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Occupational titles and their classification
the case of the textile trade in past times

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Introduction

Herman A. Diederiks

Sponsored by the European programme 'Human Capital and Mobility (Eurocit), the Department of History of the University of Leiden and a Training Programme in History and Computing (ESF/DABURH), a workshop on *occupational titles in the textile trade* was organised at the University of Leiden in November 1994. There were participants from Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. The workshop was a follow-up to meetings held during the international conferences of the Association for History and Computing in Graz in 1993¹ and in Nijmegen in 1994. The workshop was also part of activities within two larger projects: Eurocit and the Historical Thesaurus of Occupational Titles. The Eurocit project is supported by the European Union and is carried out (amongst other places) at the University of Leiden, Leicester and Strasbourg. The central theme of the programme is European Urbanisation and the Leiden team within that programme are dealing with the collection, classification and documentation of occupational titles. The other larger project is the Historical Thesaurus of Occupational titles in which Dutch historians and sociologists are participating on the basis of their common interest to create a tool for economic and social analysis. After the more general topics dealt with in Graz and Nijmegen an initiative emerged to take a major branch of the industrial sector to exemplify the problems of occupational titles, their standardisation and classification. This major branch is the textile trade in the broadest sense of the term. There are good reasons for taking the textiles as a starting point. First, well into the 19th century textiles formed the most important branch of industry; secondly, it was the first to be mechanised and this must have influenced the emergence, change and disappearance of occupational titles. Thirdly Leiden was one of the most important textile towns, in Western Europe during a long period in the early modern history. For the workshop invitations went to partners in the Eurocit project but also to specialists outside that group. The list of countries given above provides an idea of the geographical range. Within the above mentioned countries specialisations were: for Germany the textile industry in Siegerland, for Britain the situation in medieval Winchester and 16th and 17th century London, for Belgium the Flemish towns from the late middle ages up to the end of the 18th century and Verviers at the end of the 19th century, for Italy Tuscany in the 19th century, for Portugal the textile industry in Covilh during the 18th century, for Spain Madrid in the 17th century, for Ireland Dublin in the 19th century, while the Austrian database contains 30,000 occupational titles from Zrich, Rome, Zagreb, Vicina, Bohemia and villages in Switzerland and Austria from the 17th to the 20th centuries. The Dutch contribution was dealing with problems of the use of a tax register of Leiden in the mid 18th century. Apart from that the French paper dealt with the meaning of occupational titles found in descriptions of, among others, the 'philosophes' while Marjan Balkestein introduced images of occupations and functions published between the 16th

¹ *The Use of Occupations in Historical Analysis* (eds. Kevin Schürer, Herman Diederiks) Halbgraue Reihe zur Historischen Fachinformatik, Band 19 (St. Katharinen 1993).

The census records losses and gains in various sectors of employment, and shifts from one material to another, such as the move into silk in the 1860s. However, sources outside the census are required to ensure significant moves within sectors are noted, such as a move into weaving poplin ties rather than poplin dress fabric in Dublin at the end of the nineteenth century, which is totally invisible in the published returns.⁵⁶ Similarly the occupational classification utilised in Ireland from 1841-1901 takes little account of changes in technology or work practice, failing to distinguish between those operating power looms and those working on hand looms, (whether plain or jacquard), or the move into factory manufacture away from the home-based workplace. Important differences in socio-economic circumstances are also ignored in the earlier censuses, with for example the term 'silk manufacture' (table 4) equally applicable to the most destitute of weavers and the ablest entrepreneur operating a manufactory employing perhaps a hundred persons.

Behind the decline of the Dublin textile industry lies a complex web of legislative assistance and handicaps, and numerous other influences such as changes in fashion and purchasing power, and moves in international trading patterns. To move from the bare census statistics to the human reality behind requires complementary and contradictory sources of information, from both statutory and voluntary spheres. When considered within this wider framework the census occupational classification tables for Ireland are found to provide an excellent point of departure for studies in many directions.

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The generous assistance of Dr. Ríonach Ní Néill in the compilation and typesetting of the tables is gratefully acknowledged, also the assistance of Stephen Hannon in the preparation of the figures and tables for publication.

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⁵⁶ Webb, *Industrial Dublin*, 180.

