

**CONTRASTING EXPERIENCES ? REMITTANCES, WELFARE AND THE HOUSEHOLD
ECONOMY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RURAL EUROPE.**

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dr. Thijs Lambrecht

Ghent University and State Archives Belgium

Thys.Lambrecht@Ugent.be

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In 1784, fourteen people appeared for the notary in the village of Cérans (north-western France) to discuss the pension of an elderly farmer named Louis Porteboeuf. This retired farmer had no savings and was too old to earn a living. Porteboeuf turned to his kin group to come up with a solution for his poverty. The family members of Porteboeuf decided that all of them, from his children to his nieces and nephews, would found an annuity of 96 livres per annum. The contract stipulated that each family member would contribute to the annual pension of Porteboeuf taking into account the '*proximité de parenté*' (kinship proximity). Thus, the six children provided the bulk of the pension with 60 livres. The other family members each contributed 3 to 4 livres. Four of the six children of Porteboeuf worked as servants when this contract was drawn up. (Fillon, 1991: 41). All of the children agreed to remit part of their earnings, either as a farmer, gardener or servant, to their destitute father. This contract, by no means exceptional in this region, illustrates the importance of the family as a source of financial and material assistance in eighteenth-century rural France. Although there was –unlike England and other European regions – no legal obligation to care for parents, these children nevertheless stepped up to the challenge. Especially for those unmarried children working as servants this was not a simple formality. In agreeing to this contract, these servants not only accepted a lower income, but also delayed the process of resource accumulation that was expected from them in a neo-local pattern of household formation. From the viewpoint of unmarried adolescents, balancing the expectations of family solidarity with pre-marital resource acquisition was neither easy nor straightforward. The care of a parent could seriously undermine the saving potential of servants. Elizabeth Brooks worked 16 years as a servant when she left her London employer around 1770 to take care of her blind mother in rural Sussex. By 1772 the care of the mother had absorbed nearly all of the savings of Elizabeth Brooks and she contemplated applying to the parish for poor relief (Crawford, 2010: 55 and 251).

In both these cases individual ambitions were sacrificed at the altar of filial assistance. These examples of servants in France and England indicate that part of the earnings from service were remitted to close kin. They also highlight the importance of the family as a source of welfare for the elderly. In both cases

remittances of unmarried children were part of the solution for the poverty of the parents. Viewed from the perspective of the parents, unmarried children in service were clearly an asset in these two cases. The separation from the household did not necessarily result in severing all financial and material ties between them. Louis Porteboeuf and the mother of Elizabeth Brooks experienced the hardships individuals could encounter resulting from the specific pattern of household formation and organization that characterized much of Western Europe. In the terminology of Peter Laslett, these two elderly persons were confronted with nuclear hardship (Laslett, 1988). In both cases it was the family, and not the collectivity that came to the aid. To what extent these two examples are characteristic of eighteenth-century rural Europe will be discussed in this paper.

This focus of this paper lies with the wages and earnings of farm servants and their financial relationships with their family members, especially their parents. I have opted for servants as a case study because they were, at least in theory, able to financially assist their parents. As I have shown in other research servants could save up 40 to 50 per cent of their cash wages (Lambrecht, 2012). It has been argued that these savings were used to acquire the necessary financial and material resources to establish a new household. My research on eighteenth-century Flanders however also exposed another story. When the accounts and contracts of farm servants with their employers are analyzed in detail, a picture emerges of the majority of servants as apparently altruistic family members. Servants allocated part of their earnings directly and indirectly to their family members, especially their parents. Labour contracts between farmers and their servants indicate that the latter remitted part of their cash wage to their parents. Servants not only handed over money to their parents, but also bought food and clothing. In the labour contracts with their employers it was not uncommon to find traces of different benefits in kind allocated to family members. These could take the form of food, fuel, access to land, access to the capital of their employer (horses, ploughs and carts) and gleaning rights. The picture that emerged from these accounts was vastly different from what English historians wrote about the importance of remittances from children in service. Richard Smith in particular has argued on different occasions that service was not an institution conducive to the transfer of resources from children to their parents or family members (Smith, 1984: 72 and Smith, 1981: 605-606). For John Hajnal too, service was a stage characterized by great financial independence from the parental household (Hajnal, 1982: 474). Not

all historians have subscribed to this view with reference to England. Bridget Hill for example argued that remittances from servants to their parents were not that uncommon, although hard evidence was scarce (Hill, 1996: 214-215). Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos argued that the life-cycle mobility of unmarried adolescents tended to strengthen rather weaken family ties, but that servants never became a regular source of assistance for the family (Krausman Ben-Amos, 1994: 165-170 and 2000: 297). To what extent servants remitted part of their earnings to their family members can also be framed in a wider debate concerning the role of kin members as sources of assistance. On this matter English historians have been divided. Some have argued that the collectivity, especially welfare provisioning under the Old Poor Law, was more important than the family (for a recent review see Tadmor, 2010). This paper adds to this debate by introducing some comparative data for other European regions.

