Memoirs of the Fruits of Globalization: The Markets for Chinese Textiles in New Spain by Jean de Monségur

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An Economic Report, or Intelligence Gathering?

This chapter discusses textile trading and smuggling in the mid-eighteenth century by using several invaluable and newly discovered resources. Following the economic difficulties arising from the wars during the reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), a series of reports, consular reports, and memoirs related to the markets of Spanish America were produced.[1] Charles Weiss (1844), in his *L'Espagne depuis le règne de Philippe II jusqu'à l'avènement des Bourbons*—which was translated into Spanish in 1846—for example, used the *Mémoire du comte de Rébenac* (1689) from the *Manuscrits Français de la Bibliothèque du roi*. Weiss first included

[1] Some of these manuscripts are in the Foreign Affairs Archives, in Spain and France.

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some data from the memoir in his dissertation thesis in 1839 *Des causes de la décadence de l'industrie et du commerce en Espagne, depuis le règne de Philippe II jusqu'à l'avènement de la dynastie des Bourbons* (Weiss 1844, pp. 8–87). *Las memorias secretas de América*, by Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa (1826), are indispensable for understanding the mid-eighteenth-century mechanisms of fraud and smuggling. Albert Girard (1932) wrote several biographies of the French consuls in Spain, and especially those on Jean-Baptiste Patoulet.[2] The cornerstone of our work, Jean Monségur's *New Memoirs of Mexico* (2002), discusses efforts to recover the market share that the French held in the Spanish colonies before the wars of Louis XIV, and his work offers information now being used in current historical works on colonial studies and in the histories of material culture and decorative arts. There are also the reports of French consuls in Cadiz and Seville (Fernández de Pinedo 1986) that are rich sources of information. The information these resources provide allows us to understand some of the changes related to the production of fabrics, their commercialisation, and their consumption worldwide between the sixteenth century and eighteenth century.

Our chapter starts with Captain Monségur,[3] who at the end of 1706 left Cadiz in Spain on a small ship lightly armed with eight canons, under the orders of His Holy Majesty the King of Spain Philipp V.[4] The mission was to carry messages to Don Fernando de la Cueva Enríquez, the Duke of Albuquerque, Viceroy of New Spain from 1702 to 1711. However, when Monségur reached Saint-Domingo, on the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola, he was attacked by the Dutch and was badly injured in the head. While not yet recovered from his injuries, Monségur sailed first for Veracruz and then to Mexico. He spent one year in the City of Mexico

[2] These are in the Marine and Affaires section of the French National Archives. See https://francearchives.fr/fr/facomponent/b5cd45f1f2c7197ab648b2f72afc555ae64ddc3e.

[3] Jean de Monségur, born in Ciboure, near Saint-Jean-de-Luz, in France, carried out military duties on land and on sea in the Royal Navy of the king of Spain. The accompanying notes in his memoir, at the National Library in Paris (BnF Mss Fr. 24.228), provides a minimal autobiography with key dates about his military career, honours, and distinctions received from the king of Spain. It also sheds light on the circumstances of his journey to Mexico, his mission, and the writing process of his *New Memoirs of Mexico*.

[4] Philipp V of Spain (1683–1746), was the grandson of Louis XIV. He inherited the throne upon the death of Charles II in 1700. At the turn of eighteenth century, Europe saw a marked rise in the House of Bourbon.

(1707–1708) on the orders he had received in Cadiz from the French minister of Marine, the Earl of Pontchartrain,[5] asking for all intelligence about the country of Mexico. Monségur collected relevant information from myriad sources, which he included in his memoir, *The New Memoirs of Mexico, or New Spain*. Upon his return to Madrid at the beginning of 1709, he presented his memoir—twenty-seven chapters at the time—to the king of Spain. He later prepared copies for the Earl of Pontchartrain and for the French ambassador in Spain, Michel-Jean Amelot.[6] In addition to these three copies, he made one copy for himself and two additional copies were shared in the hope of publishing the *New Memoirs of Mexico*. Thus, six copies were in circulation at the same time, and five remain in public collections: one manuscript is in Madrid's Archives of the Foreign Office, three are in the National Library in Paris, and one is in the Arsenal Library in Paris.[7]

From the initial twenty-seven chapters, Monségur expanded his memoir by another twenty-five chapters, for a total of fifty-two chapters, with much of this later work written when he was back to Europe in 1713 and 1714. The only regret expressed by the author was that such a detailed description of Mexico would be better if paired with a similar description of Peru. In the hope that his memoir might affect the politics at the time, he was ready to rework his manuscript in 1715, as he was seeking patrons in France. Nearly sixty-seven years earlier, Englishman Thomas Gage had published *A New Survey of the West Indies* (Gage 1648).[8] Comparing his work to Gage's, Monségur believed his own on Mexico to be more explicit and filled with essential information.

Along with offering geographical, physical, and material descriptions of the country of Mexico, as well as its on people and its natural resources, this memoir was to highlight the trade and the commerce of Spain with

[5] Jérôme Phélypeaux, Count of Pontchartrain (1674–1747), was the secretary of state at the Marine department from 1699 to 1715. This department was in charge of all commercial and international activities, including intelligence gathering.

[6] Michel Jean Amelot, Marquis of Gournay (1655–1724), Extraordinary Ambassador sent to Spain, was in Madrid from 1705 to 1709. The royal instructions he received focused on the commerce and trade agreements with Spain and the organization of the trade in the West Indies. See Ozanam and Mézin (2011, pp. 67–79).

[7] Madrid: Ms. 9; Paris: BnF Ms Fr. 24.228; Ms Fr. 24.229; Arsenal Ms. 4788.

[8] Translated into French with the title, *Nouvelle relation des Indes Occidentales, contenant les voyages de Thomas Gage dans la Nouvelle Espagne*, Paris, 1676.

its ally, the French, in the West Indies, especially as related to Mexico and the neighbouring countries of Guatemala, Bolivia, and Peru.

Monségur wrote about what he witnessed in the City of Mexico, especially about the commodities traded, their provenance, and their success. Such mercantile information on Mexico was rare at the time. At the time of Monségur's work, Gage's work on the West Indies had been translated into many languages and was the only—and very successful—source of information for Europeans on New Spain. But by the early eighteenth century, the richest and largest Spanish colony in America was mysterious and unknown, as Jean-Paul Duviols states in 2002, making Monségur's *New Memoirs* a remarkable historical testimony and a necessary reference for the knowledge of Spanish America (Monségur 2002, pp. 7–23).

European Rivalry

Monségur reflects on the socioeconomic changes that had taken place throughout the seventeenth century as related to the wars in Europe and also the economic and social situations in Spanish America in the second half of the seventeenth century.

On the first point, after peace was established between Spain and the Netherlands in 1648, conflicts in Europe turned to the Anglo-Dutch rivalry. The English Navigation Act of 1651 began a three-war cycle between England and the Netherlands in the years 1652–1654, 1665–1667, and 1672–1674. There was also France's expansion to the south (Treaty of the Pyrenees of 1659), north, and east (War Devolution in 1667–1668, Treaty Aix-la-Chapelle of 1668, war from 1672 to 1678, and the Treaty of Nijmegen of 1678). The French also went to war with of the Augsburg League (Nine Years War, 1688–1697). The Treaty of Ryswick of 1697 and the Treaty of Regensburg of 1684 recognised French annexations of Spanish lands. In the War of the Spanish Succession, France became the dominant power in continental Europe, but England and the Netherlands had managed to settle permanently in the Caribbean. For Spain, the Eighty Years War (1566–1648) saw the settling of the Dutch on the islands of Curaçao (1634) and Saint Eustatius (1636), and the Anglo-Spanish War of 1654–1659 meant the settlement of the English in Jamaica (1655). These territories would become the areas for smuggling textiles.

