games of chance (S)	0.02%		
09.5.1 – Books (SD)	0.05%		
09.5.2 – Newspapers (ND)			
09.5.3 – Miscellaneous printed matter (SD)			
09.5.4 – Stationery (ND)	0.10%		0.09%
09.6.0 – Holidays (S)			
10.1.0 – Education (S)	0.03%		0.18%
11.1.0 – Inns, taverns, cafés and the like (S)			0.17%
11.2.0 – Accommodation services (S)			0.07%
12.1.1 – Hairdressers and barbers (S)	0.01%		0.23%
12.1.2 – Appliances and articles for personal care (ND)	0.06%	0.02%	0.04%
12.2.0 – Prostitution (S)			
12.3.1 – Jewellery (SD)	4.58%		
12.3.2 – Clocks and watches (SD)			0.32%
12.3.3 – Objects related to the consumption of tobacco (SD)			
12.3.4 – Other personal effects n.e.c. (SD)	0.27%		0.04%
12.3.5 – Maintenance and repair of personal effects (S)	1.09%		0.18%
12.4.1 – Funerary articles and expenditures for the funeral rite (SD)	0.94%	1.68%	4.39%
12.4.2 – Requiem masses (S)	0.64%		0.13%
13.1.0 – Social protection and support services to family members (S)	13.39%	26.72%	34.08%
13.2.0 – Social protection and support services to non-family members (S)	10.01%	0.71%	3.82%
14.1.1 – Investments in public debt or capital (S)	0.73%	3.92%	9.93%
14.1.2 – Investments in private capital (S)	0.05%		1.93%
14.2.1 – Interests paid on public investments (S)	2.99%	1.26%	
14.2.2 – Interests paid on private investments (S)	4.16%	7.06%	1.30%
14.3.0 – Expenditures paid for the redeem of a pawn (S)		0.98%	2.15%
14.4.1 – Business insurance (S)			
14.4.2 – Property insurance (S)			
14.4.3 – Life insurance (S)		1.51%	
14.5.1 – Trials, legal proceedings, and other legal services (S)	2.55%		2.26%
14.5.2 – Hiring of an attorney or consults with lawyers or legal experts (S)	0.18%		0.61%
15.1.0 – Tithes and income taxes (S)	3.21%	16.23%	9.04%
15.2.0 – Fees and contributes for the membership of a guild, a confraternity, etc. (S)	0.80%		
15.3.0 – Other taxes and fees (S)	0.12%	1.04%	0.52%
16.1.0 – Unidentifiable expenses	24.55%	28.66%	7.90%

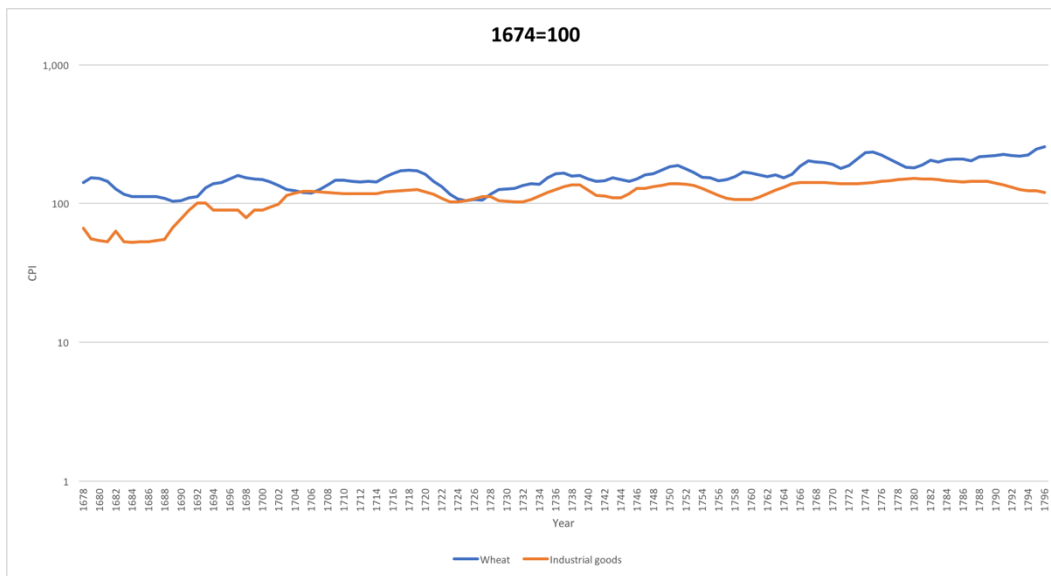
*Appendix 7. Percentage of expenditures per class during the entire period of the trust: non-noble households. Median values.*