In the first section of this paper the technical obstacles to remittances are exposed. Remittance behaviour and patterns of farm servants are then illustrated for three countries: Belgium, France and England. In the last section, the results of this comparative exercise are framed within the wider welfare context of these countries.

Obstacles to remittances in the eighteenth century

Contemporary research on international remittances has focused on the determinants of financial flows. This strand of research focuses on the motives of migrants to allocate part of their earnings to their family members in their region of origin. In historical research on remittances however, the question of *how* people remitted their earnings is equally important. In the absence of financial institutions such as Western Union remittances are not that straightforward. The technical problems migrants and potential remitters could encounter were identified and addressed by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century. Like many others after 1750, Bentham identified intra-family transfers in general and wage remittances from children to parents in particular as a possible alternative to public welfare for among the labouring poor. Unlike many others however, Bentham also realized that there were practical problems involved in transferring small sums of money because. As he wrote in 1796, "*The poor man's pittance is immovable. A*

dutiful child, who has quited his native cottage for employment, might send (one should think), a few shillings, as he could save and spare them, to assist an aged parent in his struggles against incidence [...]. No, it is not to be done." (Quoted from Bentham: 1796/2001: 90) Bentham claimed that many children living and working at some distance from their parents could assist them, but in practice never did. Especially the high costs attached to sending small amounts of money across the country and the lack of geographical coverage by the postal services obstructed such transfers. To overcome these problems and reduce transport costs, Bentham proposed to erect 'remittance offices' attached to his houses of industry (Bentham, 1796: 90; Bentham, 1798: 490-494). This author thus supposed that the absence of these types of financial institutions, that facilitated the exchange of small sums of money between kin-members who were geographically separated, resulted in higher levels of dependence on external support. For Bentham, lack of opportunity rather than willingness or financial margins to assist kin-members explained the absence of these transfers. In other words, the collectivity assumed financial responsibility for the poor because transfers between kin-members were nearly impossible to organize efficiently. Bentham's observations on the difficulties to transfer small payments between distant parishes during the late eighteenth century are confirmed by recent research on the practical problems surrounding the administration of out-relief under the Old Poor Law. Even until the early decades of the nineteenth century well-organised parishes and their overseers encountered substantial difficulties in transferring money to out-residents. The absence of a reliable infrastructure to transmit small payments between parishes has been identified by Steve King as one of the great logistical problems of outdoor relief to sojourners (King, 2005: 167-173). Not all categories of labourers experienced these technical difficulties in transferring money to their family. Especially those involved in long-distance labour migration had access to advanced financial technology to remit part of their wages. For English naval seamen such opportunities already existed in the first half of the eighteenth century. If they appointed an attorney, they could allocate part of their earnings to people of their choice. But because costs and attorney fees were so high, very few seamen made use of this opportunity to assist their family members from their wages. The Navy Act of 1758 altered this system and ensured that sailors could send money almost free of charge (Gradish, 1978: 46-67 and Lin, 1997: 31-91). Employees of the Dutch East India Company also had the opportunity at their disposal to remit part of their wages. Through a system of so-called *maandbrieven* sailors could send part of their annual wages to any person

of their choice (see van der Heijden and van de Heuvel, 2007: 299-301). The English Navy and the Dutch East India Company are the exceptions to the rule. Most labourers did not have these cheap financial instruments at their disposal to transfer small sums of money over short distances. It is important to stress the lack of this type of institutions as it seriously constrained the opportunities of migrants to assist their family members. If offspring were working as servants at some distance from home, parents were less likely to receive any material assistance from them. This was already suggested by Laslett in his original formulation of the nuclear hardship hypothesis. Close geographical proximity to kin was identified as one of the pre-conditions of family welfare (Laslett, 1988: 157-158). Research on farm servants has indicated that they were very mobile. As Kussmaul notes this mobility was ambiguous: farm servants changed employers frequently, but distances between employers were limited (Kussmaul, 1981). In other words, servants moved often, but did so in a narrow geographical range. As such, servants can be identified as potential remitters because their earnings far outstripped their subsistence needs and they worked and lived close to their family members.

Remittances in eighteenth-century Belgium and France

Belgium

As I have demonstrated in earlier research, farm servants in Belgium, and Flanders in particular, frequently assisted their family members (Lambrecht 2009 and 2012). There are numerous traces in the account books of farmers that servants did use their cash wages to assist others. The farm account books contain data that enable us to reconstruct how and when servants actually transferred part of their earnings and savings to their kin members. Indeed, one of the striking features of the notes of farmers in this region are the recurrent references to kin members of the servants and their parents in particular. The parents of servants appear in the account books on three different occasions. First, when the servant bargained with the employer over wages and work conditions, they were sometimes assisted by their parents. Secondly, labour contracts also frequently mention the parents of servants as beneficiaries of various benefits in kind. Lastly, farmers also noted that their servants asked advance payments on their wages and that some of these advance payments were used to transfer cash, goods and services back to the

parental household. Although servants were physically removed from the household of their parents, the financial and economic ties were not severed.