As related to Monségur's second point, French expansionism had a negative impact on commerce, as pointed out by most of the late

Illustration 1 Panel of chintz, India (Coromandel Coast), second quarter of eighteenth century, cotton, drawn and painted resist and mordant, dyed, with applied gold leaf. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the United Piece Dye Works, 1936 36.90.121

seventeenth-century French consular sources (Morineau 1998). French competitors included not only the Dutch and English but also the Hamburgers and the Genoese, with greater or lesser success. Trade through Spain to America was more important economically for French traders than for English or Dutch traders, whose maritime hegemony allowed them to practice smuggling in America. In addition, an unexpected competitor to the French trade in silk emerged: silk brought by the Manila galleons—Spanish trading ships—which supplied a good part of silks consumed in New Spain, and even the Viceroyalty of Peru. During the War of the Spanish Succession, the French supplied the Spanish colonies with silk, which in turn financed part of the war effort (Dahlgren 1907, p. 4). However, France paid a commercial cost, from which they tried to recover with the Treaty of Utrecht. Nevertheless, they failed to ban, or even reduce, the arrival of Chinese silks from Acapulco. However, Spain managed, through a 1720 trade regulation with Spanish America, that the *derecho de palmeo* tax, established for tissues and measured by the palm of the hand (Rodríguez 1936, p. 110)[9] would benefit heavily taxed expensive fabrics. The *derecho de palmeo* implied that the tax was paid for the volume occupied by the merchandise on the ship. This meant that these costly but small fabrics were not taxed proportional to their value when compared to the medium-quality fabrics (that is, those that were heavier and bulkier but cheaper), thus favouring French silks over English cloths (Map 1).

Societal and Consumption Patterns

Monségur's information was gathered to serve French political interests, and he discovered his knowledge about local Mexican markets by studying products and consumer purchases. It is a unique and first-hand source on the textile trade and the clothing culture in the Spanish colonies in America, and the infrastructure of its commerce. The analysis of textiles, with their description, vocabulary, and economic value allows us to have a better understanding of the colonial world in Spanish America for the early modern period (Illustration 2).

[9] "The *palmo* is one fourth of a vara... The *palmo* was the span from tip of thumb to tip of little finger with the hand outstretched—7 to 9 inches—with a tendency to be close to 8 inches in observed cases on individuals of varying height and hand proportion" (Rowe et al. 1979, p. 241).

Map 1 Carte du Mexique et de la Floride, 1703. Guillaume Delisle (1703). Bibloteque Nationale de France, Cartes et Plan. Ref. GE C 10968 80

The colonisers who arrived to the already conquered Mexica empires had fewer options to make their fortune. The *repartimiento de indios*, or discovery of rich mines, had taken place in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Indian economy was slowly changing. Increased populations of Europeans and the dramatic decline of the indigenous populations led to these changes, although mining remained the main economic engine. Livestock of European origin e.g. cows, horses, donkeys, sheep—filled empty lands; and the vineyards, olive groves, and grains from across the Atlantic, linked to the diet of the conquerors, spread. Hugette and Pierre Chaunu (1955) had already pointed out that these changes could explain the reduction of fleet and galleon tonnage because they were carrying fewer heavy products such as wine, oil, and grains that were replaced by less bulky—but higher value—fabrics. Thus, the reduction in tonnage did not necessarily mean lower consumption capacity. Nuanced readings of the volume of precious metals shipped from the mines have been made, including understanding that most of the seventeenth century was not

Illustration 2 Petticoat, Coromandel Coast, India, ca. 1725. Painted and dyed cotton chintz. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Given by G. P. Baker, IS.14-1950

necessarily in a recession, at least in America, and there is nothing to suggest a decline in sales in America of European products. The figures on precious metals arriving in Europe probably do not capture the growing consumption in Spanish America, although, as Sánchez-Albornoz (1977, p. 108) pointed out, the movement of the population was not very

dynamic and the cities grew slowly. The loss of Spanish naval hegemony in the Atlantic meant the colonies had to build their own defence by spending or investing tax money on fortifications, armed forces, weapons, and even developing modest shipbuilding. The colonies also had to send considerable sums of *situados* to colonial areas with fewer resources to also build up their defence (Marichal and Grafenstein 2012). These tax expenditures, more or less in situ, led to increased purchasing capacity of those who benefitted from this expense, such as soldiers and workers in the construction sector who were building fortresses, ports, and ships (Lynch 1969, pp. 220–23; Céspedes del Castillo 1952, pp. 263–264).

A gradual increase in the tonnage allowed on the galleons (Schurz 1918) reflects New Spain's greater purchasing capacity of Chinese products; a Royal Decree in 1702 allowed an increase from three hundred to five hundred tons in the Manila galleons. This included both legal silk fabrics and illegal silks through Guayaquil—modern Ecuador–, via the Viceroyalty of Peru. However, the main factor that increased the demand for handicraft products, especially at certain prices, was the mining of silver and gold. In the 1680s, additional mines were discovered in New Spain (Bakewell 1974, p. 269). The reports of the French consuls relate the beginning of the exploitation of these mines to the rich contents of the returning fleets. During the eighteenth century, the production of the Zacatecas mines grew regularly from an index of 100 in the five-year period of 1700 to 1704, to 187 between 1730 and 1734, and continued its growth until the end of the century (Garner 1980, pp. 163–164).

Increased mining benefitted mainly the wealthy mine owners and merchants and those who profited via fraud. Other benefactors included large groups of miners, transporters of metals, and food vendors who fed the workers. The rest of the population, from indigenous to low-income Spaniards, purchased products made locally, such as cotton fabrics, but also increasingly bought imported ones. In New Spain, a great shift occurred with the arrival of cotton fabrics from India, via the Philippines. The Spanish administration, of course, wanted to limit the consumption of these foreign products in its colonies, except for the silver leak in its payment. The *indianas* (woven in dyed cotton) created competition for linen, even though Spain exported limited amounts of this material. As with linen, Spain did not export many silk fabrics to New Spain—despite what Monségur noted—so it did not concentrate on banning outright or reducing the amount of silk fabrics arriving from China via Manila. That trade depended on the maintenance of the archipelago in Spanish hands.

Monségur (2002, pp. 70–76) established that there were relationships among New Spain farmers, shepherds, miners, indigo and cochineal collectors, pearl fishermen, and masons and the workers and servants from Europe. He highlighted that some of those who were skilled and made a lot of money spent funds on parties, suing others, and alcohol. If we leave aside his peculiar (that is, racist) vision of indigenous peoples by pointing out their limited capacity for savings, the interesting thing is that he links the indigenous population to what in Europe were manual labourers and low-skilled artisans. He also mentions blacks and mulattos who were servants, breeding mistresses, and cooks, and slaves who worked in the sugar mills and in the production of indigo (Monségur 2002, p. 71). Interestingly, some of the slaves who managed to buy their freedom or who were freed by their masters rose economically, if not necessarily socially—*accomodés et assez riches* (wealthy)—which was an exception to the indigenous people. Only the *caciques* lived better than the indigenous. The indigenous dress—calzones, capas, shirts, and skirts—were made of cotton, and usually brightly and colourfully dyed. The indigenous owned almost no furniture, not even mattresses. As true worldwide for the colonised, their essential diet was reduced to cereals, and mostly corn. This might be accompanied by chili made with a little meat. For drink, there was some milk and especially *atole*, a hot drink made from corn with cinnamon. The latter was particularly drunk by males (Monségur 2002, pp. 72, 74–75).

Monségur estimates that in Mexico City, the Spaniards and their descendants were less than a fifteenth of the population. Thus, the purchasing capacity of this demographic for imported products was low, regardless of women's tendency for fashion and holding galas, according to Monségur. The economic and social structures of Mexico City were very different from those of Spain. There were spending similarities between Spaniards and Creoles, but the latter purchased items in lower quantities and of lower quality. Dobado-González research included findings that highlight "the heterogeneity of consumption patterns between Spanish America and the rest of the world and within Spanish America" (Dobado-González 2015, p. 52).

In the *Encyclopédie* (1765, vol. 10) of Diderot and d'Alembert, Mexico City, the capital of New Spain and the largest city in the New World, is described as being extremely rich in commerce. It received supplies from the north by approximately twenty large ships filled with merchandise from Christendom that landed each year at Vera Cruz. In his *Dictionnaire*

universel de commerce, Jacques Savary des Bruslons (1726) writes that the West Indies, a Spanish colony, could not survive without merchandise and products manufactured in Europe. And, according to Savary des Bruslons, despite strict regulations, trade with Spanish America—theoretically reserved exclusively for the Spanish—nonetheless occurred with other European countries, especially France, England, and the Netherlands, as well as a few other Northern European countries. This commerce was in fact one of the richest and most profitable for European businesses (Savary des Bruslons 1726, p. 237).