**Labour, capital and the structure of the textile industry
in seventeenth-century Madrid¹**

José A. Nieto Sánchez

Introduction

The recent and growing interest of European historians in the classification and codification of occupational titles has not yet been reflected in Spanish historiography. The fact that there is such a scarcity of work which sets about tracing the changes occurring in the socio-occupational structure of the late feudal Castilian towns is, therefore, hardly surprising.¹

This paper, a contribution to the Leiden workshop on historical occupational titles and the respective problems of interpretation, coding and classification, is not intended to be a comprehensive study of Madrid's textile sector but rather to present the first results of ongoing research. Its main aim is to shed light on the structure of production in seventeenth-century Madrid and the role played by capital and labour in the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism. By examining the interaction between the spheres of production and distribution in the urban textile industry in the period from 1625 to 1700, some explanation as to the backwardness of this industry in Madrid with respect to the progress occurring in some contemporary North-Western European towns and cities will be discussed.²

¹ Research for this paper was made possible by a grant from the Consejería de Educación y Cultura de la Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid. This paper would not have been possible without the collaboration of Jesús Espinosa and Juan A. González Pañero. Translation by Michael McGovern and Victoria López.

¹ See V. Fernández Vargas, 'Eibar, León, Ocaña y Cartagena en 1625: un ejemplo de estructuras urbanas peninsulares', *Revista Internacional de Sociología* XXVIII/36 (1980) 515-537; and J.C. Rueda Fernández, 'Fuentes fiscales e historia. Apuntes sobre la utilización de los vecindarios del donativo real para el estudio de la población ocupacional y la "riqueza"', *Actas de "Fuentes y métodos de la Historia local"*, Instituto de Estudios Zamoranos, (Zamora 1991) 239-261. For the case study of Madrid, the controversial work of D. Ringrose did not shed much light on this particular aspect restricting his analysis to a list of 600 individuals: D.R. Ringrose, *Madrid and the Spanish Economy, 1560-1850* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1983). While eighteenth-century Madrid's working population is just beginning to be examined, that of the seventeenth century still waits for a historian. For the eighteenth century, see J. Soubeyroux, *Pauperisme et rapports sociaux à Madrid au XVIIIème siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris 1978); and J. Nieto Sánchez, *La organización social del trabajo en una ciudad preindustrial europea. Las corporaciones de oficio madrileñas durante el feudalismo tardío*, unpublished dissertation, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Madrid 1993).

² For the transition from feudalism to capitalism, see R. Hilton ed., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (London 1974); and T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin eds., *The Brenner Debate. Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge 1985). For urban manufacturing, see M. Berg, P. Hudson, and M. Sonenscher eds., *Manu-*

From the huge amount of source material available in the archives of Madrid we have used two sources: the *Donativo de 1625* (the 1625 donation) and the *Repartimientos del soldado* (billeting books), which will provide us with an overall view of the changing mixture of occupations and wealth found in seventeenth-century Madrid.

The *vecindarios* (neighbourhoods) included in the *Donativo*, which were registered in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, represent an excellent source to study the socio-occupational structure of a wide range of Castilian towns. This levy, aimed at extracting enough revenue to finance the renewal of military conflicts with which the Crown was now engaged, was imposed upon Castilian inhabitants who were thus obliged to "graciously" submit individual offerings. Notations therefore were made of the name, address and occupation of each individual, together with the sum of money they were capable of contributing. Thus, this record enables us to study in depth the social topography of the city, as well as to outline income levels and the distribution of wealth.³

As with other records of the past, the *Donativo* has its limitations⁴: only 3 per cent of the city's total population were registered (3,308 individuals aggregated according to occupation); except for mastership, the other socio-occupational positions (journeymen, apprentices...) were omitted, and mobile persons such as casual workers, migrants and vagrants, and domestic servants are absent from these records; finally, figures for royal court and municipal officials as well as those for women were largely unrecorded. However, all these shortcomings, stemming from the fiscal nature of this source, do not outweigh its virtues in as much as its accuracy and reliability enables us to carry out an accurate assessment of the significant number of the city's trades which it does cover.

Whereas the *Donativo* displays excellent internal organisational arrangements, this is not true for the *Repartimientos*. The coverage of the latter concerns the period from 1640 to 1720, and while its purpose was the same as that of the former (financing military operations), it was implemented with the specific object of recruiting people from the various trades to serve as soldiers on the battle-field. On the one hand, even if not every tax-roll for every trade has survived for a given date, in general terms they provide valuable evidence on the evolution of the trades, revealing specific demographic trends amongst the artisan segments of the population, together with the organizational structure of Madrid's workshops in the second half of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, these tax-rolls show the same drawbacks we have already pointed out for the *Donativo*: these documents

facture in Town and Country Before the Factory (Cambridge 1983). For the interaction between the spheres of production and distribution, refer to P. Kriedte, H. Medick and J. Schlumbohm, *Industrialisierung vor der Industrialisierung* (Göttingen 1981).

³ This data has been processed in DBASE III, comprising 25 fields (among which are the full names of donors, their sex, marital status, origin, address; the name of the house's owner, his occupation; the sum offered, and the signature).