Class	Decade		
	1670s	1720s	1770s
	<i>n</i> =7	<i>n</i> =2	<i>n</i> =13
01.1.1 – Bread, cereals, and farinaceous-based products (ND)	0.65%		0.75%
01.1.2 – Meat (ND)	0.12%		0.04%
01.1.3 – Fish and seafood (ND)			0.01%
01.1.4 – Milk, cheese and eggs (ND)			0.30%
01.1.5 – Oils and fats (ND)	0.02%		0.15%
01.1.6 – Fruit (ND)	0.08%		0.06%
01.1.7 – Vegetables (ND)	0.15%		
01.1.8 – Sugar, chocolate, ice creams and sorbets (ND)	0.03%		0.02%
01.1.9 – Honey, jam and confectionery (ND)	0.03%		
01.1.10 – Salt and spices (ND)	0.06%		0.00%
01.1.11 – Food products n.e.c. (ND)			
01.2.1 – Coffee, tea and cocoa (ND)			0.09%
01.2.2 – Water, fruit and vegetables juices (ND)	0.01%		
01.3.0 – Food and non-alcoholic beverages used as a mean of payment (ND)	1.37%		0.21%
02.1.1 – Wine (ND)	0.78%	2.87%	0.49%
02.1.2 – Spirits (ND)	0.06%		
02.1.3 – Beer (ND)			
02.2.0 – Tobacco (ND)			
2.3.0 – Alcoholic beverages and tobacco used as a mean of payment (ND)			0.01%
03.1.1 – Fabrics and clothing materials (SD)			
· 03.1.1/H: linen and hemp	2.67%	6.47%	0.27%
· 03.1.1/W: wool	4.18%	4.17%	0.89%
· 03.1.1/S: silk	0.16%	0.05%	1.02%
· 03.1.1/C: cotton	0.32%	0.03%	0.80%
· 03.1.1/M: mixed fibre fabric	0.11%	5.45%	
· 03.1.1/L: leather			
· 03.1.1/F: fur			
· 03.1.1/X: other or unknown	0.43%	17.88%	0.10%
03.1.2 – Garments (SD)			
· 03.1.2/H: linen and hemp	1.79%		0.49%
· 03.1.2/W: wool	0.95%	0.34%	0.39%
· 03.1.2/S: silk	1.38%		2.46%
· 03.1.2/C: cotton	0.26%		
· 03.1.2/M: mixed fibre fabric			
· 03.1.2/L: leather			0.02%
· 03.1.2/F: fur	0.24%		
· 03.1.2/X: other or unknown	4.92%	3.55%	0.24%
03.1.3 – Other articles of clothing and accessories (SD)	0.60%	3.20%	0.31%
03.1.4 – Decorations for garments (SD)	0.32%	2.76%	0.28%
03.1.5 – Making of clothing (S)	2.12%	7.63%	0.98%
03.1.6 – Cleaning and repair of clothing (S)	0.35%	1.89%	0.30%
03.1.7 – Used fabrics, clothing material, and garments (SD)	0.62%	0.55%	
03.1.8 – Used accessories and decorations for garments (SD)		0.94%	
03.2.1 – Shoes and footwear (SD)	1.14%	6.77%	1.00%
03.2.2 – Decorations for footwear (SD)	0.05%	0.12%	0.12%
03.2.3 – Making and repair of footwear (S)	0.34%	1.05%	0.06%
03.2.4 – Used shoes, footwear and decorations for footwear (SD)			
03.2.5 – Used decorations for footwear (SD)			

