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Leiden

The Netherlands

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Citation

Schmidt, A. (2018). Contested authority: working women in leading positions in the early modern Dutch urban economy. In M. L. Bailey, T. M. Colwell, & J. Hotchin (Eds.), *Women and work in premodern Europe. Experiences, relationships and cultural representation, c. 1100-1800* (pp. 214-236). Routledge. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3512258>

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

10 Contested authority

Working women in leading positions in the early modern Dutch urban economy

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The recent debate on early modern women's work largely revolves around questions about access of women to the labour market, the opportunities of women to be economically active, and the contribution of women to the urban economy or to economic development. Careful reconsideration of the sources and the development of new methodologies have led to (re)assessments of female labour force participation rates. Broadening the perspective beyond women's employment opportunities and the inclusion of women's unremunerated work in family businesses has revealed the wide variety of ways in which women could be economically active.¹ By emphasising women's agency and their opportunities instead of restrictions, and by showing that notions of domesticity in practice had barely any impact on most working women's experiences—this notion did not, for example, lead to the withdrawal of a large number of women from the labour market, as the greater majority of women simply had to work for their maintenance—recent research has nuanced the interpretation of the early modern period as a time of reinforced patriarchy.²

The recent emphasis on the importance of the economic role of women does not alter the acknowledgement by historians that the position of women in the labour market or the family business was not equal to that of men. Women were economically active on a large scale, but, in general, their work was often lower skilled, lower paid, less esteemed, less visible, and more intermittent in nature than that of men.³ Most women worked in subordinate positions. But women in the early modern period were not completely excluded from positions of authority; under certain circumstances they were able to gain access to positions in which they were in charge.

The most well-known example of women in leading positions are the widows who were granted the right to continue operating their husband's craft or trade after the death of their spouse. This was achieved by the written or unwritten rule that granted the widow the right to continue the work after her husband's death. But there were also women working in positions of authority who were apparently not widows, or who worked in other sectors of the economy. Women could be found as overseers at Dutch markets; in (very) rare circumstances they participated in administrative

bodies of corporations, and women (co-)supervised welfare institutions in early modern Dutch towns.

This contribution examines the experiences of the numerically small, yet from a gender perspective very interesting, group of women, who worked in positions of authority in various sectors of the early modern urban economy. How did women gain access to positions in which they could exercise power? How was their authority legitimated in a society in which women were legally subordinate to men? What were the limitations of their authority? Did male colleagues, or subordinates, accept the authority of women in charge? To answer these questions I will analyse several case studies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women who worked in leading positions, and who, at a certain point in time, came into conflict with their male colleagues. These conflicts offer us an exceptional insight into the way in which their positions were legitimated. It reveals what restrictions were imposed on women, and, on the other hand, how women negotiated their power and defended their positions when their authority was contested. I will show that the symbolic analogy with the family played a crucial role in the legitimating of their authority.

The focus will be on the province of Holland in the period 1650 to 1800. Evidence is drawn from archival sources from Leiden and Gouda, combined with recent secondary literature about early modern women in the Dutch Republic. The sources include (fragmentarily preserved) guild membership lists and guild regulations, the archives of orphanages and especially the records of the administration of the orphanages' female boards. The most important evidence for the research presented here is, however, the petitions women submitted to the city council. Petitions were one of the appropriate instruments for city dwellers to come into contact with the urban authorities. With a standardised letter they asked the authorities for a favour, the resolution of a problem, or simply for justice in a situation in which they felt disadvantaged. Through the humble tone of the requests the subordinates affirmed the authority of the city council. The city council, in turn, could not ignore the petitions. The petition was the instrument par excellence through which burghers could exercise influence on the urban legislation. In fact, as Henk van Nierop has demonstrated, in Amsterdam almost all urban by-laws were made in response to petitions of individual burghers or corporations.⁴ As the positive replies to petitions formed an essential part of urban legislation, these petitions were carefully recorded. Various Dutch city archives keep a complete series of such petitions covering the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even though petitions were composed according to standardised forms, and often written by or with the help of professional writers, they do echo the voices of women,⁵ and provide a unique insight into the problems women encountered and the solutions they brought to the fore themselves. Various of these problems were, in one way or another, related to issues about these women's authority, as we will see later.

As parties in conflicts about the authority exercised by women often referred to the law to sustain their arguments, I will first give a brief and general overview of women's civil legal status and their position in marital, property, and inheritance law.

The legal position of women in Holland

According to early modern Dutch law the legal relation between women and men was determined by the 'natural law'. The subordinate position of women in society was legitimated by their supposed inferior intellectual capabilities and their 'mental weakness'. The famous Dutch lawyer Grotius argued that the female sex was less capable of performing activities that required rationality or the ability to reason than the male sex, and therefore men were granted legal authority over women.⁶ Women were similarly denied the administration of property and supervision over people. Women were deemed to be weaker than men; they were 'by nature' less suitable to judge and think logically and therefore excluded from government over people and over goods (*bestier van luijden en saaken*).⁷

As is well known, the marital status of a woman was of crucial importance in determining her legal position. A married woman fell under the legal authority of her husband. This implied that women had to obey their husbands and, in return, could count on the protection of their spouses. Furthermore, married women lost the right of disposal over their property. According to Dutch law the goods of both bride and groom became part of the joint property over which the husband had the right of disposal. Whereas in other regions in the Dutch Republic the husband was only allowed to dispose of his wife's movable property, in Holland he could alienate both movables and immovable goods without her consent. Finally, a husband represented his wife as her guardian in legal affairs, in court cases, when making contracts, or appearing before a notary.⁸

These rules applied to women who were married. The legal position of unmarried adult females in early modern Holland was different. According to the seventeenth-century Dutch lawyer Simon van Leeuwen, it was considered old-fashioned to place adult single women under permanent guardianship. He sustained his argument with a reference to the work of Johan van Beverwijck, the medical doctor who in 1639 had published his *Van de Wtnementheyt des vrouwelicken Geslachts* (On the excellence of the female sex). In this apology for the superiority of women over men, which has the character of a catalogue of learned women, Van Beverwijck described the virtues of women at length.⁹ Van Leeuwen referred to this work when he argued that 'the innate character of women is not as weak as is often assumed' and that there could be found many women with a larger intellect (than men) and men with a smaller intellect (than women), 'indeed that many women exceeded man with respect to intellect and administration'. Therefore, the lawyer concluded, unmarried adult women were allowed

to 'guide themselves' and dispose of their own goods.¹⁰ In practice, when unmarried women and widows in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appeared before the court or entered into contracts they were assisted by a guardian, but these guardians were 'chosen' by the women themselves for the particular occasion and were thus not comparable with the permanent guardianship required for married women.