⁴ The *Donativo* for Madrid has previously been examined by M.C. González Muñoz, 'Datos para un estudio de Madrid en la primera mitad del siglo XVII', *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Madrileños*, XVIII (Madrid 1981) 149-185. The present analysis is based exclusively on the 59th and 86th books from the section of *Contadurías Generales*, Archivo General de Simancas (hereafter, A.G.S.).

seldom listed servants, and when they did, details of their occupational status were not given.⁵

A brief account of the methodological problems of this study is also necessary. The above mentioned tax-rolls included over 150 trades that covered the whole range of craft industries and services. The trades recorded in the *Donativo* are assigned to ten broad categories, namely victualling, building and furnishing, textiles, leather, metal-work, miscellaneous production, merchants, officials, professions and services, and others. This categorization involves unavoidable anomalies and arbitrary decisions such as the inclusion of dress-making, and hemp and *esparto* (grass-cloth) work in the textile sector. Such decisions enable a wide-ranging view of the whole spectrum of trades involved in the textile production process from the first stages up to the final transformation of the textiles and fibres into garments and other commodities.

A further drawback arises from the somewhat artificial differentiation between trades involved in production and those concentrating on exchange. In the period under consideration both spheres overlapped. Manufacturers sometimes preferred to sell their own products. For the present analysis, however, priority has been given to production over exchange. Finally, various occupations (servant, assistant...) and their equivalents for women working within the same occupational fields pose another problem. On the one hand, although most of these individuals were probably unskilled workers, there is no way by which we can identify the actual nature of their occupations. Most of them were probably part of the large mobile workforce moving between rural and urban economies in accordance with the seasonal rhythm and job opportunities of a given time. On the other hand, the female workforce mostly appears as subsidiary to that of an absent male relative. Thus, the notations concerning widows reflect generally the occupation or social status of the late husband.

I. The textile trades: their nature and fortunes

The political and economic changes caused by Madrid's emergence in 1561 as an administrative capital city and an important commercial hub made it a magnet for capital and population. The establishment of the Court and the nobility in Madrid consolidating a class structure in which a rentist elite was predominant, generated new patterns of consumption which had, in turn, far-reaching consequences for the rest of the urban population, especially for the city's *artesanado*. Thus the demand created by the elite consumer class contributed to a restructuring of the occupational make-up of the city. Regarding the textile industry, this shift resulted in the specialization of textile-related trades in the final stages of the production process. Increasingly, tailored clothing, embroideries, silk-ribbons, and a panoply of luxury goods were produced in Madrid's workshops, replacing the bolts of rough cloth that once had been a characteristic product of the city.

As a capital city, Madrid rapidly developed into a social and financial centre for a wealthy feudal elite, who accumulated revenue from government and rentier sources and

⁵ For the *Repartimientos del soldado*, Archivo de la Villa de Madrid (hereafter A.V.M.), Secretaría, 3-425-2 (1646); 3-426-6 (1649); 3-428-3 (1654); 3-429-3 (1657); 3-431-1 (1666); 3-432-2 (1674); 3-433-2 (1682); 3-434-1 (1706).

Sectors	Persons	%	% of contributions
Victualling	256	7.75	1.5
Building and furnishing	435	13.17	6.3
Textiles	847	25.64	6.4
Leather	253	7.66	0.7
Metal-Work	350	10.59	20.6
Miscellaneous production	117	3.54	0.7
Merchants	602	18.22	16.7
Officials	254	7.69	36.0
Professions and Services	161	4.87	5.7
Others	33	1.00	5.4
Total	3308	100	100.0

Source: A.G.S. Contadurías Generales. Libros 59 y 86.

Table 1: Number of workers and tax-contribution rates of Madrid's occupational sectors in 1625.

thereupon for a plethora of servants, opportunists, and beggars. This is why Madrid is often considered to have played a negative role in the economy, growing as a parasite by sucking dry the rest of the country. In this light, the city appears to have played no significant part in production and exchange. A more detailed analysis, however, reveals that some manufacturing production sectors tended to be established in the urban area to cater for the increasing demand of the wealthy elite and their clientele, stimulating a growing division of work between town and country, and a long-distance commercial network along with an expansion of mercantile capital.⁶

Madrid's structure of production in the seventeenth century was orientated towards producing goods and services for local consumption, and there were hardly any industries geared to providing for an expanding market, except for printing and certain tanning trades. Moreover, the structure of production was organized by means of a corporative system, and capital accumulation and investment were not very developed. There seems

⁶ D.R. Ringrose's, *Madrid and the Spanish Economy*, represents the paradigmatic study of Madrid as parasite-city. Seventeenth-century Madrid, nonetheless, had a wide array of craftsmen, merchants, and professions, which evinces a relevantly specialized economic activity. The 1625 *Donativo* throws up an overall picture of a town where crafts and construction trades figured prominently (together representing 65 per cent of the working population) followed by a relevant number of merchants -agricultural and stock breeding activities already being scarce. One might indeed be sceptical of those who tend to underestimate the role played by the urban trades, for after all they employed a significant part of the city's population; along with the dress-making and clothing trades, there were other activities such as metal-work, leather work, and miscellaneous production which together occupied over a fifth of the handicraft workforce (see Table 1).

to have been no stimuli or pressure to alter the existing pre-industrial make-up of the city at least during the period under consideration.