In a precursor of world-systems theory, Fernand Braudel states that Europe 'invented' America in the early modern age. In 'The Perspective of the World', part 3 of his book *Material Civilisation, Economy and Capitalism*, Braudel quotes a document written by Le Pottier de la Hestroy in 1703, who stated that consumption for European products in the West Indies was so high it exceeded the capacity of what European manufactures could provide. According to a comment by Ernst Ludwig Carl in 1725, the Spanish colonies in America almost became a warehouse of foreign goods (Braudel 1979, p. 516).

The arrival of artisanal goods in New Spain, especially textiles, had several origins. They arrived through legal Europe trade via fleets and galleons, and through smuggling. From China, products arrived on the Manila galleons in exchange for New World silver. Another origin was indigenous production (Melvine 2006, pp. 130–131), which was aimed at Indians, mestizos, mulattos, and slaves; that is, groups that could rarely purchase imported products. Foreign merchandise was mainly intended for the colonial elite: bureaucrats, merchants, and mine owners.

By 1686, on average, ships sailing from Spain to the West Indies were loaded especially with textile products (84.34%); excepting peddling (14.26%); paper, spices, oil, eau-de-vie, and iron and steel products (less than 1% each). Spain sent almost the same in value in wines, brandies, raisins, oil, and iron, as well as velvet, double taffeta, other silk fabrics, and some Segovia cloths. Given the theoretical high purchasing power of settlers and the considerable amount of taxes and transport prices, one might think that these were very expensive fabrics. They were, and included specifically: Rouen fabrics, brocades, gold and silver *mués*,[10] taffetas of French origin, Dutch gold and silver cloths and brocades,

[10] *Mué* was similar to a silk double taffeta such as the Gros of Tours (Dávila 2004, p. 132). Taffeta is a fine, tightly woven silk fabric.

silver and silk fabrics, silk stockings, silk taffetas, Flemish white thread lace, Bruges and Brussels camels, Brabant fabrics, and Dutch and Spanish Flanders batistes[11] But it was made clear by Monségur that the *platillas* made in Hamburg, *bocadillos* coarse canvases from Silesia and Westphalia, *creas* from Germany, *terlices* for mattresses, Morlaix common *creas* and Languedoc cloths from France, and the bays or etamines from England were materials to dress the middle class. The *sempiternals* or *perpetuanas,* and especially the less fine *sempiternals* of England or the unfashionable fabrics of Brabant, were medium-quality fabrics. Shipments to New Spain, such as to Peru, also included Indian cotton fabrics dyed in England or Holland. The finest Rouen and Louviers fabrics were actually the least sought after in New Spain and Peru; instead, *floretes* and *blancardas* were highly appreciated. The Languedoc cloths "were made to dress the poor"[12] (Monségur 2002, 202). Most likely due to the frequent wars undertaken by Louis XIV, certain French fabrics lost market shares. The *estameñas* of England replaced the Amiens serge; and the Dutch brocades in silk, gold, and silver displaced those produced in Tours and Lyon. Fabrics from Brabant competed with those from Rouen, and the *contanzas* of Holland, Hamburg, and Germany replaced those from Morlaix, Laval, and Saint Quentin. At the same time, the silks transported on the Manila galleons threatened those of European origin, and the cottons of the East were beginning to gain some relevance in the colonies. The New Spain market in the mid-seventeenth century thus had to have undergone changes. The increase in smuggling via Jamaica and Curaçao, and with the *asiento de negros* (Arrazola 1848, vol. 4, pp. 140–142) with Holland, discouraged trade from Seville-Cadiz, in which European traders (sometimes of the same national origin of those who practised smuggling) actively and increasingly participated. It could be that the irregularity of fleets and galleons with legal goods was in some way linked to the growth of smuggling (Pérez-García 2020, p. 6). With smuggled goods, the supply of European products in the viceroyalties would be satisfactory. While smuggling shifted the legal trade from Spain, it also had positive effects on prices, which increased the purchasing capacity of the Novohispanos, the inhabitants of New Spain. The worst hit by smuggling would have been the French, starting in 1667 (Weiss 1844, p. 514).

[11] Batiste is a very fine, tightly woven fabric, usually made from linen or cotton.

[12] Translations of Monségur are by the authors.

In Spanish America, from at least the second half of the seventeenth century, more money was increasingly spent on defence and on the administration through the *situados* (Marichal and Souto 1994). The smuggling and fraud would have reduced the taxes received in Spain. In addition, fraud lowered the price of certain goods. Moreover, at the end of the seventeenth century, mining in New Spain increased, with some problems arising from the supply of mercury. The slow but growing export of products linked to new colonialism (from sugar to leathers to traditional dyes) would have provided additional income to New Spain. Although the social pyramid in New Spain resembled that of Europe, those considered 'well off' were not as rich as their counterparts in Spain, and in not a few cases chose to remain there than to return to Spain. Large groups with significantly less purchasing power acquired mainly indigenous products. However, even among these lower-class groups, slaves dressed in imported cotton fabrics. Those who were socially between Spaniards (at society's top end) and Creoles (at the bottom end) increasingly had more purchasing power because of the higher fiscal spending in Spanish America and the development of non-mining activities, leading to improvement for the *sayasayas* and the *indianas*. It can be inferred that the prices of certain goods brought from China to New Spain was within everyone's budget (Dobado-González 2014).

Asian Taste and New Luxury Goods for New Consumers in New Spain

When the trading route opened between Europe and America in the sixteenth century, Mexico was placed at the crossroads of the global trade routes in the Spanish colonies, whose territories stretched from Mexico City in New Spain to the Spanish West Indies in the Caribbean and to the Spanish East Indies in the Asia Pacific. Donna Pierce explains that the "influx of luxury goods helped Mexico City gain a worldwide reputation as one of the most beautiful and prosperous cities in the New World" (Pierce 2015, pp. 53–73). Asian goods arrived in Acapulco on the Pacific Coast, and from there they were hauled overland to Mexico City and sold in the city's large Parián market in the centre of the capital (Illustration 3).

In the last chapter of his updated memoir, entitled 'Reflexions to be noticed on the commerce between Manila and Acapulco,' Monségur argued that it could no longer be ignored that the Chinese were skilled

Illustration 3
Waistcoat, textile from India, mid-eighteenth century, used for a man's waistcoat made in France, 1770–1790. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1935 35.142

and ingenious merchants, and that their manufactures and products were sought after for their singular taste. In Mexico and Peru, as well as throughout many parts of Europe, Chinese products became preferred to those made in Europe (Illustration Detail of sack made of Chinese hand-painted silk satin (1735–1760); Illustration 5). As Pierce (2016) noted in her research, textiles comprised the majority of Asian imports to the Americas, yet not much is documented about their specific nature.

Monségur comments on Chinese silks and other textiles (coming from India) that were valued for their beauty and their affordability, even though European products offered better quality and reputation. Monségur repeatedly insists that Chinese silks were less expensive but also of lower quality as compared to Spanish or French silks. For example, he highlights that the wealthiest people in Spanish America, when not wearing the *golilla* suit[13] but "dress in inexpensive silk that comes from China" (Monségur 2002, p. 234). The same thing also happened with ribbons and stockings, with him stating "there are also a lot of these kinds of stockings from China and although they are not so good, nor so beautiful […] they are cheaper" (Monségur 2002, p. 188). According to Monségur, price differences between European and Chinese silks had to do with design: Chinese fabrics offered simpler patterns. This was also the case for *pannes*, of which Monségur said, "they are not as beautiful nor so good as those of Europe' or brocades." The latter, however, Monségur considered quite good in terms of quality; hence, the prejudice for those of European origin, but again he points out that the difference is in "designs that are not so beautiful" (Monségur 2002, p. 189). Table 1 shows Monségur's characterization of the various fabrics.

Therefore, certain products of French and European origin that were more expensive—because they were better quality and considered more beautiful—were seriously impacted by the lower prices of Chinese products. In Monségur's description of the population of Mexico, he reports that even commoners used Chinese silks for clothing instead of locally produced material.