With respect to inheritances Dutch law may be characterised as remarkably egalitarian. In Holland, after the death of a spouse, the marital estate was divided in two equal parts. One half, representing the goods brought into the marriage, was taken out of the joint estate by the surviving spouse. The other half formed the inheritance of the spouse who had died and was divided among the heirs of the deceased, usually the children. Sons and daughters received equal parts or parts of equal worth. This equal inheritance practice implied that, at least in theory, the situation in which widows and widowers found themselves after the death of a spouse was exactly the same.¹¹

In Dutch law, the subordinate legal position of women was legitimated with references to the supposed mental weakness of women and their incapability to judge. In practice, though, the fundamental legal inequality was not taken to the extremes. The marital status of women was a factor of importance, although there were some significant differences between the legal norm and legal practice, and, finally, inheritance law in Holland was relatively egalitarian. In the following we will examine if, and how, this legally subordinate status affected women working in positions of authority.

Guilds: Defining positions of authority

The impact of guilds on women's work is a much-debated issue in the historiography of women's work.¹² Initially many historians had a rather pessimistic view of the corporations and believed that the guild organisation had a limiting effect on women's economic role. The emergence of guilds was seen as one of the factors that excluded women from market production in the early modern period. Historians emphasised that craft guilds gradually imposed more restrictions on women's work.¹³ In recent years, however, this perception has changed. Historians now emphasise the variations in the corporate status of women; they have shown that gendered patterns of inclusion and exclusion varied geographically and even from one guild to another. Another important finding was that the position of women in guilds was highly dependent upon a woman's marital status. In various guilds in cities in France and Germany marriage enabled women to access positions of authority and widows were often considered the legitimate successors of their deceased spouse.¹⁴

The evidence of Dutch guilds concurs with these findings. The impact of guilds on the position of women varied from one guild to another. Guilds did not necessarily exclude women from work—most urban craft guilds

excluded unmarried and married women from membership, but allowed widows to continue their deceased husband's work. In the retailing and food sector, the segments of the urban economy that were usually more accessible to women, there were guilds that accepted women as members.¹⁵ Within the guilds that regulated export industries, like the pipe-making industry in Gouda, women carried out work as wage labourers. And, last but not least, women quite often provided unpaid labour in the workshop or family business that was run in their husband's name or by the couple jointly.¹⁶ Almost all guilds, though, excluded women from positions of authority. Women had no access to the guild's boards and had no right to vote. Even in the mixed-gender guilds, like the guilds of the innkeepers, of publicans, of schoolmasters or one of the shopkeepers' guilds that existed in many towns, the position of women was inferior to that of men.¹⁷ Seamstresses formed an interesting exception.¹⁸ In some Dutch cities they were assembled as a sub-division of the tailors' guild, and in Gouda they even had a board of their own, consisting of four female deacons (*dekeninnen*). That the position of this board was not equal to that of their male counterparts becomes clear from the stipulations that regulated the guild festivities: whereas female deacons received four guilders to celebrate their annual election, the male deacons were given up to eight guilders to spend.¹⁹

When it comes to the position of women in traditional artisanal guilds, marital status was of crucial importance. In her book *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris*, Janine M. Lanza concludes that widows 'did not fit into the trajectory of loss and decline that other historians have laid out for women of Old Regime Europe'. It was precisely their position as masters' widows in the traditional artisanal guilds that set widows apart from other women. As Lanza argued, widows faced gender-specific challenges, and widows also functioned differently to men. Yet in eighteenth-century Paris, the period studied by Lanza, some women nonetheless still had access to 'well-paid, high-status work'.²⁰

Many Dutch guilds or corporations acknowledged the so-called 'widows' right'.²¹ This right—sometimes, though not necessarily, laid down in the guild regulations—gave women the opportunity to carry on their deceased husbands' work and to assume a formal position. The conditions under which widows were allowed to continue the work varied. Firstly, in most guilds widows were allowed to work as long as they were 'assisted' by a 'master journeyman' (*meesterknecht*). Secondly, a master journeyman was sometimes required to have passed his exam or to pass it within a limited period of time. A third condition found in various guild regulations was that widows were only allowed to continue work for a limited period of time. However, analysis of various guild regulations revealed that this was the period during which a widow was allowed to work *alone*. After the required time had passed, the widow had to hire a journeyman to assist her.²² These restrictions imposed by the guild regulations upon widows' work served

the same goal. Widows had often been active in the workshop or enterprise that was run in their husbands' name for years, but they had never had the opportunity to give proof of their expertise as they were excluded from official training. The presence of a (master) journeyman was required to ascertain the quality of the goods produced.²³

Once a widow met the requirements she could work on the same conditions as her deceased husband had done, as was explicated in some of the guild regulations.²⁴ With respect to work, the status of a master's widow resembled that of a male master. She was bound by, or had the scope to exercise her work under, the same requirements as a male master. In Dutch records no restrictions concerning the hiring of apprentices or the quantity of goods produced in a widow's workshop are evident.²⁵ But the right to continue the work in her own name was restricted to the period of widowhood, until she remarried.²⁶ This illustrates how closely the status of a guild member was connected to the status of the head of the household—who represented the family, who was perceived to be the family's 'breadwinner', and who was usually male.

Guild regulations reflect the *norms* concerning the status of women. Women, however, sent petitions to the city council in which they asked for a flexible interpretation of the rules or for adaption of the regulations. In Leiden, only those petitions to which the city authorities responded positively survive in the records. Requests that were rejected were not always registered. Therefore, we do not know the frequency with which widows tried to alter their own situation; nor do we precisely know their chances of success. The petitions that were preserved do, however, shed a very interesting light on the position of women in guilds in daily practice. In some cases these women had worked for years in the family enterprise or workshop, as daughter or as a wife. Margriete van Eijck, widow of Tousseijn Barbarij, for example, when asking the local authorities in 1662 for permission to continue her husband's work as a coppersmith, emphasised that she was very experienced. During the frequent times her husband had been ill, all work had depended upon her, so she had 'thorough knowledge' of both the craft and of 'supervising the workshop', as she told the authorities. We do not know in detail how the authorities reacted, but apparently they were not prepared to allow Margriete the same rights as her husband had held. Initially Margriete received exemption from the rule for a limited period of time, but after two more petitions the widow had to close her shop, as will be shown below. The childless widow Johanna Cabeljauw argued in the petition she submitted in 1669 that she knew 'the art of dyeing' perfectly well, adding that she had always and continuously assisted her husband with his work when she was not burdened with children. Lysbeth Verborre, who worked in the Leiden textile industry in the 1620s, emphasised that she had assisted her parents in their workshop since her childhood, and had worked alongside her husband, thus demonstrating that she was able to serve the merchants to 'full satisfaction'.²⁷ Only as widows could Margriete,

Johanna, and Lysbeth claim the position in which they received a formal status and exercise supervision over the workshop.