Textile manufacture was by far the largest craft industry in the capital throughout the period, accounting for 847 people (over 25 per cent of the sample). In seventeenth-century Madrid, however, there was a scarcity of craftsmen involved in the preliminary aspects of textile production. Carders, woolwinders, or spinners are absent in the *Donativo*, suggesting that the many branches of cloth manufacturing which had been formerly so vigorous were no longer urban occupations.⁷ These trades only numbered 24 silkweavers⁸, 10 linenweavers, 29 shearers, 21 gauzeweavers, and 4 dyers, in 1625. Some related activities, such as spinning, might have escaped being registered in the tax-rolls as they were most probably domestic occupations and the persons involved were too poor to be taxed.

The numbers in the weaving trades, silk, linen and gauze, saw an increase between 1624 and 1655, but it was a short-lived one, given that in the *Donativo* of 1675 their figures have not changed. The shearers also experienced a dramatic drop in their numbers around 1674, and in spite of a subsequent slight revival, they finally disappeared altogether with the gauzeweavers, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Regarding dyers, they illustrate the case of a small trade whose figures hardly varied, ranging from 18 to 15 masters in the period under consideration (see Table 2).

Conversely, textile trades concerning the final stages of the production process such as dress-making and other related activities, what are generally known as the needle trades, were the dominant industries in seventeenth-century Madrid. Above all, tailors, with 280 people plying their needles in the city, figure predominantly in the *Donativo*, and were by far the most characteristic occupational group in the capital throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries.⁹ The trade reached a peak in the middle of the seventeenth century (1657=368 masters) but in 1706 was back to the levels of 1646 (1646=295;

⁷ Throughout the Middle Ages, rough cloth production had been one of the activities for which Madrid was best known. Thus the *Fuero de Madrid* of 1202 specifies the functions of trades such as carders, fullers and weavers. At the close of the fifteenth century this production was still in progress both in Madrid and its hinterland. See P. Iradiel Murugarren, *Evolución de la industria textil castellana* (Salamanca 1974). Regarding the sixteenth century, Larruga refers to the existence of a significant cloth industry in Madrid. See E. Larruga y Boneta, *Memorias políticas y económicas*, vols. 1-4 (Madrid 1787-89).

⁸ Silkweavers were considered to belong to the *Arte Mayor de la seda* (Silk's major art) so as to differentiate them from the braidmakers who were supposed to come under the silk's *arte menor* (minor art). From 1705 onwards, the silk's *Arte Mayor* came to include the stocking-weavers too. For silk manufacturing, see M. Garzón Pareja, *La industria sedera en España. El Arte de la seda de Granada* (Granada 1972).

⁹ Madrid's tailors were in charge of cutting-out and sewing. These dress-making craftsmen being distinguished from those making men's clothes and those making women's garments, would work by a system of orders. Another differentiation within this group was made between the so-called *sastres de corte* (royal court tailors) and the ones known as *sastres de villa* (for the rest of citizens).

Trades	1625	1646	1649	1654	1657	1666	1674	1682	1706	1750
Basket makers		8		14	13	15	20	21	29	8
Cord-makers	117	96	90	88	87	64	63	62	58	77
Doublet-makers	30	51	56	41	40	43	38	35	40	81
Dyers	4	16	18	15	16	18	16			14
Embroiderers	30	89	94	100	84	36			61	56
Esparto-workers	20	10	8	9	10				33	27
Gauzeweavers	21	50	48	45	38					
Hemp-workers	8	16	20	21	20	24	24	31	26	21
Hosiers	29	28	27	31	29	38	40	46	59	
Linenweavers	10	31	39	27	25	19	15		17	
Palmleaf-mat-makers		7	15	9		14	16	16	18	9
Shearers	29	25	25	26	26	23	8	14	19	
Silkweavers	24	36	37	50	46	36	24	32	38	62
Tailors	212	295	320	338	368	310	297	329	289	420
Used-clothing dealers	47	74	76	84	80	66	82	83	75	30
Total	581	832	873	898	882	706	643	669	745	822

Source: Donativo 1625, Repartimientos del Soldado y Censo de Artes y Oficios.

Table 2: The quantitative evolution of textile trades masters.