In addition, certain expensive European productions, such as first-quality wools, were not popular in New Spain—"they had not yet found

[13] The *gollila* was in fashion during Philip IV's reign and became the national costume (Colomer y Descalzo Lorenzo 2014; Thépaut-Cabasset 2014). Sempere y Guarinos, quoting Philip V, explains that his predecessor invented the golilla to avoid linen and laces used to make the collars (Sempere y Guarinos 1788, 145).

Table 1 Chinese fabrics as compared to European fabrics, according to Jean de Monségur

	Price	*Quality*	*Design/colour*
Silk stockings	lower	lower	not as good
Ribbons	lower	lower	n/a
Panne	lower	lower	not as good
Brocades	lower	good	not as good
Taffetas/sayasayas	lower	good	not as good
Dorures	lower	lower	old-fashioned

Source Monségur (2002, pp. 188–189)

all the esteem they deserve" (Monségur 2002, pp. 204–205)—because consumers had other alternatives. Chinese production was capable of adapting to different purchasing capacities, which made their productions so appealing. Competition was not confined to expensive items. Monségur points out that certain silk stockings rivalled those made of wool. Ordinary wool stockings were in great demand, but it would have been higher if it were not for the large amount of thick silk stockings coming out of China (Monségur 2002, p. 193). In other words, it is clear that Chinese products competed with, as Monségur called them, 'common and ordinary' products. With regard to the quality and price of silk products, the governor of the Philippines himself stated that "it is the fact that the products of China benefit in New Spain people with little wealth and servants who cannot buy the fabrics of Spain" (AGI, Filipinas, 206, N1, quoted in Picazo Muntane 2020, p. 261). The wide variety and types of silks were undoubtedly advantages for Asia, but these were not the only two. Another of China's great advantages was its ability to imitate European fabrics and trends through sampling and copying (Monségur 2002, p. 307).

Monségur noted that silk stockings for women and children had begun to arrive to New Spain between 1695 and 1697 ('so far, we hadn't seen these products coming'), imitating those made in Toledo, Naples, and Milan. He reiterated that they did not match their quality or beauty, but they were cheaper and thus more affordable. Such inexpensive garments were aimed at New Spain consumers who wanted access to 'stylish' wardrobes on a regular basis. Speaking of the *dorures*, he points out that the Chinese 'have been trying to imitate them for some time' (Monségur 2002, p. 190). He said something similar of the ribbons, which the Chinese were beginning to introduce in New Spain in the same time

period (Monségur 2002, p. 306), imitating the products of Genoa, Turin, Naples, Genoa, and France.

Silk products, as well as certain cotton fabrics, created changes in the international market in the late seventeenth century that led to problems for the European textile sector. Illegal Chinese silks were well received in New Spain; hence, the *Recopilación de Indias* of 1680 tried to regulate the smuggling of Chinese textiles, but without much success. Since the beginning of direct trade between New Spain and the Philippines in 1565, this route became very lucrative as quantities of silks and other Asian goods were re-exported to Peru and Spain. Satin in New Spain in the seventeenth century was manufactured from Chinese and Mexican raw silk (Schurz 1918, p. 393), but it was the imported Asian damasks and brocades that customers preferred (Rodríguez 2015, p. 231). In New Spain, the ban in 1596 against mulberry planting and the ending of the silk industry in New Spain in 1679 (Ma 2017, p. 81; Pohl 1971, p. 7) did not appear to incentivise imports from Spain. Instead, it consolidated the consumer habit of dressing in Chinese silks.

The extraordinary consumption of Asian goods in Mexico led to additional trade with Peru—even though it was sometimes strictly forbidden by the authorities—when the desire for goods exceeded the local market demand or when prices were low. Every year a ship from Peru arrived in Mexico to purchase goods originally shipped by the Manila galleons. According to Monségur, this created a yearly opportunity for Mexicans to sell European goods when it was profitable to do so. This counter-trade was both illegal and caused financial losses for Spain.

Galleon San Francisco Javier

The global cargo on the ship *San Francisco Javier*, arriving from Manila to Acapulco in 1707, is difficult to interpret. What does Monségur mean by the '2000 boxes of all kind of silks' valued at '1.000 piastras box', or the '2.000 *ballots* named *éléfantes*' each valued at 500 piastres/*ballots* (see Table 2) (Illustration 4).

In total, over the course of his study, Monségur values the goods sold in New Spain at four million pesos. We have estimated prices according to his data for Mexico City; however, given the price range for the same product, these estimates must be interpreted with caution.

Seventy-five percent of the shipment was fabrics, and made up half the cargo (in value). It must be added raw silk, representing 9% of the

Table 2 Breakdown of the cargo by product, in piastres and percentage of the *San Francisco Javier* (1707)

Products	*Piastres*			*Percentage*
Silk textiles/fabrics	2,000,000			50.00
Cotton/silk fabrics	1,000,000	Cotton fabric raw silk	630,450 369,550	25.00
Wax	150,000			3.750
Gold	25,000			0.625
Cinnamon	660,000			–
Pepper	35,000			–
Clove	5,600			–
Nutmeg	300	Total spices	700,600	17.522
Porcelains	10,000			0.25
Drogues	10,000			0.25
Other items	104,000			2.60
Total	3,999,990			99.997

Source Monségur (2002, p. 298)

total (see Table 2). Cotton fabrics represented 16%. It is likely most of the metres of fabric would be cotton textiles, since cotton was not expensive. The spices took up a certain weight (18% in value), especially cinnamon, which was linked to chocolate consumption (Fernández-de-Pinedo 2018). Gold was imported because in China silver was overvalued; thus, it was not bad business to buy gold with silver (Flynn and Giraldez 2012). Porcelain appears in the shipment, but not in excessive quantities, and the type of porcelains and at what prices is not clear. Wax was imported for use in the churches of Mexico, as in other countries in the Catholic world (Fernández-de-Pinedo 2018). The Manila galleons also brought a wide range of qualities of raw silk, which amounted to 369,550 piastres, or 2,956,400 *reales de a ocho* (see Table 3).

Unfortunately, the two most important products for our study—Chinese silk and cotton fabrics from the coast of Coromandel and Bengal—are mixed. Silks include brocades and cotton includes raw silk, some brocades, and low-quality taffeta. Luckily, Monségur provides an overview in Chapter 47, and then specifies the types of fabric in both silks (Chapter 49) and cotton (Chapter 50).

In Chapter 49, Monségur noted two thousand boxes worth two million pesos. Of those two million, the value of raw silks is estimated at almost three thousand *reales*, or 356 piastres (see Table 2) of different

Illustration 4 Felpa Ribbons with different floral patterns. *"Quaderno de muestras de los géneros de Europa que tienen estimación en Quito y su provincia, conocidos con otros nombres de aquellos que sacan de las fábricas, con expresión del precio a que comunmente se venefician*". Seville, Archives General de Indias, MP-Tejidos, 1780, 14, fol.

Illustration 5 Detail of sack (dress) made of Chinese hand-painted silk satin (1735–1760). The design of fanciful flowers shows the Western influence; the Chinese artists were using patterns sent to Europe to make silks expressly for the European market. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.115&A-19532006AY9543_2500 and 2006AY9540_2500

types and qualities: *mazo, quina, tramas, floxa from Bengala, chagny*, and *izquierdosilla*[14] (the final item would be spun or twisted, mostly in Mexico City, and made into capes, taffeta, and other fabrics). This indicates that there was still a need for silk artisans who could use raw and spun silks from Calabria,[15] Granada, and China to produce local plain-weave silks.

[14] Ana Cabrera, curator at the Museo del Traje (Madrid) points out that raw silk is a silk from which the gum (sericin) has not been removed. Sometimes the spun threads from the broken ends and 'floss' from *B Mori* (*Bombyx mori*) cocoons are also called wild silk instead of raw silk. These 'raw silks' seems to be second-class spun silks made from short lengths obtained from damaged cocoons or broken off during processing and twisted together to make yarn.

[15] For 'soie de Calabre', see Savary des Brulons, 1742.