The presence of parents when servants were hired out to farmers is not that surprising. Especially with young servants it is fair to assume that they would have lacked the knowledge and the financial skills to successfully strike a bargain with an employer. It is therefore quite logical that parents guided their children in their first steps onto the labour market. It is highly unlikely that young children, unlike their parents, would possess a realistic knowledge about their economic value and, consequently, the wages they should receive. Thus, as the account book of a farmer in the village of Eke indicates, there is a negative relation between the wage levels of servants and the presence of parents at the timing of hiring. As the wages of servant progressed with age, the cash wage of servants can be used as a proxy for age. With servants receiving a wage lower than 5 £ Flemish per annum parents were present in three quarter of all bargains. As servants earned more, and thus grew older, the parents gradually disappear from the bargaining scene. Only in one in five cases are parents cited as being present when servants were hired with a wage exceeding 10 £ Flemish per annum. This trend can also be traced with individual servants. A servant named Pieter Versele worked on this farm for three consecutive years. In 1769 he earned 5-13-4 £ per annum and the presence of his mother was recorded in the account book. In 1771 his annual wage had risen to 8-5-0 £ and his mother was now absent. Apparently, assistance and guidance from the direct kin group was no longer required at this stage (Lambrecht, 2009: 638-643).

More importantly, the entry of a child into service also was an opportunity for parents to secure income for themselves. In eighteenth-century Flanders, it was not uncommon for parents to be included in the labour contracts as recipients of various goods and services delivered by the employer of their children. Servants not only received a cash wage and board by their employer. It was common, throughout Europe, that servants also received goods in kind on top of their wages. In most cases these were textiles and clothes. One farmer in particular meticulously noted the nature and beneficiaries of the payments in kind. From this account book (by an anonymous farmer in the village of Lembeke) it is possible to analyse these benefits in kind in greater detail (see Table 3).

Table 1: Benefits in kind for servants and their parents: Lembeke, 1786-1800
(per 10 contracts)

	male servants (n = 34)	female servants (n = 9)
benefits for servants		
linen	9.5	10
clothing*	2.6	8.9
footwear	1.2	7.8
socks	0.6	5.6
schooling	0.6	0
benefits for parents		
food	1.5	2.2
land	1.2	1.1
fuel (coal)	0.3	1.1
transport	0.6	0

* shirts for men and aprons for women. Source: State Archives Ghent, *Old Archives Lembeke*, nr. 292.

A close look at the benefits in kind reveal some distinct patterns. First, there is a clear difference in the benefits in kind for male and female servants. Both male and female servants received different types of textiles in addition to the cash wages. The data from this account book indicate that gender differences can be observed. Female servants received textiles as part of their total earnings more frequently compared to men. This pattern can also be observed in other farm account books. On a farm in the village of Oostkamp female servants received on average 7.4 el of linen on top of their wages in the late 1730's. With male servants this only amounted to 4.8 el of linen.¹ These differences might possibly reveal different consumer preferences, needs or strategies towards pre-marital resource acquisition. Female servants, for example, might have accumulated more textiles to serve as household textiles after marriage. Secondly, the benefits listed in table 3 indicate that the parents of servants also frequently appear as beneficiaries. In this sample, between 25 and 30 per cent of all contracts contain benefits in kind of some sort for the parents. These benefits in kind mostly consist of basic foodstuffs such as rye and potatoes and meat on a rare occasion. Next to food, somewhat surprisingly, land seems to be the second most frequent payment in kind for the parents. Land in this context refers to the right of the parents to grow potatoes on small plots of land belonging to the employer. These plots of land, as the contracts

¹ Great Seminar Bruges, *Accounts of the Abbey of the Dunes*, nr. 89: Account book of the farm Meunicken. 1735-1743.

indicate, were rather small. In all cases they did not exceed one tenth of a hectare (ranging between 0.026 ha and 0.037 ha). The institution of service thus functioned as a means to temporarily extend the parental holding without having to recur to the expensive land or rental market. The potato land secured this way also created an additional flow of food and calories to the parental household. Fuel and transport services appear less frequently in these accounts. In this example transport services refer to the free use of a horse and wagon of the employer.

These types of benefits in kind, extending to the parents of the servants, were not unique to this farm in Lembeke. In other account books, similar arrangements also frequently appear. A maid on the farm of Gerard de Wulf in the village of Eke negotiated a wage of 3 £ Flemish per annum and 2 'meukens' (or 28 litres) of rye to be delivered to her mother. On another farm, the father of maid called Marianne De Mey secured 1 barrel of rye for himself when he hired out his daughter. The parents of Joannes Neerinck received some pieces of clothing and a dish of pork meat. When Pieter D'Hont hired himself as a servants in 1774 he managed to secure for his mother the free use of a team of horses for one day (Lambrecht, 2009: 638-643). These examples indicate that benefits in kind were regularly recorded in the labour contracts of servants. It is possible that not all benefits in kind were systematically recorded in the labour contracts. A government decree from 1740 reports that servants also tried to secure gleaning rights - most likely for their parents - on the fields of their employer when they hired themselves (*Placcaertboeck van Vlaenderen*, 1763: 829-830). Labour contracts in farm account books thus probably underestimate the flows between employers and the parents of their servants.