1706=289). Nonetheless, in 1757 master tailors (amounting to 420) clearly outnumbered those of the rest of the urban trades.

A good deal of other occupations related to dress-making such as hosiers and clothing dealers were dependent on tailors, and together became a trade corporation at the close of the sixteenth century (in 1636 clothing dealers would constitute their own independent corporation). So that, while hosiers were actually master tailors that made breeches, stockings, and underpants¹⁰, clothing dealers were charged with marketing the finished garments. This group in turn split in two: new-clothing dealers and used-clothing dealers, the former providing ready-made clothes (though generally not the most fine) for sale; and the latter dealing only with used garments and other second-hand items. If new-clothing dealers were specifically engaged in the commercialization of products, used-clothing dealers besides reselling also remade some of the garments. This particular group, (a great number of them French) experienced an extraordinary apogee throughout the seventeenth century, nearly doubling in 25 years the number of masters (1625=47; 1654=84), to there-

¹⁰ The delimitation of the competence of hosiers to the making of garments to be worn from waist to the feet was established at the end of the sixteenth century as the outcome of an important case won by the tailors. For further details, see J.A. Nieto Sánchez, *La organización social del trabajo*.

after hover between some 75 and 80 members. Another increase, this time at intervals, took place in the number of hosiers, which had doubled from that of 1625 by the beginning of the eighteenth century (1625=29; 1706=59). In 1757, however, we lose track of them.

Jubeteros (doublet-makers)¹¹, embroiderers, cord-makers, braidmakers¹², and tapestry-makers round off the series of occupations which constituted the city's major industry. The number of doublet-makers hardly changed in the course of the century, ranging from 30 members in 1625 to 56 in 1649, to remain thereafter between 41 and 35 until 1757 when the number of masters escalated to 81. Indeed only tailors, cord-makers, and embroiderers surpassed the figure of 100 masters. The evolution of the two latter crafts was quite different. Cord-makers exemplify the case of a declining trade, given that intermittent drops in their numbers over an 80-year-period resulted in a halving of its contingent (1625=117 masters; 1706=58).¹³ On the contrary, embroiderers increased from 30 masters in 1625 to 100 in 1654 but thereafter witnessed a progressive decline which nevertheless did not prevent them from doubling their 1625 figures with 56 masters in 1757. Finally, the number of master tapestry-makers, a small-sized trade, ranged from 6 to 13.

Dress-making thus appears as an outstanding leading sector in the textile industry. It is also worth noting that we remain ignorant of the number of women and illegal journeymen engaged in fabric manufacturing (see Table 2). Regarding the condition of the fibre subsector, the reduced size of its various trades is remarkable. *Esparto* workers, craftsmen employed in the manufacture and sale of mats, ropes, panniers, baskets, brooms and other items usually made of grass-cloth or *esparto*, numbered only 20 masters in 1625, and hemp-workers (making *cabestros*¹⁴ and other hemp-made items) amounted to only 8 members. There is no evidence at all of wickerworkers (usually engaged in basket-making) or of palmleaf-mat-makers (who besides manufacturing would also lay the mats in households) in the *Donativo*, but we know that all fibre trades remained stable throughout the century, hemp-workers seeing a swelling of their ranks (which doubled between 1646 and 1682) up to 31 masters, but within the standards of the general pattern followed by this subsector (see Table 2).

¹¹ The *jubeteros* would make *jubetes*, a kind of mail-coated doublet, doublets proper, and the like. In the seventeenth century, they would also appear as *golilleros* (gorget-makers) and *cotilleros* (corset-makers), making *cotillas*, a closely fitting silky or linen garment stiffened by bone-strips to give support round waist and hips, worn specially by women; and as *emballenadores*, stiffening by bone-strips corsets, dresses and other female garments.

¹² While braidmakers (*pasamaneros*) would make or sell braids (*pasamanos*), the cord-makers (*cordoneros*) specialized in the making and selling of tassel or ornamental cords, the difference between both trades being the width or thickness of the pieces produced. Both groups, however, shared the more generic name of *cinteros* (ribbon or lace-makers). The *cordoneros* were merged with the hatters.

¹³ Braidmakers suffered a similar fate, their ranks having undergone an enormous increase from 12 masters to 120 during the first two decades of the century, reaching 160 masters and journeymen in 1625, only to dwindle to a mere 40 individuals hardly fifteen years after.

¹⁴ The so-called *cabestro* was a kind of rope or strip tied around horses' heads or necks to serve as reins or a tether.

In short, a closer analysis of the general evolution of Madrid textile trades and the distribution of the workforce reveals three momentous changes between 1625 and 1710. A general increase in the number of workers from 1625 up to the 1650s was followed by a dramatic drop occurring between 1666 and 1674, after which renewed increase brought the levels back by 1680.