In the absence of a man, a woman could take over the role of 'head' of the workshop, together with the accompanying responsibilities. Widows who married again lost this status. On some occasions a widow's new husband was allowed to take the place of his new wife and run the workshop in his name. The case of Laurens de Matter, who in the 1630s married Aeltgen Mourings, widow of the dyer Barent Claes van Paesschen, is remarkable in this respect. Laurens was allowed 'to swear the oath in addition to his wife' but was not admitted to the *actual* work of dyeing as he did not yet have the required experience.²⁸ Only after a year did the authorities grant him the right to carry out the work in his own name, 'as being married to the widow of Barent Claes van Paesschen'. In the intermediate year it was Aeltgen who both did the actual work and held the supervision.²⁹

The enforcement of the rules concerning the application of the widow's right was not rigid. Some guilds without the so-called widow's right did accept widows as members after all;³⁰ other guilds extended the right to daughters. The Gouda wood merchants' guild, for example, in 1775 accepted Adriana Hooglandt, who wanted to continue the workshop of her deceased widowed mother, as a guild member. The married couple Dominicus van Luiten and his wife, who wanted to succeed Dominicus' mother-in-law into the guild, were granted permission to do so in 1764.³¹ In Leiden three unmarried sisters, Anna, Margrieta, and Johanna, were allowed to run an apothecary. Judith Baes, Antoinette Vaillant, Hester Ongena, and Judith Huijgen were all unmarried daughters continuing the workshop of their father or mother in the textile industry producing serge.³²

The widow's right was in practice not only extended to daughters; in very exceptional cases even divorced women were granted the right. For example, the Gouda blacksmiths' guild in 1771 granted Jannigje Kreek the right to run the blacksmith's shop in her own name under the condition that her (former) spouse would refrain from all rights as long as the couple lived apart.³³ The traditional artisanal guilds in cities in Holland applied rules with a remarkable flexibility, or adapted the regulation, sometimes in favour of women. By taking away some of the strictest conditions that hampered widows in their work, these guilds not only served the interests of the women and their families by enabling them to maintain themselves, they also prevented flourishing workshops closing and thereby served the interest of the wider local economy.³⁴ It is probably from this point of view that we should interpret the decision of guilds to choose the side of widows when they came into conflict with their journeymen, as we will see.

Conflicts in the workshop

Merry Wiesner was the first who, in her research into women's work in early modern Germany, discovered that journeymen frequently came

into conflict with the widows working in guild shops. According to Wiesner the journeymen's hostility to women, motivated by both economic considerations and by an ideology of guild honour, developed into a gradual exclusion of women from guilds.³⁵ Janine Lanza also noticed that widows did not always get along with their master journeymen. In some cases widows met resistance to their authority in the workshop and these conflicts were often based on their gender.³⁶ Similar conflicts can be found in Dutch towns as well. Many masters' widows were experienced and had good knowledge of the work. The question of whether widows were actually involved in the production process was not relevant to their right to continue the work. Experience was not required according to guild regulations. The authorities' decision to grant widows permission to continue work was not related to the number of years a woman had provided 'assistance labour' in the workshop or family enterprise. Furthermore, it is possible that at least in some sectors, male masters were also not involved in the production process on a daily basis, but rather assumed managerial roles. These roles were not very different from the roles their widows assumed after their death, in which the actual work was left to journeymen. What was relevant, though, is that widows, whether experienced or not, were never given the opportunity to provide proof of their expertise. Even when they were experienced, and had good knowledge of the craft, like the above-mentioned Margriete van Eijck, Sophia Jans, Lysbeth Verborre, or Johanna Cabeljauw, these women were usually obliged to work in the presence of a journeyman. He was the one who formally had to guarantee the quality of the goods produced because he was the one who had been admitted to the formal training. This situation placed widows at a disadvantage in their relations with their journeymen.

The master journeyman who had to assist the widow in her work was a craftsman who had come close to finishing his training and who was often just one step removed from establishing an independent workshop. The knowledge that a widow was dependent upon him strengthened his bargaining position.³⁷ This becomes clear in a conflict between the widows of bakers and the bakers' journeymen. Widows of bakers were only allowed to keep the bakery open if they employed a journeyman who had been apprenticed for at least four years, two years of which he had to have served and lived with a Leiden master, and who had passed his exam. Master journeymen were well aware of the consequences of an untimely departure: the widow would have to close her bakery and lose her clientele. This happened often. The bakers' widows stated in a mutual petition directed to the city council in 1655 that journeymen left shortly after their employers had paid for the examination, only, as the widows claimed, 'to obstruct' their mistresses. The situation was repeated over and over again, and as a result the widows had to pay the costly exam fee for the journeymen several times within a short period. This behaviour was so 'impertinent' that it made them, as the widows claimed, 'merely the servants of their journeymen'.³⁸

The behaviour of the journeymen who were supposed to assist the millers' widows was not much better. Well aware of the fact that the widow had to pay the guild admission fee of every new journeyman she hired, the journeymen were demanding excessively high wages, and threatened to leave if widows refused to pay. The millers' widows also sent a collective complaint to the city authorities. In 1673 they asked whether the guild regulation could be changed to bring the practice of blackmailing by the journeymen to an end. These collective petitions also reveal the shared occupational identity that could arise when female guild members, with their male colleagues, petitioned the authorities together to defend their common interests. Such was the case when the male and female sellers of vegetables, and the male and female rope makers of Gouda sought to counter competition from outside the town.³⁹ These joint petitions also indicated a preparedness for women and men to take the initiative collectively when their interests were threatened. Moreover, in these cases, the instrument of petitioning appeared to be effective. Both the bakers' and the millers' guilds decided to relax the rules. The bakers' guild stipulated that journeymen hired by widows no longer had to pass their exams. The millers decided that those widows who wanted to have a journeyman to work for them should pay the guild membership—and thus the admission fee—themselves, but only once.⁴⁰

The widows of the bakers and millers complained that it was difficult to find qualified and reliable journeymen to assist them. Other widows petitioned the authorities for support because they were reluctant to hire journeymen beforehand. Sophia Jans, for example, a widow who had managed the apothecary of her husband for about ten years on her own, was summoned in the 1660s by the guild to meet its requirements and hire a master journeyman. Sophia refused to do so. Apart from the fact that she was very experienced, as she stated in her petition, Sophia emphasised that she was an old lady who did not look forward to the 'unfreedom of having a journeyman in her home'. Sophia was granted exemption from the guild regulation and was allowed to continue her work without a journeyman.⁴¹ The above-mentioned Margriete van Eijck was also not inclined to hire a journeyman, but her grievances were more fundamental in nature. Margriete petitioned to the city council because, in her opinion, she had no need to be assisted by a master journeyman. During her husband's life Margriete had made 'much of the heavy work herself' and she had worked to the satisfaction of her customers. The widow argued that hiring a journeyman would lead to a 'incredibly inconvenient' situation. It would be 'inevitable' that she would get into conflict with a journeyman, which would harm her as well as the people around her. Margriete tried to convince the city authorities that she was very well capable of 'supervising her shop', that the supervision over the workshop could very well be trusted to her, and that she would inevitably lose 'the authority' over her workshop if she had to appoint a journeyman. Moreover, she continued, it would be impossible to find a journeyman who would be willing to submit himself to her

authority.⁴² Whereas Sophia Jans was allowed to continue her work without a journeyman, Margriete put her work at risk. She was granted exemption twice, but only for a limited period of time and she was summoned to leave the craft—and close her workshop—at the end of the term. What happened to the experienced coppersmith after she had closed her shop is unknown.