These benefits in kind, either for the servants or the parents, were part of the total wage of the servant. As such they should also be treated as part of the remuneration system of servants. Although the value of these benefits in kind was not explicitly stated in the labour contracts, it is highly unlikely that farmers did not take these benefits into account when determining the annual cash wage. As a result, the cash wages of servants were most probably lower when benefits in kind were included. Benefits in kind thus exerted a downward pressure on the cash wage. If no benefits in kind were included in the labour contract, cash wages would likely be higher. In some cases the effects of the benefits in kind for parents on the cash wage of servants were significant from a financial perspective. From another

account book it was possible to calculate the value of the small plots of potato land for the parents.² For one servant, receiving a cash wage of 720 stuiver per annum, the value of the 18 rods of potato land secured for his parents amounted to 82 stuiver or 11 per cent of his cash wage. For another servant, earning 420 stuiver per annum, 25 rods of potato land with a market value of 117 stuiver, amounted to 27 per cent of his wages. The use of a horse and cart for one day can be valued at the equivalent of 13 daily wages of an adult day labourer. Securing benefits in kind for parents thus probably reduced the cash wages of a servant and, consequently, their earning and saving potential.

Parents not only appear as beneficiaries of goods and services in the labour contracts of servants. The farm account books analysed in this chapter also contain details about the nature of the advance payments to servants. In theory, servants received their wage at the end of their service term with their employer. Servants hired in May 1736 for example would not receive their wages until the following year (May 1737). In reality however, employers frequently allowed their servants to receive advance payment on their wages. In all of the four sets of account books analysed in this chapter advance payment of wages was a common feature. Some farmers noted in great detail how servants used the money that was advanced to them. From these data it is, for example, possible to reconstruct consumption patterns of these rural labourers (see Lambrecht, 2000 and Delahaye, 2006). But these accounts not only list the consumer items bought by servants, they also contain frequent references to the parents of servants. Here too, we find that parents of servants appear as the recipients of a range of goods. In the account books the parents, but also other kin members, appear as the recipients of cash, food and clothing. The value of all these goods was deducted from the wages of the servant. To illustrate the nature of these transfers, some examples have been drawn from an account book of a farmer in the village of Zwevegem.³ Marianne Crepeel, for example, earned 29 £ parisis per annum in 1720. During the year she worked on that farm, 21-1-0 £ parisis of her wages or some 72 per cent of her total cash wage were handed over to her parents. The value of this transfer is not unimportant as it was the equivalent of some 35 to 40 daily wages of an adult male day labourer in this region. Especially with younger servants (cow herds) these transfers to parents appear frequently. In some cases the recipients of the goods purchased by

² Calculated from the account book of Pieter-Joannes Buyse, farmer at Heldergerm (1788-1797) held at State Archives Beveren, Family Records Buyse, nr. 33.

³ State Archives Courtray, Aanwinsten, 7334.

the servant were not specified, but it is apparent that they were destined for the parents. This is the case with the purchase of large quantities of staple food items, such as rye. We may assume that the rye bought from the employers was destined for the parents as the servants themselves were fed on the farm at the expense of the employer. Servants also indirectly financed the proto-industrial activities of their parents. Daniel Spinsemaille for example purchased flax seed from his employer destined to be grown on the fields of his parents. The accounts of servants also indicate that yarn and processed flax were transferred to the parents. Although the vast majority of these transfers were vertical, from children to their parents, some examples can be found where money was transferred to other kin members. Jan Soubrie for example transferred approximately one third of his cash wage to his uncle Jacques Soubrie in 1722. In 1751 a maid named Petronella Vereecke spent one fourth of her cash wage to pay for the burial and funeral expenses of her deceased sister. As was the case with benefits in kind, servants partly financed the household of their parents with the wages earned in service.

Next to these direct transfers from children to parents, the employers of servants in Flanders also bore some of the costs that were traditionally covered by parents. Table 1 indicates that some (young) male servants could also attend school at the expenses of the employer. In the account book of the farmer in Lembeke two young servants could attend the village school two to three months per year. In other account books similar arrangement concerning schooling of young farm servants are recorded (Van Kerschaver, 1939: 108). Service thus also served to transfer the costs of education (and human capital formation) beyond the limits of the household economy of smallholders. Although this was not a direct cash transfer, this type of arrangement directly resulted in lowering the household expenses for educating the children. It is important to note that these remittances were not restricted to the younger segment of the servant population. Admittedly, especially the accounts of young male and female cow herds regularly contain references to parents. However, the more expensive goods and services destined for the parents, such as land or transport services, were predominantly encountered in the accounts of the elderly servants such as ploughmen. Although it is most likely that the relative value of remittances to parents declined as servants grew older, we still encounter this form of kinship solidarity among servants who, as their wage level suggests, would be close to marriage.