In order to trace the heterogeneous set of reasons for this peculiar evolutionary pattern, we must explore individual trades. In some instances, this evolution reflects a massive imbalance between different members of the same trade that resulted in a series of disputes leading to the disappearance of a substantial number of members and the consolidation of a monopolizing minority. For example, in late seventeenth-century Madrid some master *esparto*-workers worked as journeymen for other masters, or in charcoal storehouses where, together with other journeymen, they would make new panniers or mend the old ones.¹⁵

Moreover, in seventeenth-century Madrid no clear distinction had yet been made between various trades and the definition of their fields of competence. It was only by way of growing demand in the market, and the consequent necessity for increased specialization, that a process of corporate diversification was undertaken geared to the foundation of new guilds. For example, garment-producing occupations all came under the tailors' guild, but in 1635 new-clothing dealers split to constitute an independent guild, as did the used-clothing dealers in 1673.

Some other trades underwent spurious expansion owing to the interest the central state held in their promotion. Thus, even though Madrid's silk manufacturing was virtually extinguished at the close of the seventeenth century, growth was achieved thereafter by virtue of governmental mercantilist policies. This is the period in which the first real attempts were made towards attracting foreign investors in the form of incentives to production (the endowment of privileges, titles of nobility and fiscal exemptions). These measures encouraged a plethora of national and foreign entrepreneurs to settle in the capital, a process which was marked by a series of difficulties since the policy of tax exemption clearly favoured the newly arrived to the detriment of those already established.

Moreover, some trades, prey to whims of changing fashion, diminished to the point of virtual extinction. In 1718 the *diputados de rentas* (Exchequer officials) deemed that the financial difficulties of certain corporations such as swordsmiths, gorget-makers and hatters were caused by their inability to adapt to the growing demand for more fashionable commodities, as was also the case of gauzeweavers, silkweavers, shearers and pressers.¹⁶

¹⁵ A.H.N., Consejos, Libro de gobierno 1.282, ff. 202r-203r. The situation was no better for a number of tailors who became increasingly impoverished throughout the seventeenth century. Not all master tailors could afford to hire journeymen; a good deal of them did not even have their own workshop, and others would work as journeymen earning a journeymen's wages, as the 1607 strike made manifest. Neither were some of them able to afford tax-payment. Thus, in 1667, 43 masters, 14 per cent of the total number of masters in the guild, could not meet the *Repartimiento del soldado* duty, the assigned contribution of which ranged from 8 to 80 *reales*. For further information about master tailors, see J. Nieto Sánchez, *La organización social del trabajo*.

¹⁶ In the same year (1718), silk, gauze and linen weavers had disappeared. The shearers

Furthermore, concurrent crises and depressions, competition from foreign centres of production and heavy taxation, a crucial variable in the internal reproduction of the trades, topped off the series of difficulties. Even though the compulsory extractions of manpower from various trades and guilds, through the *repartimientos del soldado* duty, could be substituted by way of a monetary payment, actual recruitment was occasionally unavoidable bringing about exhaustion of the active segments of the population. As a result, guild masters found themselves little able to afford the labour reproduction due to the scarcity of the younger and more energetic elements of the working population.

Ultimately, all the variables mentioned so far influenced the demographic make-up of trading occupations, which comprising of ever aging elements verged on the point of complete disappearance by natural death. Under such circumstances, labour reproduction could be attained only by the hiring of workers from elsewhere. A thorough look at the workshops unmasks the reality of a good deal of masters who were not able to count on any hands but their own or those of a relative. The scarcity of apprentices and journeymen caused by the *repartimientos del soldado* had serious repercussions on the trades' upkeep.

In short, the growth experienced in the second half of the sixteenth century brought about a dramatic diversification of consumer goods, especially second transformation and luxury items. The crisis of the seventeenth-century then caused stagnation in some textile craft industries, and a decline in labour. In the last analysis, the social make-up of the capital and its class structure, whereby an exiguous minority had access to a wide range of commodities while a vast majority had only access to a few essential items, determined its market structure.

This situation was the reason for the increase in manufacturing costs that trades had to face, owing to the high prices of raw materials and labour, with the concomitant de-capitalization of production units resulting from a lack of technical innovation. Craft production suffered from a structural weakness derived from its dependency upon governmental exemptions, on the one hand, and the merchants for the supply of raw material and the distribution of the finished product, on the other.