The loss of a husband brought a master's widow into a precarious situation. In many workshops where journeymen worked for their master, the wife of the master was also around. She even may have stood in for him once in a while. But the relations of authority had been clear to all: the male artisan was in charge and held the supervision over the workshop and the personnel. This changed when he was no longer present. The master journeyman, who had (almost) finished his education in an occupation that under normal circumstances was only open to men, was supposed to work under the supervision of a woman. This was a situation that was not readily accepted by all. The relationship between the master journeyman and the widow was, however, one of mutual dependency. The master journeyman, having completed his exam and acquired proof of his qualifications, enabled the widow to keep the shop open. The widow, on the other hand, owned the workshop in which he could bring his knowledge into practice. Costs for exams were expensive and establishing a workshop usually required the investment of a large amount of capital. It is no surprise that the cliché of the widow marrying her journeyman became reality for many. For those who did not, this mutual dependency did not necessarily ease the relations between the two.⁴³

The decisions on the petitions Dutch widows submitted to their city councils indicate that the consequences of the conflicts between artisanal widows and their journeymen had outcomes different to those in the German cities described by Wiesner. There are no signs of an ongoing process of exclusion of women from guilds and widows were quite often supported by the guilds. Whether they were motivated by commercial reasons or by consideration for the broken family remains unknown, but it is telling that the guilds sometimes chose the side of the widow and enabled her to overcome the conflict with her employee and continue the work. Margriete van Eijck's loss of status suggests that her interests were only of temporary concern to the guild. But there are also examples in which the interests of women were given priority on a permanent basis. Apparently the patriarchal guild institutions prioritised the interests of these women out of concern for economic or social stability over gender ideology. Unwilling employees were rebuked or guild regulations were adapted in certain circumstances. That the interests of the widow were given priority must have strengthened her position of authority. The situation was, however, different when not journeymen but guild boards were the opponents. Even though, again, we do not know the precise frequency with which it occurred, in various cities widows came into conflict about their position with the board members. The records of disputes reveal on the one hand how widows tried to claim greater scope for

autonomy and, on the other, how guilds defended their prerogatives, thus contributing to a fundamental inequality between the sexes.

Authority contested

Masters' widows may have been given the opportunity to work under the same conditions as their husbands had done, but their position within the corporation was by no means equal to that of men.⁴⁴ When economic motives were at stake, guilds were prepared to apply the regulations with flexibility. Thus the pipe-makers' guild decided that when a pipe maker's widow married a man from outside the guild, he—or the couple—was allowed to continue to use the trademark on *his* name when he would pay for it, and thus keep the workshop open.⁴⁵ The policy of the Amsterdam wine-merchants' guild was less flexible. In 1759 it forbade a widow who remarried outside the guild to continue the trade. It was directly against 'the natural order of things' if a married woman, 'who submitted herself to the marital power of a man, would be able to continue the trade or business in name and as if she was a widow of her deceased husband', as the guild justified its decision.⁴⁶

It is not so much the decision as the justification of the wine-merchants' guild that strikes the eye. Such explicit references to marital law are not easily found in the decisions of authorities in the seventeenth century, although they appear to be more common in eighteenth-century rhetoric. The Gouda pipe makers may have been more flexible with regard to the position of women than the wine merchants, but only for practical reasons. By allowing the new husbands of remarried pipe-makers' widows to continue the work, they prevented the obstruction of the production in the industry that was of crucial importance for the local urban economy. That, however, the pipe makers shared the opinion that female guild members did not have the same status as their male guild counterparts becomes clear from the decisions on the petition of four remarried pipe-makers' widows, who in 1784 asked the city authorities for clarification on the inheritance laws.

In 1753 the pipe-makers' guild regulated the inheritance practices of the clay-pipe-makers' trademarks, which functioned as a licence to produce. After a pipe maker passed away, the ownership of his mark would devolve upon his widow and after her death, the (grand)children would inherit the mark. A possible second or third wife of a pipe maker could inherit the mark, but when the pipe maker had children from a previous marriage, this second or third wife did not acquire the ownership. In this case, she was entitled to use the mark as long as she lived, but she could not sell or bequeath the mark, as it would revert to the children of the first marriage of her deceased husband. In 1761, however, the regulation was changed and the guild stipulated that the master pipe maker was now allowed to bequeath his mark freely. A widow, by contrast, could only *use*, and not *bequeath* the mark. It was in 1784 that Sijna van Nierop, Lijsje van Berkel, Belighe Sliedrecht,

and Geertrui van Vliet, all remarried pipe-makers' widows, asked the city council for the same right of the free disposal of their marks so that they could bequeath them to their second husbands.⁴⁷

The four women remarked that the change in the regulation made in 1761 granted the right of free disposal only to the guild brothers, whereas women seem to have been deprived of the right to bequeath. As guild sisters (*gildezusters*) had the same obligations as guild brothers—they had to meet all requirements, they had to pay the guild—they also expected to receive the same rights. Such 'equal rights' would enable them to maintain themselves within the craft. The widows tried to convince the guild that the trademark should be considered as 'free property' which could be freely disposed of by the owner. They also told the authorities that their children tended to marry at a young age (at which moment they could demand their father's inheritance, including the trademark). By doing so, they deprived their stepfather, who until then had maintained his stepchildren with his work based on the mark, of his maintenance. The widows concluded their plea for equal rights by mentioning that it probably had never been the explicit intention to exclude the guild sisters of the right of disposal but that they must have been forgotten unintentionally, as, after all, there was ample reason to grant them the right to dispose of the mark as well.⁴⁸

The members of the guild board, who were asked for advice by the magistrates, did not share this point of view. They refuted the arguments point by point: as the guild regulation made in 1753 only concerned male members of the guild, the subsequent amendment could also only concern men. Guild marks were not free property. Pipe making was a physically demanding craft for women and, therefore, many pipe-makers' widows remarried soon. Widows, however, had to be protected against the 'cunning flattery' of men who wanted to marry them and to whom they would too easily hand over their mark at the expense of themselves and their children.⁴⁹ In this the guild appealed to a universal notion that women as the weaker sex had to be protected against the outside world and that women were not capable of defending their own interests.⁵⁰