These transfers to the parents, either as benefits in kind or subtracted from the cash wages, may not appear that substantial individually. We should however take into account that the transfers that can be traced through this source probably underestimate the true extent and value of cash, goods and services that flowed back to the parental household. Servants also frequently received unspecified cash advances on their wages. In these cases it is not possible to determine what servants did with these cash advances. It is possible that here too part was remitted to the parents. More importantly however, parents would likely have more than one child working as a servant. If the transfers of multiple children in service could be cumulated, their importance for the parental household economy could be more substantial. The most important argument pleading for the importance of these transfers for the household economy of the parents can be simply derived from the very existence of these transfers. If parents were able to support themselves without the aid of their offspring in service, we would simply not encounter these remittances in the account books of the employers of farm servants. This strongly suggests that part of the earnings of the servants, either indirectly or directly, constituted a welcome addition to the household income of parents. In some cases, service thus acted as a means for the parents to secure free goods and services from the employers of their children. From this perspective, the institution of service was closely linked to the household economy of the parents. Service enabled parents to gain access to food, cash, textiles, land and capital goods from large farmers. Although servants were physically separated from the parents (as they lived with their employer), they nevertheless contributed directly and indirectly to the household economy. This has some important implications. The examples in this section indicate that the unmarried youth of rural Flanders combined kinship solidarity with saving to set up a new household.

France

Farm servants in France display a similar remittance behaviour. Here too, references to payments from servants to their families can be frequently encountered in farm account books. Parents appear as recipients of benefits in kind given to farm servants. A farm servant in Saint-Eutrope (Agenais) for example received a cash wage of 15 livres per year and some pieces of clothing in 1737, but also 228 litres of grain and a sack of vegetables (Tholin, 1880: 384). In the same region a servant received two *sacs* or 218 litres of grain on top of his cash wages in

1756 (Charbonneau, 1970: 169). Although no explicit references are made to the fact that this food was destined for the parents, it is highly unlikely that the servants themselves would have consumed this grain as they were fed by their employer. In northern France it was not uncommon for farm servant to receive flax seed on top of their wages. In some cases the parents of the servants are explicitly recorded as beneficiaries of this flax seed.⁴ Parents receiving benefits in kind from the employers of their children in service seems an almost universal practice in the Alsace region. As in Flanders parents received a variety of foodstuffs (wine and grain), but could also rely on access to the working capital of the employers of their children. Thus in the 1780's and 1790's parents could use the horses, ploughs and carts of large farmers where they had placed their offspring in service. For the French historian Jean-Michel Boehler these frequent indirect remittances testify to the strong family ties in this region (Boehler, 1994, II: 1048-1053). As in Belgium, parents also used the wages of their children as a kind of cash deposit on which they could draw from time to time. Thus, the wages of young servant in the region of Boulogne were used by the parents to purchase grain and textiles from his employer (Hamy, 1906: 354). The mother of a servants in Droyes used the wages of her son in service to obtain an unspecified amount of merchandises from his employer (Arnouet, 1962, 169). In northern France too the cash wages of farm servants were sometimes almost completely absorbed by goods and services delivered to the parents of servants (de Calonne, 1920: 270). In some cases parents could rely on periodical cash transfers from their children. The wages of François Dupuy were paid in three-monthly instalments to his father in 1767. These cash transfers were used by parents of servants to pay their taxes. In most cases parents were the main beneficiaries of these remittances, but also brothers and sisters are sometimes recorded (Gutton, 1981: 112-114). On the farm of the family Chartier (north of Paris), male servants who were hired locally received some 13 % of their cash wage in kind (especially foodstuffs) between 1737 and 1746 (Moriceau and Postel-Vinay, 1992: 252). In some regions it was traditional that the wages of children placed in service flowed back to the parental household. Thus a 1765 memoir on the economic situation of rural households in the Gévaudan reported: 'When children reach a certain age, the father places them as servants and receives almost all of their wages' (translated from Claverie and Lamaison, 1982: 85). The most detailed evidence testifying to the importance of these remittances can be

⁴ See the multiple references in the account book of Pierre Antoine Le Blond (1759-1784), held at the Archives Départementales Pas-de-Calais, Serie E, depot 585 II 8.

gleaned from the account book of the family Flahaut in Labourse (northern France). This family exploited a large farm (exact size unknown, but in 1811 three plough servants were employed). The detailed notes about the wages of servants reveal that remittances to parents were the general rule. Between 1812 and 1830 servants allocated on average one fifth of their cash wages to their parents ! The intensity of these remittances varied from one year to another. In some years no cash transfers from servants to parents were recorded. In years of high food prices, the intensity of these remittances could rise spectacularly. In 1816 for example female servants on this farm remitted 26 % of their wages to their parents. The following year, when the price of rye had risen from by some 42 %, the volume of remittances rose to 53 % of their cash wages. Annually female servants remitted between 0 and 53 % of their cash wages between 1812 and 1830. Male servants remitted between 0 and 44 % of their wages to their parents. Also, male servants frequently purchased peat and coal from their employer. These purchases should probably also be added to the volume of remittances (Hubscher, 1969: 391-96, see also Heywood, 1988: 37). The detailed accounts of this farm clearly illustrate that remitting money was fairly universal for farm servants. This suggests that children working as farm servants were in most cases still strongly integrated into the household economy of their parents. The importance of servants for their parents material wellbeing can be illustrated directly from the wage books of farm employing servants. However, I believe that there is also indirect evidence that testifies to the central role of unmarried offspring for the household economies of the peasantries of France.