Craft masters, however, were not deprived of the ownership of their means of production, even though many of them had already lost control of some aspects of the production process. Despite representing the largest contingent of labour in the capital, craft industries did not take the chief role in the process of capital concentration that was taking place in the city. Craftsmen were entirely dependent on merchants for the acquisition of certain raw materials. This, for instance, was the case of silk-weaver masters whose silk provision was in the hands of the *Puerta de Guadalajara's* silk-merchants. Along with the fabrics, other essentials such as dye-stuffs were brought all the way from various parts of the Peninsula and abroad by drugs-merchants and drapers. Moreover, craftsmen found it more difficult to sell their own products given that their shops were often far from being in good retail locations.

numbered only 7 members (four of them widows) "because they cannot find employment any more since gorgets went out of fashion, and neither can they even earn sufficient money to buy a loaf of bread". AVM, Secretaría, 3-420-1, and AHN, Consejos, libro 1.514, n. 53, ff. 38-47.

The persistence of a regime of small-scale production was largely facilitated by the somewhat belated consolidation of a corporative system in the form of trade guilds which, in turn, laid the ground for limiting and even forbidding child and woman labour in the field of craftsmanship. This economic orientation was supposed to ensure equal opportunities for all of their members, although the possibility for capital accumulation was very limited.

This, in addition to low productivity and small-scale production units, made it extremely hard for producers to attain enough capital accumulation to revolutionize the city's production set-up. It is not within this traditional context that capital accumulation can be detected, but rather within the merchant trades.

II. Merchants and capital

Merchants of various types were, obviously important in the capital. Those dealing with silk, jewellery, cloth, linen, spices and drugs together represented the largest concentration of mercantile capital in the city, and were involved in highly profitable large-scale business.¹⁷

Merchants dealing exclusively with textile products numbered only 230 individuals in 1625, distributed in various rather small trades. Their evolution followed a similar pattern to that discussed above for crafts. Thus, merchant trades were also affected by the 1660-1675 crisis during which their figures dropped dramatically, especially those of spice-merchants and drapers. Conversely, cloth-merchants managed to maintain their position throughout the period (ranging from 34 to 42 individuals). Silk-merchants' figures, however, fell in the second half of the century to stabilise thereafter.

In the course of the seventeenth century, these trades developed a corporative structure. A milestone in this process was marked on the 23rd of March, 1686, by the issuing of regulations aimed at eradicating the confusion that was commonplace within merchant corporations regarding the kind of commodities each one had the right to sell, and the marketplaces where they were allowed to do it. The major merchant corporations thereafter came together to constitute a confederation of five independent guilds, the *Cinco Gremios Mayores de Madrid*, with an organizational structure different from that of the rest of the capital's corporations.¹⁸

It is, indeed, within this group that a source of capital accumulation can be detected. Regarding the distribution of wealth within the capital, the analysis of levels of affluence indicated in the *Donativo de 1625* discloses a remarkable structural imbalance given that a scanty 2.3 per cent of the population, only 77 individuals, contributed 70 per cent, whereas the great majority of tax-payers were below the average rates. Under these circumstances, social polarization was a reality. There is evidence that an increasing distance between

¹⁷ The products commercialized by the textile merchants were of a wide variety, some of which were produced elsewhere. See *Pragmática* of 1680, A.H.N., *Consejos*, Libro de gobierno 1.265, ff. 315 y ss.

¹⁸ From 1686 onwards, these corporations became extraordinarily powerful up to their final dissolution in the mid nineteenth century. For further details on the *Cinco Gremios Mayores*, reference can be made to M. Capella y A. Matilla, *Los Cinco Gremios Mayores. Estudio crítico-histórico* (Madrid 1957)

the fortunes of the elite and those of the rest of the population was already apparent. This selected group of 77 individuals included officials, merchants engaged in supply and wholesaling (9 cloth and silk merchants, 8 involved in exchange, 2 spice-merchants and 1 supply commissioner), and a scarce representation of craftsmen (11 silversmiths, 4 mareros, 2 painters, 2 tailors, 1 timber-merchant, 1 cord-maker, and 1 embroiderer) (see Table 1).

Mercantile capital was concentrated in the hands of cloth and silk merchants with a rating average of 1,005 reales per individual. Between these and the rest of the trades there existed an enormous gap. Spice-merchants, haberdashers, and drugs-merchants paid an average of 179 reales, and drapers only 64. But the most dramatic contrast was that between cloth-merchants and silk-merchants, and stocking dealers, the lowest rated group with an average of 8 reales.

Below the commercial groups, income disparities rapidly become extreme. While trades related to garment-production represented the largest craft sector, their income levels remained below the mean, except for the embroiderers, whose contribution rate was as high as 332 reales, owing to the fact that this craft included two individuals of substantial wealth (3.3 per cent of all members) who provided 76 per cent of the contributions from this trade. This imbalance contrasted with the relative equality within the braidmakers, where none of their members reached the ceiling of 83 reales; 68.9 per cent of contributions in this trade (ranging from 2 to 21 reales) was concentrated in 38.6 per cent of individuals.