The guild continued its argumentation with a remarkable consideration. It stated that the very fact that husbands had given proof of their expertise according to the guild rules, had obtained guild membership and thereby acquired the name of 'guild brethren' (*gildebreders*) certainly did not imply that the wives of these guild brothers—as they would never be admitted to the proof of expertise—would be known under the name of guild sisters. Nor did it imply that they enjoyed the privileges and rights equal to those of their husbands.⁵¹ 'No one with the slightest understanding of a guild—and especially of the guild of the pipe makers—would be able to maintain this.' This meant that:

The pipe-makers' wives as a consequence cannot be considered other than just shareholders (*deelgenoot*) of the privileges of their husbands,

as according to the decision of 1753, after the death of their husbands and during the period that they are widows, the guild's privileges are not granted to them as guild sisters, but as a special gift.⁵²

The guild thus argued that widows of the pipe makers were not guild sisters. They derived their privileges from their deceased husbands, but only for the period of their widowhood. The magistrates followed the guild's advice and declined the widows' request.⁵³

At the moment of the dispute between the guild and the widows the craft of the pipe making industry had been in serious decline. The loss of the importance of the industry for the local economy may have diminished the necessity for a flexible interpretation of the regulation. Similar authority conflicts arose in other areas of the eighteenth-century urban economy which illustrates that it was not only (the lack of) commercial motives that heated the debate.

Conflicts in the boards

Dutch lawyers denied (married) women the right to administer goods and people because they were considered to be unable to think logically, as we saw above. An important and noticeable exception to this general rule is offered by women who participated in the boards of welfare institutions and prisons or correctional institutions. Together with the male regents, the female regents supervised welfare institutions, the organisation of which resembled that of the family. The analogy becomes apparent in the occupational titles. Inside orphanages, hospitals, and prisons, an 'indoor-father' (*binnenvader*) and 'indoor-mother' (*binnenmoeder*), preferably though not necessarily a married couple, looked after the inmates (orphans, prisoners, the ill, or old-aged) and the staff (servants). The overall authority over the institution was held by the male and female regents, or 'outdoor-fathers' and 'outdoor mothers' as they were sometimes called. These male and female administrators were usually not related to each other and only had a business-like relationship.⁵⁴

The female regents did not receive any form of compensation or emoluments for their work. The offices they occupied belonged to the so-called subaltern or 'serving' offices that were considered part of the civic duties that citizens, and in this case the most well-to-do citizens in town, were supposed to provide to the urban community. The subaltern officials, who formed the social layer just below that of the town councils and magistrates, were supposed to assist the senior administrative and judicial officeholders.⁵⁵ They were selected by the city authorities from the upper echelons of the urban community. The office of regent of a welfare institution was one of the lower rungs on the ladder a man might climb in order to pursue a long career of public service. Other, more prestigious positions might include treasurer, master of the Orphan Chamber, captain of the civic

militia, and, possibly, the highest public offices of magistrate or city councillor.⁵⁶ For women, on the other hand, membership of the board of regents was the only area in which they could assume such a prestigious position of leadership.

The tasks of both the male and female board members were written down in instructions. The conceptual division of tasks is strongly reminiscent of the division between the public and the private sphere that became more sharply articulated in the eighteenth century, whereby the private sphere was increasingly promoted as a woman's domain and activities in the public sphere were more strongly promoted as the domain of men.⁵⁷ Male regents usually held the final responsibility over external affairs, finances, management of buildings and property, the admittance of inmates, and the employment of part of the personnel. Female regents in most institutions held the final responsibility over what was called the 'internal' affairs and domestic matters. They supervised the kitchen and the sewing room and sometimes also (part of the) female indoor staff.⁵⁸ The instructions were not always unambiguous. Relations were put to the test in such circumstances and on many boards conflicts arose about responsibilities and especially about the female regents' autonomy, as we will see.

Dutch female regents enjoyed a reputation of international fame.⁵⁹ They were portrayed as qualified leaders, full of confidence, by the famous Dutch painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁶⁰ In practice, however, their authority was far from self-evident. Willem Loran, orphan father from 1813 to 1845, wrote a history of the Utrecht orphanage. This account, written in retrospect, provides an interesting insight into a nineteenth-century male official's perspective on women in positions of authority. Loran characterised the female 'matronate' as 'a source of eternal discontent and quarrelsomeness'.⁶¹ As Loran records, for most of the eighteenth century the Utrecht orphanage had functioned without a board of female administrators. Until the early seventeenth century, the wives of the male regents had fulfilled the task of female supervisors. But these women were 'burdened with children and their own household' and therefore in the beginning of the seventeenth century it was decided to appoint eight 'experienced and qualified women, above child-rearing age'.⁶² In the first years these matrons worked under the supervision of the wives of the regents, who apparently still assumed an official role within the orphanage. This led to an unworkable situation. Whether this was caused by the 'imagined superiority' of the regents' wives, as Loran suggested, is unknown.⁶³ But in due course, the wives of the regents were excluded from involvement and the tasks of the matrons became autonomous activities. The matronate of the Utrecht orphanage functioned until 1702, when matrons ceased to hold office.⁶⁴ We are not informed about the reasons of this joint reassignment. Similar incidents in other cities suggest that conflicts over authority may have played a role.

The female regents of the house of correction in Gouda came into conflict with their male colleagues in the mid-eighteenth century because they

demanded a say in the appointment of the new indoor-mother as this right had been granted to them in the regulations, and as they were the ones who had to work with her on a daily basis. As their protests were not heard, the female regents decided to resign. But even in this they were not heard, as the city authorities declined their request to be dismissed, without providing any further rationale for their decision.⁶⁵ Similar disputes arose in the boards of the Lutheran orphanage in Amsterdam in 1689, as well as in the orphanage in Middelburg in 1771. The Amsterdam female regents considered themselves independent and refused to give an account of their financial administration to the male regents. That the church congregation in the end accepted the women's claim of autonomy was unmistakably related to the fact that the board of female regents was established in 1680 with a special financial bequest and that the board could dispose of its own financial means.⁶⁶ The re-division of the tasks of the board of the Middelburg orphanage between the male and the female members was called 'a humiliating project' by the latter.⁶⁷ The female regents perceived themselves to be treated as 'housekeepers' who were allowed only some rather 'insignificant tasks'.⁶⁸ They refused to submit themselves to the supervision of the male regents, demanded a full say and responsibility over the orphan girls and the complete household, and wanted to appoint female staff and hold responsibility for the purchases of the household necessities. The last point was considered of special importance. The female regents believed that they were better equipped to plan the menu and to make the purchases as economically as possible. But what also played a role was that the possibility of favouring merchants with large orders and special assignments was incredibly important for consolidating social relations, and maintaining the social network-engendered status and social prestige within the local community. The regents, who wanted to assign their female colleagues a supporting rather than an executive role, did not give up the responsibility for purchasing that easily. The social importance of this task was simply too significant. The male regents appealed to the 'natural right' and argued that when a board consisted of both women and men, 'the management was reserved solely to men'. They explained to the female regents that:

As was the case in the management of families in which one follows the natural order, men were granted the management and women the surveillance. For this very reason it was perfectly clear that the whole administration was given to the regents.⁶⁹

As mediation was not of any help, the case was submitted to the city magistrates, who decided in favour of the male regents. The male regents held the overall supervision of the organisation and the right to appoint the employees to the higher echelons. The female regents retained supervision over the 'domestic matters', and were entitled to appoint the lower staff.⁷⁰

That conflicts between male and female regents were not automatically settled in favour of the male officials becomes clear from the long-lasting dispute in the Leiden orphanage. Here, a disagreement between male and female board members led to a genuine management crisis. The female regents had punished a girl who had stolen clothes with a beating and five months' extra work.⁷¹ The male regents were aggrieved about their actions, because they were not consulted, nor given notice of the incident. Moreover, as they argued, their female colleagues were not responsible for punishing the girls. They should have discussed this with the male regents, as the 'chief administration' belonged to them. The female regents resisted, arguing that they were appointed by the city council and thus that they only had to give account to the city council. They added that they would rather cede their functions than submit themselves to the authority of the male regents.⁷²

As the boards could not come to an agreement, a committee was installed to examine the responsibilities and to mediate between the two. The committee—consisting of male regents—unsurprisingly supported the argument of the regents that they were the chief administrators, and that the moral education of the girls pertained to the responsibility of the male regents. The committee referred to the perceived fundamental inequality between women and men to sustain its argumentation. One member of the committee argued that he could not believe how the city authorities of Leiden entrusted the care of the poor and parentless girls—'whose welfare the committee considered to be equally important as those of boys'—to women. Another proposed that the male regents held the final responsibility with reference to the legal status of married women and argued that 'a married woman is not a [legal] person'.⁷³

The female regents responded to each of the arguments separately. They acknowledged the authority and final responsibility of the male regents with respect to criminal conflicts, the property, finances, and the moral education of boys. Again we see that the fields of responsibility were made according to the idea of public versus the private spheres informed by assumptions about gender, whereby the private sphere was seen as the domain of women and spheres of 'public' activity traditionally deemed masculine. Criminal behaviour had to be indicted by the criminal court, and thus outside the orphanage. Punishing a girl for less serious misbehaviour could be dealt with inside the house. It was part of the moral education of the girls, over which they held responsibility and they defended this responsibility with verve. They were the ones, the female regents argued in their response, who would educate the girls 'in all domestic tasks so that the girls, in due course, knew how to behave as good housekeepers and mothers'. Punishments were part of this. Moreover, there were issues that the women could not notify to men 'out of chastity' as the female administrators formulated cryptically. The female regents expressed their outrage over the imputation that the female regents could not take care of the girls. 'If the citizenry of Leiden shares the opinion of the members of the committee about the female regents, we, the female

regents, would be made nothing, or little more than insignificant beings, or Machines, operated by the hands of others.' The argument that women were not legal persons was countered by the women as well. They responded that they knew very well that they fell under the marital power of their *husbands*, not under the marital power of the regents.⁷⁴

The female regents demanded that the male regents acknowledge that the city council held the final say and that the responsibilities were to be divided as suggested in their petition. The male regents were incensed and stated that this would result in a fundamental change to the traditional organisational structure. Furthermore, they continued, it would imply a loss of unity in the governance of the orphans and this was a situation that 'even within the smallest household' would have 'lamentable consequences'.⁷⁵

The mediation of the committee did not bring an agreement any closer. The female regents were accused of trying to counter the solid argumentation of the male regents solely with 'subtle expressions and insignificant rebuttals'.⁷⁶ The committee decided to instigate another committee, apparently also without success as the female regents finally presented the conflict to the city council. The city council asked both boards to make a draft for new regulations.⁷⁷ During the procedure the women were to maintain responsibility over the orphan girls and the men over the boys, which led the female regents to conclude that the council provisionally had decided in their favour.⁷⁸ According to the final regulations the female regents kept their authority.⁷⁹

Conclusion

Whereas Dutch law denied women the right to govern on the basis of their supposed mental weakness and incapacity to judge, women could assume positions of authority in early modern towns. Law made a distinction between married and unmarried women whereby married women were placed in a subordinate position and unmarried women were legally capable of affairs. The dividing lines in the urban economy were different, though. Whereas law did not make clear distinctions between ever- and never-married adult women, the 'marital history' of women was of crucial importance when it came to access to work. It was through marriage that women gained access to positions of authority; literally, through marriage, as in the case of traditional artisanal guilds, or symbolically, as in the case of the boards of welfare institutions, where male and female regents acted as if metaphorically married, although in reality not to one another.

Women were granted formal positions as widows, as married women living alone because their husbands had left for work or were absent for other reasons, or even as divorced women who were considered substitutes of their (former) husbands. In some cases even daughters were allowed as stand-ins for their fathers in the artisanal sectors of the urban economy. Though in practice rules were applied with a remarkable flexibility, broadly

speaking, the parallel with the patriarchal household as organising principle was dominant. The evidence from the two Dutch towns concur with the findings for other European cities, such as those in Germany or France. As Janine Lanza phrased it in her research on Paris, 'the shop itself, not the patriarch, constituted the central element of familial survival'.⁸⁰ The role assumed by women in charge was usually considered as that of the substitute of the patriarch. They were, in Wiesner's words, 'maintainers of the family unit'.⁸¹ The work status of widows was conceptualised according to their status within the broken family. They took over the role of the household head and could assume positions of authority, albeit temporarily, as long as a male household head was absent.

The analogy with the household was also paramount in the legitimisation of the authority of women in boards of administration. As has become clear in recent research, the frequently discussed notion of domesticity and the ideology of the separate spheres have little or no explanatory power in the work experiences of most women in the early modern period. The majority of women moved freely in the 'public sphere' and many participated actively in economic life.⁸² The research presented here does not (aim to) challenge this notion. But it is interesting to see that the ideology of the separate spheres did play a role in the experiences of a very small group of women in urban society as it, paradoxically, was precisely the strictly gendered division of tasks that provided the conceptual basis for women to assume managerial roles in welfare institutions. The ideology of the gendered division of work may even have provided these women with a basis from which to claim authority, albeit in a very limited sphere of activity. Tasks between male and female overseers were divided between husbands and wives, according to the *ideology* of the gendered division of work, along the lines of the public and the private spheres. The analogy with the household made it self-evident that women were in charge *in* the institution and men took care of external affairs.