The importance of remittances from unmarried children for the household economy of the French peasantries is also illustrated by the specific measures adopted concerning the welfare of soldiers families at the end of the eighteenth century. Hundreds of thousands of young unmarried men were separated from their families during the early years of the French Revolution. In 1792 a set of measures was introduced to compensate households for the loss of income they sustained following the enlistment of their children. This was a measure to reduce resistance to military enrolment. The system of family allowances was active between 1792 and 1796. It has been estimated that the French military effort resulted in the recruitment of some 800000 to 900000 men in 1794. This large-scale conscription resulted in labour shortages (and rising wages) in the countryside (see the numerous references in Festy, 1947). The effects however stretched further. Many households were deprived of their productive and income-

generating capacities. As conscription targeted young male adolescents in particular, households were stripped of part of their labour power and income. A report of the Minister of Interior estimated that, on average, one unmarried adolescent cared for the material needs of two family members. It was calculated that circa 1.6 million individuals would need to be compensated throughout France (Thuillier, 1988: 488). The French state thus acknowledged that the enlistment of young men had profound impact on the households of the French rural labouring classes ('pauvres journaliers'). To neutralize the effects of the conscription on unmarried young men, the French state decided to compensate poor families for their material losses. The compensation scheme adopted by the French state between 1792 and 1796 is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Annual compensation for family members of French soldiers, 1792-1794 (livres/year).

	1792	1793	1794
Father (60 +)	40	100	100
Father (70 +)	60	100	100
Mother (60 +)	40	100	100
Mother (70 +)	60	100	100
Orphaned brother/ sister (- 12)	/	50	100

Source: Gross, 2000: 376-384 and Bertaud 1990: 251-274.

In 1792, compensation was restricted to those who had enrolled voluntarily into the army. One year later, compensations were extended to all soldiers. From 1793 orphaned brothers and sisters from also received benefits. Parents could also claim benefits if they were younger than 60 and prove that they were poor or incapable to work. The value of these pensions rose between 1792 and 1794 to compensate for the galloping inflation. What is most striking is that the compensation of service in the army extended far beyond the traditional categories of wife and children or widows. For example, the father and mother of a farm servant enlisted in the army would receive a joint annual pension of 200 livres in 1793 and 1794. If they had two sons in the army, the pension could be doubled. French welfare schemes for soldiers clearly reflect the importance of unmarried children for their parents. This also becomes apparent when the distribution of these pensions is analyzed in detail. In the village of Bassens (near Bordeaux) 75 enlisted soldiers entitled 91 family members to relief or compensation. The vast majority of the assistance received from family members came from unmarried

sons. 68 out of 91 received assistance because they had a son or grandson in the army (Valette, 1989: 323). The state compensated households for the hardship brought upon them as a result from military conscription. In doing so, the state thus officially recognized that unmarried adolescents (such as farm servants) were an indispensable part of the household economies and source of income.

The evidence presented in this section clearly illustrates that servants allocated part of their income to their closest family members. As such servants in rural France and Belgium were an asset for their parents. Although they were physically separated from their parents, intense and frequent flows of material resources can be reconstructed. The next section of this paper reviews the evidence for these types of transfers for England.

Remittances in eighteenth-century England

As noted earlier, historians working on the institution of service in England have stressed the relative financial independence of farm servants from their family members. If this is true, there will be few references to remittances from servants to their parents in eighteenth-century sources. The work of Ann Kussmaul on English farm servants has revealed that these transfers were certainly not inexistent. Evidence of remittances from children in service to their parents can be found in eighteenth-century farm account books. However, as Ann Kussmaul notes, these references pertain almost exclusively to the youngest segment of the farm servant population. Especially young servants such as cowherds remitted part of their wages to their parents (Kussmaul, 1981: 76). Keith Snell also unearthed evidence of remittances from children working as servants. However, as he notes, these arrangements were limited in time. Parents of servants could only expect a year's wage at best during the start of the servant career of the child. Examples of such arrangements that lasted longer are scarce (Snell, 1985: 347-348). Compared to the evidence presented for France and Belgium, remittances in England seem to have been less frequent. In France and Belgium transfers can be observed in all age groups of the servants population. Not only young children but also those servants that would be close to marriage at the time remitted wages.