Table 3 Raw silks brought by the *San Francisco Javier* in 1707, in *reales de a ocho*

Product	*Average "livres" (*)*	*Prices (reales)*	*Prices* x *"livres" in reales*
a	30,000	35,33	1,059,900
b	12,000	57	684,000
c	17,500	30	525,000
d	3,500	30	105,000
e	5,500	40	220,000
f	4,500	50	225,000
g	2,500	55	137,500
Total reales	–	–	2,956,400

Note (*) as Monségur noted different quantities for the same items along the *Mémoirs* we have calculated average weight (*livres*)
a. *Sedamazo*: silk in mass quantities
b. *Quina* or *pelo*: used, for example, to make taffetas blankets
c. *Trama*: weft raw silk
d. *Bengala*: raw silk used as weft
e. *Floxa*: untwisted silk thread used to embroider shirts, cloth skirts, and church ornaments
f. *Chagny Silk*: twisted thick white silk
g. *Izquierdilla*: similar to but thinner than *chagny*

Of the silk fabrics, many were probably copies of European patterns, especially with New Spain sending samples to China. Among the most expensive were fabrics made with gold, such as silk fabrics brocaded with gold into floral patterns, which the Chinese made via a different technique from the French (Monségur 2002, pp. 301–302). There were also brocades made with gold that were of a lower quality and brocades without gold and silver in floral patterns first and second *suerte* (sort). *Primaveras* (simple inexpensive taffeta) and *fondos con trama de algodón* (cotton weft backgrounds) imitated the fabrics made in Toledo and other places in Spain, France, and Italy.

Felpas were somewhat more expensive than the *fondos*, first and second suerte, very appreciated. Shipments included double taffetas such as *pequines* and *capicholas*. *Teletones* were a mediocre imitation of *chagrins*, the latter being long and narrow satins that corresponded to the double and simple French taffetas. *Chaules*, called *dobletes* in Spain, were popular as they were used to make *caleçons* (linings and skirts for women and children), and were similar in price to *teletons*. *Chorreras* was used for garnishing beds and flags (*pavilion*), and were widely consumed by both the poor and the rich. *Guardapies*, or petticoats, were skirts worn by

Table 4 Silk with gold (piastres/pieces) (See Glossary)

		Manilla	*Acapulco*	*México*
Telas	brocades with gold flowers glued on paper and applied on the fabric	16–24	40–50	50–55
Brocados	brocades of lower quality, with glued golden flowers made of gilded paper applied on the fabric	8, 10, 12, 14	20, 24, 35	25, 30, 35, 40

Source Monségur (2002, pp. 301–302)

women at home and as undergarments when they went out. *Gorgorán* was heavily used among women. The *sayasayas* (see Glossary), a kind of simple taffeta, was shipped in three qualities and used for skirts and linings for multiple types of clothing (Monségur 2002, 305). Monségur describes them with high praise: 'The fabric of all of them is good, good quality, and long lasting; they are preferred to everything that comes from Europe and of great consumption'. Each galleon brought no less than twenty thousand pieces, and sometimes more.

The measurements of silk fabrics—except for the *sayasayas*—were fairly uniform (16 × 1 and 1 × 0.75 varas),[16] which facilitates comparison by using prices in Mexico. Among the expensive fabrics were brocades (see Tables 4, 5 and Glossary), followed by *primaveras*, *fondos*, *felpas*, *damascos de primera suerte*, *pequines*, and *capicholas*. The *sayasayas* were much shorter in length—10 to 12 rods long—and therefore their prices have to be multiplied by 1.6. Those that were doubles cost between 4 and 5 piastres, second quality between 3.5 and 4 piastres, and those of the third quality between 2.5 and 3 piastres.

Even when those prices are multiplied by 1.6 however, they are not comparable to the rest of the silk fabrics. This creates a problem in interpreting certain texts related to the quality of Chinese silk fabrics. Some were expensive, but the majority were much lower cost than European silks manufactures, which certainly used different qualities for different types of customers. Silk consumption by lower-class groups with little purchasing power was possible through this wide variety of

[16] Vara was a Spanish unit of measurement of length between 768 and 912 millimetres (mm). The standard was the Burgos vara of 836 mm (= 33 inches).

Table 5 Silk Fabrics with or without silver (piastres/pieces) (See Glossary)

	Price and type of fabrics, according to the place they were sold	*Manilla*	*Acapulco*	*México*
Tissus (original name in the document)	brocaded silk	25–30	60–70	+70
Petite flores, first-class	brocaded silk with damask ground	15–20	35–45	35–50
Petite flores, second-class	brocaded silk with damask ground	8–16	20–25	30–35
Primaveras	Brocaded silk taffeta	5–6	12–20	+20
Fondos(a)	silk fabric with cotton weft (similar to *panne*)	12–16	30–35	+35
Felpas (b)	silk fabric with cotton weft (similar to *panne*)	+12–16	+30–35	+35
Damascos, first-class	Silk damask	15–16	32–35	+35
Damascos, second-class	Silk damask (2/3 varas long)	6–8	12–20	+20
Pequines	Pekins (almost 1 vara long)	8–10	18–22	22–28
Capicholas (c)	Silk taffeta, silk thread, low quality (the majority in *musc* colour)	+8–10	+18–22	+22–28
Teletones	Silk double taffeta (similar to *chagrin* but a poor imitation; only *musc* colour)	4–5	8–9	9–10
Rasos (d)	Silk satin (the majority are *musc* taffetas)	8–10	18–22	22–28
Rasos (e)	Silk satin (simple taffeta, 0.75 varas long)	+4–5	+8–9	+9–10
Chaules (f)	Silk double taffeta	+4–5	+8–9	+9–10
Chorreadas (g)	Taffetas (mouchetés) as *chaules*	4–5	8–9	9–10
Guardapies	Petticoat, puffed fairthingale (plain taffeta like a brocade with various flowers designs and colours)	6–8	12–14	15–18

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

	Price and type of fabrics, according to the place they were sold	*Manilla*	*Acapulco*	*México*
Sayasaya	Silk taffeta, third-class (most was white and the rest coloured), weight 5–6 ounces	5–7	14–16	20–24
Sayasaya	Silk taffeta, second-class (most was white and the rest coloured), weight 9–10 ounces	9–12	20–24	28–32
Sayasaya	Silk taffeta, double (only white), weight 12 ounces	2	4	4–5
Medias	Stockings, Milan's imitation (for men) piastras/pair	1.5–2	3.5–4	4–5
Medias	Unspecified (for women) reales/pair	12	24	28–30
Medias	Matching Manila style (for children) reales/pair	1.5–2	2–3	3–4
Rubans	Ribbons, Naple's imitation (n° 40) real/pieza	8–10 reales/pieza	18–20	24–28
Rubans	Ribbons	5–6 piastre/livre	18–20	14–16
Rubans	Ribbons, Turin's imitation (*colonias*)	10, 12, 14 reales/pieza	22, 32	35, 40
Rubans	Ribbons, Turin's imitation (raised with gold, applied on paper, and sealed on the fabric)	2 piastres/pieza	4	5–6
Rubans	Ribbons, France's imitation	2 piastres/pieza	4	5–6

Source Monségur (2002, pp. 301–306)

Note Pequins, gorgorans, capricholas, taffetas, and *damas* measure 1 vara × 16 varas. The remaining textiles measured 1 vara × 0.75 varas

a. 'Black colours are neither good nor valued. Because the Chinese do not do well on the black colour.' The Chinese did not have access to the Palo de Campeche, thus they were not capable of dying in black as in Europe

b. A little more expensive than *fondos*

c. A little more expensive than *pequines*

d. Similar to *capicholas*

e. Not quite *teletones*

f. A little more expensive than *teletones* for underpants and underskirts, and mostly consumed in Guatemala, Guaxaca, La Veracrux, Cartagena, Havana, Campeche, and all seaport and tropical countries

g. Similar to *chaules*, and especially consumed in hot countries

quality and thus prices. The increase in what was paid for *indulto* (pardon)—attributed to the amount of silk brought in from the Philippines—indicates an increase in consumption starting in 1682 (Monségur 2002, pp. 313, 315).

This information on the large range of textile products coming from Asia, including those destined for Europe, reveals the extraordinary dynamic of the commerce in Mexico. It reveals also the fantastic appetite for textiles and fashionable goods no matter gender, race, or social rank in the colonial system.