The significance of the household as a structuring principle also became clear when conflicts arose. It seems as if masters' widows in Holland had little to fear from the opposition from journeymen who had difficulties with working under their supervision. That they found the guilds or city authorities quite often on their side in cases of conflict may indicate that journeymen were supposed to submit themselves to the authority of the household head, whether female or male. More fundamental were the discussions about the position of women that arose in the eighteenth century. The scattered information does not allow for a systematic analysis, but the records suggest that the authority of women became subject to debate more explicitly. Both in guilds and in boards, conflicts centred on the question of women's autonomy. The cases show that debates became particularly fierce when women tended to claim autonomy, or dared to demand a position that was equal to that of men. Male opponents tried to demarcate women's authority on the work floor with references to the 'natural order' and the law that placed married women

in a subordinate position, or to the principle of inequality between the sexes. The conflict in the Leiden orphanage shows that female regents followed this line of reasoning, but not until the end. They accepted the gendered division of tasks according to which women held the responsibility over domestic matters, and men were responsible for external affairs, seemingly as self-evident. But the regents refused to subordinate themselves to the claimed, gender-specific authority of men to whom they were not married. They refused to relinquish power and thus refuted the analogy with the family in this respect.

Notes

- 1 This contribution is based upon earlier publications. The research was conducted for my dissertation and within the research project 'Women's Work in the Early Modern Northern Netherlands, c. 1600–1815', funded by 'Stichting Vrienden van het IISG', Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and 'Stichting Professor Van Winterfonds' at the International Institute of Social History. For this contribution, I reassessed the cases and analysed them from the perspective of women's access to positions of authority. See Ariadne Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood: Weduwen in Leiden in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Prometheus / Bert Bakker, 2001); Ariadne Schmidt, 'Gelijk Hebben, Gelijk Krijgen? Vrouwen en Vertrouwen in het Recht in Holland in de Zeventiende en Achttiende Eeuw', in *Het Gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw: Recht, Onrecht en Reputatie in de Vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, ed. Michiel van Groesen, Judith Pollmann, and Hans Cools (Hilversum: Verloren 2014); Ariadne Schmidt, 'Managing a Large Household. The Gender Division of Work in Orphanages in Dutch Towns in the Early Modern Period, 1580–1800', *History of the Family* 13 (2008).

- See for example Jane Humphries and Carmen Sarasúa, 'Off the Record: Reconstructing Women's Labor Force Participation in the European Past', *Feminist Economics* 18 (2012): 39–67; Ariadne Schmidt and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Reconsidering "The First Male-Breadwinner Economy": Women's Labour Force Participation in the Netherlands, 1600–1900', *Feminist Economics* 18 (2012); Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700–1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006); Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands, c. 1580–1815* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007).
- 2 Schmidt and Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Reconsidering'. Cf. Merry E. Wiesner, 'Wandervogels and Women: Journeymen's Concepts of Masculinity in Early Modern Germany', *Journal of Social History* 24 (1991).
- 3 Deborah Simonton, *A History of European Women's Work: 1700 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1998), 68–69.
- 4 Henk van Nierop, 'Popular Participation in Politics in the Dutch Republic', in *Resistance, Representation and Community*, ed. Peter Blikle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 286.
- 5 See for an elaborate discussion of this source Marcia Schmidt Blaine, 'The Power of Petitions: Women and the New Hampshire Provincial Government, 1695–1770', *International Review of Social History* 46, suppl. 9 (2001).

- 6 Hugo de Groot, *Inleidinge tot de Hollandsche Rechts-Geleerheid. Met de te Lund Teruggevonden Verbeteringen, Aanvullingen en Pomerkingen van den Schrijver en met Verwijzingen Naar Zijn Andere Geschreften Uitgegeven en van Aantekeningen en Bijlagen Voorzien Door F. Dovring, H.F.W.D. Fischer, E.M. Meijers* (Leiden: Universitaire pers Leiden, 1965), 11. This is an annotated edition of Grotius' *Inleydinge*, first published in 1631.
- 7 Simon van Leeuwen, *Het Rooms-Hollands Regt* (Leiden / Rotterdam, 1664), 24.
- 8 Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 55–59. For exceptions to these strict rules see Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 59–61, 73–74. On the status of female public vendors, see Van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship*, 58–69.
- 9 Lia van Gemert, 'The Power of the Weaker Vessels: Simon Schama and Johan van Beverwijck on Women', in *Women in the Golden Age. An International Debate on Women*, ed. Els Kloek, Nicole Teeuwen, and Marijke Huisman (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), 39–41.
- 10 Van Leeuwen, *Het Rooms-Hollands Regt*, 24. Van Leeuwen's arguments and his (re)valuation of the intellectual capacities of women did not lead him to plead for a change in the legal status of married women. The intellectual capacities of women were defined *in relation to* men. When a man was present on a day-to-day basis, he was the one in charge. See also De Groot, *Inleidinge*, 11.
- 11 Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 80–94.
- 12 For an excellent overview of the debate, see Crowston, 'Women, Gender, and Guilds'. The following is based on Ariadne Schmidt, 'Women and Guilds: Corporations and Female Labour Market Participation in Early Modern Holland', *Gender & History* 21 (2009): 170–89.
- 13 For example, Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Merry E. Wiesner, 'Guilds, Male Bonding and Women's Work in Early Modern Germany', *Gender & History* 1 (1989); Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women in the Crafts in Sixteenth-Century Lyon', in *Women and Work in Preindustrial Europe*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).
- 14 For example: Janine M. Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris: Gender, Economy, and Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Christine Werkstetter, *Frauen im Augsburger Zunft Handwerk: Arbeit, Arbeitsbeziehungen und Geschlechterverhältnisse im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001); Anna C. Fridrich, 'Working Women in Guild Crafts: Female Strategies in Early Modern Economies', in *Female Agency in the Urban Economy: Gender in European Towns, 1640–1830*, ed. Deborah Simonton and Anne Montenach (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- 15 The textile industry was also a segment dominated by women, but this sector was usually outside the realm of guild control. Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, *De Draad in Eigen Handen. Vrouwen en Loonarbeid in de Nederlandsetextielnijverheid* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007), 155–75.
- 16 Schmidt, 'Women and Guilds', 170–89. On guilds restricting women indirectly, see Danielle van den Heuvel, 'Guilds, Gender Policies and Economic Opportunities for Women', in *Female Agency in the Urban Economy*, ed. Simonton and Montenach.
- 17 Schmidt, 'Women and Guilds', 174; Van den Heuvel, 'Guilds, Gender Policies and Economic Opportunities for Women', 119.