For England, the importance of remittances can also be reconstructed using the budgets of labouring household collected by David Davies and Frederic Eden in the late eighteenth century. Most of the household budgets collected by Davis and Eden refer to households with many young children. Although no research has been undertaken to verify if the composition of the households in these budgets are representative of the household situation of agricultural labourers, the impression arises that most of the household In these budgets young households with a high number of non-productive members are most probably overrepresented. Household of labourers that had children working away from home as servants or apprentices are scarce. In the budgets of Eden three households appear that had children working outside the parental household. In none of these household budgets remittances from children working as servants were recorded as a source of income. The household headed by 39-year old carter had a daughter of 15 working as a servant girl in Manchester, but there are no traces of remittances from this daughter in the calculation of the total earnings. A boy of 16 working as a servant in Monmouth (Wales) also did not assist his parents from his wages. Even when a household had multiple children working as servants, no income was derived from their activities. A labourer in Streatly (Berkshire) had three children working as servants, but these do not appear in the detailed list of earnings of this household. In this household annual expenditure exceeded income by some 18 £ . They managed to make end meets by child allowances and rent subsidies from the parish and charitable donations in kind. The household deficit could have been greatly reduced if these children in service, who jointly would have earned somewhere between 15 and 20 £ per annum, had remitted part of their wages to their parents. But, as the budget informs us, they choose not to do so (Eden, 1797, II: 15-16, 359, 448). Davies addressed this lack of family assistance by servants explicitly in his comments upon the household economy of the labouring poor. In his analysis of the causes of increasing reliance on parish assistance in the late eighteenth century Davies pointed the finger to servants. Like many others, he blamed unmarried adolescents for not being frugal whilst in service. As a result, their financial means were rapidly exhausted after marriage. He also added that few servants used their wages *'for the relief of infirm parents or poor relations'* (Davies, 1795: 58). In the budgets of both Davies and Eden no evidence can be found of remittances from unmarried children. On the basis of this evidence others have also argued that remittances from children working away from home were a-typical of eighteenth-century England (Williams, 1990: 72).

The relative lack of references to remittances is confirmed by data that enable us to measure the scale and intensity of remittances in greater detail. As noted above, English naval seamen could remit part of their wages to their family members. In 1758 legal formalities and costs were reduced to stimulate sailors to assist their relatives. The effects of this new legislation were not impressive. Few sailors made use of this opportunity to remit wages and the sums were quite low. On 72 ships in 1759 only 3 per cent of the sailors made remittances. Pay books indicate that the value of those sailors that did remit some money amounted to a meagre 5.6 per cent of their net pay (Rodger, 1986: 134 and 366).

Some proposals to reform poor relief in eighteenth-century England focused explicitly on this lack of family welfare and the means to restore the balance between filial and institutional assistance. One of the most interesting projects was published by Thomas Haweis. Thomas Haweis, the rector of a small parish in Northamptonshire, was one of the few who addressed the problem of intergenerational transfers and the role children in service could play in alleviating the poverty of their parents (Haweis, 1788). His pamphlet is one of the many hundreds of publications that addressed the causes and consequences of inflating relief expenditure during the last decades of the eighteenth century. His publication stands out from the others as his calculations were based on actual data on poor relief and earnings by various categories of labourers in his parish. In his booklet, Haweis dwelled on a number of issues concerning the management of public welfare resources and related problems such as settlement law. The main project however dealt with an alternative method of raising financial means to aid the poor. Like many others, Haweis suggested a compulsory contribution scheme as a replacement for the parish rates. The core of his project constitutes the notion that both the landholding class and the active labouring population ("industrious classes") should co-finance a parish fund from which the poor and elderly should be aided. In his own words, the best method to relieve the poor was "*to engage them, whilst in health and strength, to assist in raising a fund for the supply of their own necessities in the hour of calamity*". In many ways his proposal fits into a more general movement towards self-help schemes such as friendly societies and popular saving banks. Haweis suggested that labourers could contribute between 2.7 and 5.5 per cent of their wages and that farmers contributed the equivalent of 5 per cent of the annual rental value of their holdings (see Appendix B). His calculations,

taking into account the actual social structure and relief expenditure in his parish in the 1780's, showed that this project could raise sufficient means to finance all welfare needs. This alternative method of raising welfare resources basically extended the burden of poor relief down the social scale and implied a lowering of the contribution of the traditional rate-payers. In this new scheme the labouring population would raise approximately one-third of all welfare resources. With reference to the contributions of the labouring population, this author stressed the potential of unmarried labourers who were boarded with their employers (such as farm servants) to pay these compulsory taxes. Farm servants were expected to pay the highest rate of 5.5 per cent as they incurred no large expenses for rent or raising a family. As such, the tax rate for servants proposed by Haweis illustrates the high saving potential of this group of labourers in this particular stage of their life-cycle. It was only when farm servants could prove that they were already remitting part of their earnings to their aged or poor relatives that they were charged the lower rate. Remarkably, there is no reference to the Poor Act of 1601 that made intergenerational aid compulsory. His project however can be read as an extension of the 1601 act as it further institutionalized the legal obligation of kinship solidarity and also contained a practical method – through direct taxation of earnings - to force the active population to assist the old and those in need of help. This project, although probably never executed and not that widely dispersed, does indirectly reveal some issues about the nature of the relations between adolescents in farm service and their parents. In his view, remittances of servants to their parents and parish assistance were operating like communicating vessels. If servants did not financially assist their parents at a time when their saving potential was the highest, it was likely that the latter were forced to turn to public welfare to make ends meet. His project can also be read as an attempt to introduce the type of family solidarity that was characteristic of many rural societies on the Continent.