04.1.1 – Rentals paid by tenants for their main residence (S)		3.03%	1.98%
04.1.2 – Other rentals (S)	1.24%		7.12%
04.2.1 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of the main residence (D)	0.10%		0.11%
04.2.2 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of secondary residences or of workshops (D)			
04.2.3 – Materials for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of other properties (D)			0.09%
04.2.4 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of the main residence (S)	2.55%	0.09%	0.36%
04.2.5 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of secondary residences or of workshops (S)		0.17%	
04.2.6 – Services for the building, the maintenance, and the repair of other properties (S)	0.62%		0.90%
04.3.1 – Liquid fuels (ND)			
04.3.2 – Solid fuels (ND)	0.78%		0.75%
04.4.1 – Livestock for the household (ND)			
04.4.2 – Livestock not for the household (ND)			5.52%
05.1.1 – Furniture and furnishings (D)	0.75%	0.07%	0.03%
05.1.2 – Carpets and other floor coverings (D)		2.58%	
05.1.3 – Wall coverings (D)			
05.1.4 – Works of art (D)	0.33%		
05.1.5 – Repair of furniture, furnishings, floor coverings, wall coverings, and restorations of works of art (S)	0.31%		0.05%
05.2.0 – Household textiles (SD)	2.32%		0.23%
05.3.1 – Glassware, tableware, silverware and household utensils (SD)	0.47%		0.01%
05.3.2 – Kitchen utensils (SD)			
05.4.1 – Tools and equipment for house (SD)	0.30%		0.18%
05.4.2 – Tools and equipment for garden (SD)	0.49%		0.09%
05.5.1 – Non-durable household goods (ND)	0.01%		
05.5.2 – Domestic and household services (S)	5.48%		1.94%
06.1.0 – Pharmaceutical and other medical products (ND)	0.55%	0.30%	0.36%
06.2.0 – Medical services (S)	0.06%	0.01%	0.42%
06.3.0 – Hospital services (S)			
07.1.1 – Horses and ponies (D)			
07.1.2 – Animal-drawn vehicles (D)			0.49%
07.1.3 – Boats and ships (D)		0.38%	
07.2.1 – Spare parts and accessories for personal transport equipment (SD)	1.19%	0.07%	0.47%
07.2.2 – Maintenance and repair of personal transport equipment (S)		0.07%	0.21%
07.3.1 – Passenger transport by road (S)	1.34%		0.01%
07.3.2 – Passenger transport by sea and inland waterway (S)	0.35%	0.01%	0.02%
07.3.3 – Combined passenger transport (S)	0.33%	0.09%	0.40%
07.3.4 – Other transport services (S)	0.59%		0.22%
08.1.0 – Postal services (S)	0.09%		0.09%

09.1.1 – Music instruments (D)	0.06%		0.01%
09.1.2 – Durables for indoor recreation (D)	0.01%		
09.1.3 – Maintenance and repair of major durables for recreation and culture (S)			0.01%
09.2.1 – Games, toys, and hobbies (SD)	0.01%		
09.2.2 – Gardens, plants and flowers (ND)			0.05%
09.3.0 – Pets (ND)	0.10%		
09.4.1 – Cultural services (S)	0.06%		0.20%
09.4.2 – Games of chance (S)	0.05%		0.04%
09.5.1 – Books (SD)	0.73%	0.02%	1.77%
09.5.2 – Newspapers (ND)			0.06%
09.5.3 – Miscellaneous printed matter (SD)			0.05%
09.5.4 – Stationery (ND)	0.38%		0.05%
09.6.0 – Holidays (S)			3.97%
10.1.0 – Education (S)	0.86%	0.53%	2.99%
11.1.0 – Inns, taverns, cafés and the like (S)			0.18%
11.2.0 – Accommodation services (S)			
12.1.1 – Hairdressers and barbers (S)	0.84%		0.03%
12.1.2 – Appliances and articles for personal care (ND)	0.22%		0.04%
12.2.0 – Prostitution (S)			
12.3.1 – Jewellery (SD)	5.26%		0.35%
12.3.2 – Clocks and watches (SD)	3.24%		0.22%
12.3.3 – Objects related to the consumption of tobacco (SD)	1.53%		
12.3.4 – Other personal effects n.e.c. (SD)	0.52%		0.14%
12.3.5 – Maintenance and repair of personal effects (S)	0.49%	0.47%	0.01%
12.4.1 – Funerary articles and expenditures for the funeral rite (SD)	1.88%		2.09%
12.4.2 – Requiem masses (S)	1.28%		0.71%
13.1.0 – Social protection and support services to family members (S)	1.09%	2.24%	19.06%
13.2.0 – Social protection and support services to non-family members (S)	0.22%	0.26%	6.08%
14.1.1 – Investments in public debt or capital (S)	1.43%		26.07%
14.1.2 – Investments in private capital (S)	10.27%		2.02%
14.2.1 – Interests paid on public investments (S)			7.25%
14.2.2 – Interests paid on private investments (S)	2.03%	30.91%	8.08%
14.3.0 – Expenditures paid for the redeem of a pawn (S)	1.21%		2.62%
14.4.1 – Business insurance (S)			
14.4.2 – Property insurance (S)			
14.4.3 – Life insurance (S)			
14.5.1 – Trials, legal proceedings, and other legal services (S)	7.04%	1.71%	4.95%
14.5.2 – Hiring of an attorney or consults with lawyers or legal experts (S)	1.74%		0.08%
15.1.0 – Tithes and income taxes (S)	1.79%	0.62%	3.57%
15.2.0 – Fees and contributes for the membership of a guild, a confraternity, etc. (S)	3.02%		0.42%
15.3.0 – Other taxes and fees (S)	0.62%	2.27%	0.52%
16.1.0 – Unidentifiable expenses	18.90%	15.74%	10.37%

Appendix 8. Indices of agricultural and industrial prices 1674–1796, smoothed by five-year moving averages. Log scale.





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