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- 18 For an elaborate discussion of the position of seamstresses in Dutch guilds, see Bibi Panhuysen, *Maatwerk. Kleermakers, Naaisters, Oudkleerkopers en de Gilden (1500–1800)* (Amsterdam: Stichting beheer IISG, 2000).
- 19 *Gildebrieven van alle de Gildens Binnen de stad Gouda, Klee-maeckers* (n.p., 1713), 14-11-1614.
- 20 Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris*, 227–28.
- 21 The textile industry in Leiden was not organised in guilds but in corporations called *neringen*. The city authorities held strict control over the industry that was so important to the city's economy. People who wanted to establish themselves as independent artisans in the textile industry had to ask for permission from the city council. Van Nederveen Meerkerk, *De Draad in Eigen Handen*, 159–63.
- 22 Schmidt, 'Women and Guilds', 175. See also Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 146–47.
- 23 Schmidt, 'Women and Guilds', 175.
- 24 This was explicated in the guild letters of the surgeons and the schoolmasters. Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 275.
- 25 Simonton, *A History*, 49.
- 26 Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 147.
- 27 Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 146, 157–58.
- 28 In the textile industry—which was not organised in guilds but fell under the strict control of the urban authorities—people always had to ask the authorities for permission to start or to take over a workshop.
- 29 Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 163.
- 30 Streekarchief Midden Holland (SAMH), Oud Archief Gouda (OAG) no. 275, 17-10-1797.
- 31 SAMH, OAG nos. 215, 18-2-1775; 212, 12-6-1764.
- 32 Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 153, 156. The sisters de Hoest were granted exemption from the rule that they had to work in cooperation with a master journeyman.
- 33 SAMH, OAG nos. 106, 21-8-1675; 214, 16-4-1771.
- 34 Ariadne Schmidt, 'The Profits of Unpaid Work. "Assisting Labour" of Women in the Early Modern Urban Dutch Economy', *History of the Family* 19 (2014): 19.
- 35 Wiesner, 'Wandervogels', 767.
- 36 Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris*, 127.
- 37 The following examples are drawn from Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 150–53.
- 38 Regionaal Archief Leiden (RAL), Stadsarchief van Leiden, 1574–1816 (SA II) no. 72, 1-4-1655, fols. 275v–277v.
- 39 SAMH, OAG no. 208, 8-2-1749, fols. 214–215; OAG no. 209, 21-7-1749.
- 40 RAL, SAII no. 84, 12-9-1673, fols. 16v–17.
- 41 RAL, SAII no. 77, 9-3-1662, fols. 260–261.
- 42 RAL, SAII no. 78, 21-9-1662, fols. 39–40.
- 43 Schmidt, *Overleven na de dood*, 152–53.
- 44 This section is based upon Schmidt, 'Gelijk Hebben, Gelijk Krijgen?', 121–22.
- 45 Schmidt, 'The Profits of Unpaid Work', 17–18.
- 46 My translation. Cited in Maarten Prak, 'Individu, Corporatie en Samenleving. De Retoriek van de Amsterdamse Gilden in de 18de Eeuw', in *Werelden van Verschil. Ambachtsgilden in de Lage Landen*, ed. Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly (Brussels: VUB Press, 1997), 306.

- 47 SAMH, OAG no. 217, 29-12-1784.
- 48 SAMH, OAG no. 217, 29-12-1784, fols. 169–173.
- 49 SAMH, OAG no. 217, 29-12-1784, fols. 173–176v.
- 50 Simonton, *A History*, 14.
- 51 SAMH, OAG no. 217, 29-12-1784, fols. 173–176v.
- 52 SAMH, OAG no. 217, 29-12-1784, fols. 175v–176.
- 53 SAMH, OAG no. 217, 29-12-1784, fol. 177.
- 54 This and the following paragraphs are based upon Schmidt, 'Managing a Large Household', 43–45, 51–54; Schmidt, 'Gelijk Hebben, gelijk Krijgen?', 123–24.
- 55 Manon van der Heijden, *Civic Duty. Public Services in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012).
- 56 Maarten Prak, *Gezeten Burgers. De elite in een Hollandse stad, Leiden 1700–1780* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1985), 52–55.
- 57 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson Education, 1987); Dorothee Sturkenboom, *Spectators van Hartstocht: Sekse Emotionele Cultuur in de Achttiende Eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren 1998). This paradigm has been much criticised and seems to be inadequate to describe the experiences of the majority of women, although the ideology became more sharply articulated in moralistic literature.
- 58 Schmidt, 'Managing a Large Household', 45.
- 59 Els Kloek, 'De Geschiedenis van een Stereotype. De Bazingheid, Ondernemingszin en Zindelijkheid van Vrouwen in Holland (1500–1800)', *Jaarboek voor Genealogie* 58 (2004): 15.
- 60 Examples include Jacob van Loo, *Regents of the Almoners- and Poor- and Workhouse, Haarlem* (1659), Collection Frans Hals Museum; Frans Hals, *Regentesses of the Old Men's Alms House, Haarlem* (1664), collection Frans Hals Museum; Ferdinand Bol, *Three Regents of the Leprozenhuis in Amsterdam* (1668), Collection Rijksmuseum; Adriaan Backer, *The Regents of the Burgerweeshuis* (1683), Collection Amsterdam Museum.
- 61 Het Utrechts Archief (HUA), Geformoord Burgerweeshuis (GBW) no. 1/II, 131.
- 62 A.J.M. Kunst, *Van Sint Elisabeths-gasthuis tot Gereformeerd Burgerweeshuis (1485–1814)* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956), 314.
- 63 HUA, GBW, no. 1/II, 96.
- 64 HUA, GBW, no. 1/II, 129–30.
- 65 SAMH, OAG no. 210, 22-6-1756, fols. 199–203.
- 66 Simon Groenveld et al., *Wezen en Boefjes: Zes Eeuwen Zorg in Wees- en Kinderhuizen* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), 95.
- 67 Cited in J.L. Kool-Blokland, *De Zorg Gewogen. Zeven Eeuwen Godshuizen in Middelburg* (Middelburg: Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen, 1990), 381.
- 68 Cited in Kool-Blokland, *De Zorg Gewogen*, 380.
- 69 Cited in Kool-Blokland, *De Zorg Gewogen*, 382.
- 70 Kool-Blokland, *De Zorg Gewogen*, 384.
- 71 The following section is based upon Schmidt, 'Managing a Large Household'.
- 72 RAL, Heilige Geest Weeshuis (HGW) no. 197, 14-11-1796.
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- 74 RAL, HGW no. 197, 28-11-1796.
- 75 RAL, HGW no. 37, 12-12-1796.

- 76 RAL, HGW no. 37, 12-12-1796.
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- 78 RAL, HGW no. 197, 14-2-1797, 16-2-1797.
- 79 RAL, HGW no. 197, 11-2-1797; 13-2-1797; HGW no. 281, 1797.
- 80 Lanza, *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris*, 224.
- 81 Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 90.
- 82 Simonton, *A History*, 87; Schmidt and Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 'Reconsidering'.

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