Denis Carr, in the introduction to the exhibit catalogue for *Made in the Americas*, states that "the search for faster sea routes to Asia had led to the original discovery of America by Spain in 1492, and the enduring desire for Asian luxury goods would have a powerful influence on the culture and consciousness of the Americas for the next three centuries" (Carr 2015, p. 21). As a matter of fact, Asian goods left in wills and listed in home inventories continued until Mexico's Independence from Spain in 1821.

Fashion as Fruit of Globalisation

In Spanish America, apparel was not only a key element in "the establishment of European culture in general" (Martínez Bonanad 2013, p. 399) but also in the spread of an Asian-inspired taste in fashion that would develop into a Chinese aesthetic (Martins Torres 2019). If Asian trade had an impact in stimulating 'new European consumer wants' (De Vries 2010, p. 728), it appears that the impact was even greater in Spanish America (Bonialian 2016; Gasch-Tomás 2012; Ibarra 2017; Pérez-García 2020). In America, Asian goods changed daily consumer habits to the point of creating a hybrid fashion. Elite benefitted from these changed habits, but so did all strata of the society from this mingling of cloth, design, and colours. Careri, Humbolt or Gage, among other voyageurs, were surprised how much of the population in New Spain dressed in Chinese silks. Schurz (1918, p. 390), quoting the *Reglamento* of 1720, noted that natives of New Spain were accustomed to dressing in goods coming from China. Dahlgren (1907, p. 64), citing a text by Antonio de Ulloa, highlights that in Peru men dressed *à la francesa* (in the

French way),[17] but especially in silk in a rare mixture of bright colours, brocades, embroidered silk, and silver fabrics. De Ulloa mentioned that women wore clothing to show off their wealth, despite sumptuary laws and ordinances (Illustration 5).

The laws and royal or municipal ordinances against luxury, originating in thirteenth-century Europe, regulated dress and adornment to certain classes and aimed at controlling sartorial display.[18] Sumptuary rules, along with clothing laws (Wunder 2019, p. 243), defined social strata[19] and tended to reserve silks and brocades for the elites (Baghdiantz 2015, p. 21). Such legislation in a mercantilist framework had a twofold purpose.[20] One, it favoured national production of textiles over foreign competition; and two, it also favoured the elites as they regulated the external appearance of all social classes (Sanz 2002, p. 1629). Duplessis (2016, p. 155) pointed out that from the 1500s, Spanish America sumptuary laws constrained consumption by slaves and forbade them from wearing certain fabrics. The Ordinance of 1628 for example "was one of a number of regulations aimed at restricting the adoption of certain Spanish practices by Amerindians" (Earle 2019, p. 325). These bans were enacted to regulate legal status and to protect social and religious hierarchies in the colonies by taking into account the complexity of this hybrid society and the different types of identities within it. For Earle (2019, p. 326), "the history of sumptuary laws in Spanish America is inevitably entangled with colonial regulation of caste or race". Gonzalbo (1996, p. 64) points out, however, that there was greater laxity towards the less wealthy

[17] In Spain in 1707 it was common to wear *à la francesa*. See Sempere y Guarinos 1788, p. 146.

[18] "The English government, for example, enacted 34 royal statutes between 1327 and 1604, while Spanish kings enacted an average of one sumptuary law per decade for 600 years. France surpassed both with 135 royal statutes passed between 1229 and 1736, or an average of roughly 2.5 per decade" (Moyer 1997, p. 10).

[19] 'Edit contre le luxe des habits considérant les grandes et excessives dépenses ou le luxe et les superfluités engagent nos sujets et particulièrement notre noblesse' (24 Novembre 1639) (Decrusy et al. 1829, pp. 515–519).

[20] 'Mercantilists made several attempts to supplant Asian suppliers with a domestic calico industry. Before the 1686 statute was enacted, any type of painted cloth could be freely imported or manufactured in France' (Moyer 1997, 219). The toiles peintes, indiennes, and painted cloth or calicoes were banned in France in 1708 as well as in England in 1720 (Moyer 1997, 217).

classes, as was witnessed by numerous travellers who made their observations from a European point of view: "In the society of New Spain, the importance of clothing as a cultural symbol acquires special relevance since the Spanish Crown recognized the equality of all its subjects, but imposed differentiation on clothing".

Sumptuary laws in Spanish America were "premised on the interconnections between caste, morality, gender, and status" (Earle 2019, p. 337), whereas in Europe they focused on "gender, class, wealth and profession" (DuPlessis 2019, p. 346). A growing body of research demonstrates that prohibitions were constantly violated in both the colonies and in the metropolis (Martínez 2008; Riello and Rublack 2019).

While taste deals with habit, use, custom, and even comfort, fashion deals with novelty, creativity, and innovation (Welch 2017, p. 18). As a result, value systems, lifestyles, and identities produced a hybrid clothing culture in the colonial territories, reflected in the Mexican and Peruvian schools of painting in the eighteenth century (Katzew 2004). *Casta* paintings are good examples of the transformations that shaped Spanish America by means of clothing (Carrera 2003; Katzew 2004; Katzew et al. 2011): Mexican apparel display the impact of the Manila galleon trade while Chinese designs seem to have inspired daily life.

Starting in the early seventeenth century, it was observed that the upper-class in New Spain lived luxuriously and wore expensive silks of the finest quality. This taste for luxury, including silks, adorned cloth, and significant quantities of lace, continued into the eighteenth century, as noted by Monségur. Elena Phipps quotes Amédée-François Frézier, who travelled to Peru between 1712 and 1714, who noted: "Both men and women are equally inclined to be costly in their dress. The women not satisfied with the expense of the richest silks, adorn them after their manner, with a prodigious quantity of lace" (Phipps 2013, p. 45). Such taste for all that glitters and shimmers was the trend in the New World, too. Fabrics mentioned by Monségur include 'imitation' luxurious brocaded silk, which was gilded paper glued onto fabric (similar to Indian *sarasa* or Japanese *kirande* [gold brocade]). Lace from Spain and Belgium, and ribbons and trimmings made of gold and silver metallic threads, were extremely popular European-made goods. Despite the trade routes that were opened to the East, which provided silks from China and other Asian cloths from India and the importation of Spanish

silk and woollen cloth to the Americas continued throughout the eighteenth century. The annual arrival of Manila galleons from the Philippines to Acapulco on the Pacific Coast of Mexico brought goods from Asia, which became part of the vocabulary of textiles and dress in the Americas (Phipps 2013, pp. 29–45). Monségur includes quite a number of these terms (see Table 5).

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, as Phipps concludes in her essay 'The Iberian Globe':

> The desire for silks, velvets, and other luxury or exotic goods was shared by much of society within the viceroyalties, a society composed of indigenous inhabitants, Europeans, Africans, and even Asians. (…) The Americas participated in the international exchange that fuelled the global trade networks, not only as a primary supplier and source of some of the most precious and sought-after materials but also as a major consumer of the international products that traversed the oceans. (Phipps 2013, 45)

Dress historians and textile historians agree that the circulation of fashion was international, and was made possible in the early modern world by using the print culture, the press, and even miniature dresses such as for dolls, among other avenues (Thépaut-Cabasset 2011). European fashion—and the shape of clothing especially—was spread throughout the eighteenth century via the second-hand market of clothing goods. Ulinka Rublack quotes Ernst Ludwig Carl, who reported in 1723 that second-hand French clothing was sent to Mexico and Peru (Rublack 2012, pp. 281–82) (Illustration 6).

Our discussion about fashion underlines Monségur's reflexion on commerce in New Spain between 1709 and 1714. In the last chapter of his *New Memoirs of Mexico*, he states that China was hyper-focused on the latest fashion in Europe, which explains why it sent to Mexico all goods made from European silk, even those they did not produce themselves, such as silk stockings and ribbons: "This nation is so attached to our fashions, that today in Mexico we see coming from their country, everything that is done in Europe in silk, to stockings and ribbons that they do not work". Fashion was the new engine for global trade, as Monségur

Illustration 6 Wedding dress made in America, 1776, Chinese silk damask. Brooklyn Museum Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009; Gift of Edith Viele, 1949 (2009.300.731)

reveals in his observation that fashion created a mercantile system before the Industrial Revolution in Europe.[21]

Giorgio Riello argues that 'in the early modern period fashion was much more about the "new in space" than the "new in time". This translates that fashion derived not so much from a process of invention (as couturiers and fashion designers claim today) but as a process of adoption of goods coming from somewhere else, and thus fashion is 'globalizing' (Riello 2017, p. 67).