Table 3 displays the average tax-rate paid by textile craft members in the *Donativo de 1625*. Through the fiscal hierarchy revealed by this record we can see the most significant trends. Unquestionable supremacy was held by embroiderers, followed much further down by the new-clothing dealers. Nonetheless, contrasts within the craft sector were less extreme than those within the merchants', equality was commonplace in the poorer sectors, even if a difference between luxury-related trades (embroiderers, tailors, tapestry-makers, cord-makers) and those related to staple goods (braidmakers, used-clothing dealers, hatters) was apparent.

In short, these patterns reflect the predominance of the commercial sector over that of manufacturing in regard to income levels. Save for a few, all the rest of manufacturers had a lower purchasing power than that of the majority of merchants. Not surprisingly, the 1689 census of the wealthiest elements of the city included 218 merchants, 37 per cent of the sample, and only 6 textile artisans (a dyer's widow, two hatters, a tapestry-maker, a braidmaker, and a chasuble-maker). Among merchants, many of them built up their fortunes through royal rents (including venality of office and money-lending), even if one out of three of them were linked with the textile sector as cloth-merchants (42), silk-merchants (15), drapers (7), or *rasilleros* (6). Diversifying risk by widening the range of products to be commercialized seemed to be the guide-line followed by these merchants who would deal with any kind of article as long as a large profit was likely to be made.¹⁹

Ultimately, the bulk of these merchants' profits went into private loans or governmental bonds, into secular offices and above all into land. The larger profit and lesser risk that these activities implied was perhaps one of the reasons why capital investment was mostly diverted from production. Thus, at the close of the seventeenth century, the city's

¹⁹ *Donativo de 1689* in A.H.N. Consejos, legajo 12.470 (1^a serie).

Trades	tax-payers	tax-rate	mean
Embroiderers	30	9972	332.4
New clothing dealers	15	2163	114.2
Tailors	278	22699	81.65
Tapestry-makers	7	489	69.85
Doublet-makers	144	1971	67.96
Cord-makers	29	8594	59.68
Hosiers	3	1320	45.51
Dyers	8	114	38
Hemp-workers	21	248	31
Gauzeweavers	57	522	24.85
Hatters	2	1106	19.4
Esparto-workers	29	385	19.25
Shearers	62	528	18.2
Braid-makers	48	798	12.87
Used-clothing dealers	9	612	12.75
Linenweavers	21	112	12.44
Cappers	1	8	8
Silkweavers	1	168	8
Blanket-makers	1	4	4
Total	812	51813	63.8

Source: A.G.S. Contadurias Generales. Libros 59 y 86.

Table 3: Tax contribution of textile trades

corporations were appointed collectors of the royal taxes in Madrid which were known as *alcabalas* and *cientos*, and not long after, in 1733, the *Cinco Gremios Mayores* gained the monopoly over the collection of the city's revenues.

This partly explains why merchants, with an advantageous position regarding the extraction of profits from production, actually came to enjoy a very loose control over the production process. The lack of capital penetration in seventeenth-century Madrid's production system precluded the revolutionarization of productive forces. The merchants' involvement in the production process never went beyond the distribution of certain essentials, and never extended to the ownership of the means of production. Capital, in this way, remained attached to the sphere of circulation where it was reproduced through the disparities between purchase and sale prices.²⁰

²⁰ See C. Astarita, *Desarrollo desigual en los orígenes del capitalismo* (Buenos Aires 1992). There is only scattered evidence of the introduction of capital to the production system, such as the case of the linen factory that belonged to the spice-merchants, drapers, and drugs-merchants corporation. See E. Larruga, *Memorias políticas y económicas*, vol.2, 353. For merchants and dealers involved in the extraction of linen from the region of Galicia, destined for Castile and

It is, thus, hardly surprising that the monopolistic character of the merchants' trades met with the stern opposition of craftsmen who were themselves also allowed to sell their own products. The latter often included items that merchants were also entitled to market. This competition reached a high pitch between silk-merchants, on one side, and cord-makers and braidmakers, on the other, because of the similarity of their respective goods.²¹

Conclusion

In short, the conflicts between capital and labour throughout the seventeenth century laid bare one of the major contradictions within the textile industry, and within the economy of Madrid as a whole; the most significant economic disparity was not to be found within the relationship between master and journeyman but rather within that between merchant and craftsman.

the royal court, see J. Carmona Badía, *El atraso industrial de Galicia. Auge y liquidación de las manufacturas gallegas (1750-1900)* (Barcelona 1990).

²¹ The lists of the articles each trade was allowed to sell can be consulted in E. Lacruza, *Memorias políticas y económicas*, vol.1 (1787).