Remarks on Monségur's New Memoirs

What seems clear is that *New Memoirs* was written to convince his readers that the American market had to be divided between Spain and France, as indicated by title of Chapter 37: '*Que l'Espagne alliée de la France et unie avec elle, peut-elle seule fournir les Indes Occidentales toutes les marchandises qui s'y consomment et faire seule tout le commerce de l'Amérique*'. France was not the only country trying to prohibit Chinese silk fabrics in America. However, as Monségur points out, Spain made two mistakes in relation to this industry. The first was Spain's lack of interest in incentivising its own domestic industry, and the second was its trade tolerance with China, describing it as "the pernicious license they have given to the introduction of all of China silk in America" (Monségur 2002, p. 200). Likewise, Dahlgren (1907, p. 17) also insists on pointing out "the absurd colonial legislation of Spain". In *New Memoirs*, Monségur reiterated that Spain had to export certain silk products to prohibit the importation of silk from China. A French consular report of 1709 included the same complaint[22] (Illustration 5).

Indeed, Spain brought large quantities of Asian raw silk and woven silk cloths into New Spain in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Canepa 2015, p. 17). They were destined for the local market within New Spain and for reexport to the Viceroyalty of Peru. Meanwhile,

[21] In this line there is an ongoing research on New Spain based on a set of qualitative and quantitative data, highlighting the fact that an early Consumer Revolution can take place without any relationship with an Industrial Revolution is been carried out by Calderón, Dobado, and Fernández de Pinedo. "Asian goods in New Spain: An Early Consumer Revolution?".

[22] Archives Affaires Étrangères, Espagne. Correspondance politique, t. 197, fol. 317, 'Observations sur le commerce des Indes Occidentales Espagnoles'.

only limited quantities of silk were shipped to Spain through Acapulco. Although there were pressures to ban the importation of Chinese silk into Spain early on, it was not until the *Real Cédula* in October 1720, in which Philip V prohibited trade in silk, gold, and silver via the Philippines (Picazo 2020, p. 255). Despite the War of the Spanish Succession, the American market was well supplied, both legally and illegally. France had discovered the lucrative Peruvian market for French products, despite the prohibition of trading with these territories, and especially in silk. "The smuggling of fabrics and clothing from China also affected the actual incomes, by avoiding the tax, and therefore the prohibitions on free trade were repeated on several occasions" (Gonzalbo 1996, p. 63). Juan de Solórzano Pereira, in his two-volume book, identifies the prohibitions that started in 1596 and continued throughout the seventeenth century: "It is also forbidden even more firmly that those of Peru cannot be brought, neither in them to sell, to have, to bring, nor to spend silk, nor any clothing of the calling of China" (Solórzano 1739, pp. 474–475). Solórzano stresses that "in these ordinances there is not only a command to proceed against those who bring from China, but also against those who buy it, have or spend it, no matter how little" (Solórzano 1739, pp. 474–475), and argues that it should not stop the trade in silk coming from Spain. He added that Spain must avoid shipping silver to China.

Coastal trading between New Spain and Peru was first forbidden in 1604, and this decree was reissued until 1706, even though commerce continued illegally between both viceroyalties, especially in Chinese goods. Similar trade prohibitions were set in 1582 between Peru and Manila, as well as between Peru and China in 1591 (Schurz 1918, p. 396). These prohibitions consequently led to illicit trade spreading in diverse informal and personal ways, and bringing a variety of silk products into these countries. As Farrell explained, "pieces of cloth and garments could be folded up and hidden inside boxes and packages. Individual travellers, therefore, could make ideal 'smugglers'" (Farrell 2016, p. 274).

During the War of the Spanish Succession, Spain traded silver to France in exchange for French ships escorting the Manila galleons in the Indies as well as other vessels to Peru. French merchants understood the advantages of this trade (Dalhgren 1952, p. 4). The route followed by some French traders was France to Peru to China—either Canton or Amoy, with a stopover in Manila at times—to America (Dahlgren 1907, pp. 5, 16). The French, allies of Spain in this war, hoped to divide the American market with Spain to the detriment of third nations—particularly England and

the Netherlands. However, this was not to be as trade remained Spain's monopoly. This led to the insistence of Monségur, and to France's prohibition, against this type of trafficking (Manila to Acapulco) because it directly harmed the French production of certain goods.

Savary des Bruslons (1726, p. 1165) made a similar point: "China is producing all kind of fabrics made of silk; among them flowered brocaded with or without gold, velvets, panes, satins, damasks, creps, taffetas, and many others that Europeans don't know".

The reason this French prohibition was so important was because the export of French fabrics to Spain amounted to 8 million pounds (Dahlgren 1907, pp. 78–79), and a good part was shipped to America, including silks from Rouen and Bretagne as well as other expensive cloths. In addition, Savary des Bruslons acknowledges that the French trade in silk fabrics—*galons and étoffes d'or et d'argent*—had been weakened since the Peace of Utrecht due to competition from the Dutch, which sold silks at a lower price, and from the English, which manufactured more affordable drapes and cloths (Savary des Bruslons 1726, p. 923). With the arrival of imported textiles from India and China in Europe, England and France took early steps to ban them.[23] Such bans were part of mercantilist policies to protect domestic textile manufacturers from foreign competition. Spain passed a Royal Order on 20 June 1718 prohibiting the entry of clothing, silks, and other fabrics from China and parts of Asia. The measure appears to have not been very successful, as another Royal Order on 28 June 1728 prohibited cotton fabrics and painted canvases from Asia, imitation or counter made. On the other side, French fabrics played an important role in the Mediterranean households. Pérez-García noted that "it is possible to find French fabrics emulating Chinese silks such as *cambrai*, *chalu*, *chamelotte*, *monfort* or *ruan*, as well as Asian textiles such as silk, muslins or calicoes from India and China. Such goods are

[23] Restrictions on importing Indian textiles, starting in the mid-1670s, proliferated in England as a way to increase duties before the Calico Acts (Parthasarathi 2011, p. 126). Numerous petitions addressed also to Colbert prohibited the commerce from the Levant brought into the port of Marseille (e.g. silk and cotton cloths) (Baghdiantz 2015, p. 127). The total ban on imported foreign textiles occurred in 1714 (Belevitch-Stankevitch 1970, p. 115). Increases in duties were followed by bans in the eighteenth century: 'These measures were applied in several European countries, first in France in 1689, and later in England (1701 and a total ban in 1721)'. See Lemire and Riello 2008, p. 898. Farrell (2016) draws an interesting picture on silk textiles contraband in Britain, including which were the most popular silks, where they came from, and who consumed them.

found in the inventory of the Béarnaise merchant Juan Bicaix showing that they were intended for trade. This reaffirms the theory that these foreign traders played an important role as mediators in introducing new products and materials in the Mediterranean area" (Pérez-García 2019, 28).

The Spanish American colonies were well supplied with textiles and cotton products, either legally through the Manila galleons and Seville-Cadiz or illegally by smuggling.[24] If the ban on imports from India and China to America had worked, as Monségur had suggested be done, it would have benefitted the English, French, and Dutch, among others, because they legally shipped textiles to America through Seville-Cadiz that competed with those made by in China and India. Savary des Bruslons noted that French ships arrived with Indian or Chinese products (e.g. porcelains, silks, silk stockings) in *derechura* (direct trade) through Cadiz as these goods were banned in France (Belevitch-Stankevitch 1970, p. 114).

Conversely, if the prohibition had been successful, it would have meant increases in the prices of fabrics, which would have harmed consumers in Spanish America and created problems with the Philippines. As noted earlier, Monségur and several French consular reports pointed out that indeed the French were deeply affected by the arrival of silk Chinese fabrics.[25] In one consular report was the warning that "there is a trade that affects the whole of Europe (it is understood that it is negatively), to which limits should be placed, and that is the Philippines to Acapulco".[26]

In this chapter we have explored the finding made by Jean de Monségur as related to the flow of textiles, especially Chinese silks that competed with European textiles manufacturers. While his data is vital, it

[24] The "Spanish Crown since the heavy imports of Chinese silks from Fukien, Kwangtung, and Macao and Manila (whence some of them were re-exported to Mexico and Peru) not only deprived the Seville silk merchants of an otherwise closed market, but diverted a considerable quantity of bullion from the Peruvian silver-mines of Potosi to Portuguese and Chinese hands, as the silks were invariably paid for in specie". (Boxer 1946, p. 162).

[25] Archives Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance politique, t. 398 (1732–1733), fol, 329–332. 'Mémoire ou l´on établit que la balance du moins de débit et de la baisse du prix arrivées depuis quelques années dans les marchandises qu´on porte aux indes espagnoles…'.

[26] Archives Affaires Étrangères, Espagne. Correspondance politique, t. 197, fol. 316 'Observations sur le commerce des Indes Occidentales Espagnoles'.

must be noted that he was not a neutral observer. As Dobado-González (2020) highlights, the central role played by the Viceroyalty of New Spain has perhaps not been properly understood as an important driver of globalisation. Even if the trade in Asian goods could be considered small in proportion to overall trade (De Vries 2010), its impact on blending styles and materials is undeniable, as was its influence on economic performance. As Lemire (2018, p. 71) noted, "the Manila-Acapulco connection produced a distinctive material ecosystem in the Americas". Each demand had its own dynamics and audience, and in Mexico all strata of population wore silks of varying quality. Attempts to ban fabrics, especially from China, were indeed in vain (Rodríguez 2015, p. 231).

The Pacific Ocean was the centre of several intersecting circuits of exchange that connected textiles. This chapter considers the incorporation of Chinese silks in all its qualities, types, and price ranges as critical in cultural exchanges before the eighteenth century. Mexico City consumers had an influence beyond the Manila galleons when they stimulated new fashion patterns through a complex process of domestication. This new phenomenon of hybridised cloth consumption emerged as a result of the city's particular socioeconomic and political factors.

This chapter suggests that one way to redress the partial understanding of the consumer revolution that was centred in Europe, and to bring New Spain into the narrative, is to explore new insights on the role played by the global flow of textiles in the Pacific. That an early Consumer Revolution took place in New Spain soon after the opening in the of the commercial route across the Pacific known as the Manilla Galleon—see the chapter by Arturo Giráldez—is one of the results of the research carried by Dobado, Fernández de Pinedo and Calderón in a preliminary paper under the title "Asian goods in New Spain: An Omitted Early Consumer Revolution". In contrast to Britain, this early Consumer Revolution did not led to any Industrial Revolution in New Spain. New perspectives, in the words of Otero and Trentmann, are needed to 'decentre' the current Latin American narrative (Otero and Trentmann 2017, p. 19).

Illustration 7 Pale blue Chinese silk damask weaved in 1710–1720 for export to America, used for a woman gown sawn in 1770–1780, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.35-1972

Illustration 8 The design of this *sarasa* relates to Mughal embroideries of the late seventeenth century, which drew their inspiration from earlier European embroideries. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Funds from various donors, by exchange, 2010 2010.55

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Illustrations/Glossary

Damask: Monségur frequently complained about lower consumption of rich European fabrics, such as dress silk damasks, because of the silk damasks produced in China. Chinese-made damask was in patterns that revealed their Chinese origin, but some of these damasks were also copies of European silks. The most detailed lists found in the galleon shipments relate to patterned silks of all kinds. These can be compared to the list of cargo conveyed by Miguel de Elorriaga on the galleon *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* in 1712, which is preserved in the General Archives of Indias in Seville.[27]

[27] Archivo General de Indias. ES.41091.AGI/16//CONTADURIA,908,N.1.

Saya: *Saya* is a single-colour damask-like textile (i.e. lightweight, monochrome, woven silk) characterised by a pattern in twill on a plain-weave background. These Chinese silks were available plain or with small or large design of flowers.

Illustr. Wedding dress made in America, 1776, Chinese silk damask. Brooklyn Museum Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the Brooklyn Museum, 2009; Gift of Edith Viele, 1949 (2009.300.731).

Illustr. Pale blue Chinese silk damask weaved in 1710–1720 for export to America, used for a woman gown sawn in 1770–1780, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.35-1972.

Taffetas: Chinese-made *taffetas* were lightweight lustrous plain-weave silk fabric, available in a multitude of colours, often used for lining. These taffetas could be in two colours, giving a vibrant effect called 'shot' silk (Miller 2014). Taffetas like *sayasayas* in Monségur's *New Memoirs*, were used for petticoats in the New Spanish colonies, or as *guardapies*, which were worn as underskirts for formal dress but could also be worn as an informal and simple skirt.

Gold brocaded silks and other figured silks: These were most precious textiles coming from Asia. Monségur lists a number of gold brocaded fabrics produced in China with a specific technique unknown in Europe; these included the luxurious *telas* and the more modest *brocatos*, in which gold brocaded silk was replaced with gilded paper. A woman's gown made of orange and gold Chinese exported damask silk, and sewn in New York between 1740 and 1760, is preserved at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (Museum Purchase 1985–143).

Gold leaf or gilded paper: Following the description of Monségur in his *New Memoirs*, the glittering effect of gold leaf or gilded paper applied on fabric was very popular among the locals in Mexico. The garments' shimmer was close to that produced by more luxurious fabrics like brocaded silks with metallic threads of gold or silver. Gold leaf or gilded paper was usually fixed to Indian cottons by an aqueous gum that was painted on to chintz. The gilding and application of painted and printed flowers on cotton produced a shiny fabric, as, for example, seen in the textile of the man's waistcoat.

Illustr. Waistcoat, textile from India, mid-eighteenth century, used for a man's waistcoat made in France, 1770–1790. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1935 35.142.

Imitation gold and silver brocaded silks: Another example of textile matches Monségur description of techniques aiming to "imitate" the gold and silver brocaded silks produced in Europe, such as this illustration of a cotton panel made in India, where the floral pattern is drawn and painted resist and mordant, dyed, with applied gold leaf. This process produced a vibrant coloured 'imitation' of popular Western patterns of floral silk used in both women's and men's fashions in Europe.

Illustr. Panel of chintz, India (Coromandel Coast), second quarter of eighteenth century, cotton, drawn and painted resist and mordant, dyed, with applied gold leaf. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the United Piece Dye Works, 1936 36.90.121.

***Sarasa*:** *Sarasa* is a colourful dye-patterned cotton fabric originally from Gujarat (India), and is also a term for textiles imported into Japan. In the first half of the eighteenth century, these textiles made of cotton and painted, mordant, dyed, and decorated with applied gold leaf were produced in Gujarat for the Japanese market. Not surprisingly, products intended for Japan could also end up in other markets through China and the Philippines, because the Manila galleon shipped Asiatic merchandises to Vera Cruz in Mexico. Could *sarasas* have been traded in the Spanish colonies and imported to Mexico? That might explain why Monségur encountered this term and used it in his *New Memoirs*.

Illustr. The design of this *sarasa* relates to Mughal embroideries of the late seventeenth century, which drew their inspiration from earlier European embroideries. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Funds from various donors, by exchange, 2010 2010.55.

Cambayas: This is another term closely related to *sarasas*, which were probably also panels of ready-made petticoats, made of cotton, mordant, painted, dyed, and with applied gilded paper. Cambaya is certainly connected to the port of Cambay in Gujarat, on the Coromandel Coast in India. The petticoat was a visible underskirt of a woman's open robe costume or covered with a jacket. Some ready-to-sew petticoat panels were Asiatic imports from India, and made of cotton painted and dyed chintz.

Illustr. Petticoat, Coromandel Coast, India, ca. 1725. Painted and dyed cotton chintz. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Given by G. P. Baker, IS.14-1950.

Illustr. Detail of sack (dress) made of Chinese hand-painted silk satin (1735–1760). The design of fanciful flowers shows the Western

influence; the Chinese artists were using patterns sent to Europe to make silks expressly for the European market. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.115&A-19532006AY9543_2500 and 2006AY9540_2500.

Illustr. 1 Felpa Ribbons with different floral patterns.

"Quaderno de muestras de los géneros de Europa que tienen estimación en Quito y su provincia, conocidos con otros nombres de aquellos que sacan de las fábricas, con expresión del precio a que comunmente se venefician". Seville, Archives General de Indias, MP-Tejidos, 1780, 14, fol. 6v.

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