Haweis' book also fits into a wider discourse about the lack of filial solidarity and assistance in eighteenth-century Poor Law pamphlet literature. Many critics of the Old Poor Law frequently referred to the failure of the English labouring family to assist their needy members. They argued that provisions under the Old Poor Law had replaced and weakened the 'traditional and natural' ties between generations. In their view, English individualism among the labouring classes was strongly connected to generous relief under the Old Poor Law. According to Henry Kames the

relaxation of *'mutual affection between parent and child'* was one of the negative effects of the Old Poor Law. He deplored that filial assistance had to be enforced by law (Kames, 1775, III: 39-41). Hanway equally regretted that *'there is not more pride among the sons and daughters of the poor, to prevent the aged parent from being a burthen to the parish'* (Hanway, 1775: 104). Around the middle of the eighteenth century Alcock that poor relief expenditure could be lowered if the law of 1601 concerning filial assistance was more strictly enforced (Alcock, 1752: 63). The allegedly cold harsh attitude of children towards their parents is exemplified in the work of William Keir: *'The common language of children in these parts of the country now is: What occasion have we to deprive ourselves of any indulgencies, for the purpose of supporting our aged parents ? The parish is bound to provide for them'* (Keir, 1807: 155). Some authors contrasted the English experience of individualism with the other regions. Jonas Hanway, who had travelled extensively across Europe, praised Portuguese and Russian urban labourers for assisting their elderly parents. He claimed that in England, contrary to other European regions, *'old people are thrown on the parochial charity, whose children might provide for them, but do not'* (Hanway, 1774, II: 154-156). Differences in the balance between family and institutional welfare were also illustrated by direct references to the remittances of servants. In a description of the welfare institutions of the county of Galloway, the author stressed the importance of the family as a source of assistance: *'It is no unusual occurrence to find even servant girls, struggling with difficulties, and economically sparing a part of their wages to keep their parents from the dishonour they attach to receiving aid from the poor box'*. He meaningfully added: *'How different is the case in England !'* (Smith, 1810: 338-339). Another author stated that under the Old Poor Law farm servants did not assist their family members from their wages (Z.A., 1838: 136).

Both the discourse about filial responsibility and the actual data from farm account books and budgets suggest that remittances from servants to their parents were uncommon in eighteenth-century rural England. Especially when compared with the available evidence for France and Belgium, English farm servants do not emerge as an important source of material support for their parents. This suggests that there might have been important differences in the origins of welfare support in these regions. In the next section the potential of both the family and the collectivity as sources of material assistance are analyzed in greater detail.

Remittances as an indicator of family welfare

In the previous sections a variety of sources, both quantitatively and qualitatively, have been presented concerning the scale and intensity of remittances from farm servants. The picture that emerges from this scattered evidence is that these types of remittances were much more frequent in rural France and Belgium than in England. Some eighteenth-century English authors clearly suggest that institutional welfare was more important than family welfare. In this section we put these claims to the test. This section of the paper tries to reconstruct the potential of remittances from children versus institutional relief. As such, these data can serve as a crude measure of the relative importance of the family and the collectivity as sources of welfare. Ideally, we should be able to compare the total earnings in a population with total poor relief expenditure. These data are beyond the reach of the historian. While we are well informed about the level of poor relief in the eighteenth century, estimating the total earnings of labouring households is nearly impossible. To circumvent this problem, I will focus on the earnings of servants in husbandry. A comparison between the cash wages earned by servants and relief expenditure could bring to light which of these two potential sources of welfare were the most important for households.

The earnings of servants can be reconstructed with relative ease. Contrary to day labourers we are well informed about their annual earnings. Detailed data about the number of servants, the composition of this workforce (male/female servants) and wages can be used to evaluate their total remittance potential. The value of the total wages earned by servants can then be compared with poor relief expenditure. The results of such an exercise are presented in table 3. For a region called the 'Eight Parishes', a group of predominantly agricultural villages close to the French border, reliable information is available about the number of servants, their sex ratio and male and female annual wages between 1697 and 1701. For the same period we are also informed about the income of the poor relief boards in these villages. The income of these poor relief boards can be viewed as the maximum these institutions had to offer their inhabitants in terms of institutional welfare support. Table 3 reports the value of wages earned by servants and poor relief expenditure in each of these rural communities. In all villages the total cash wages earned by servants vastly exceeded poor relief expenditure. Important variations can be observed between poor relief boards. The income of the poor relief

board of was relatively high in Elverdinge compared to that of Woesten for example. On average the value of poor relief expenditure in this region was less than 10 % of the cash wages of servants. This clearly indicates that, viewed from the perspective of parents, children in service were a potentially more generous source of assistance than local poor relief boards. The data in this table also indicate that poor relief expenditure was low compared to the earning capacity of unmarried adolescents working as servants. If each individual servant in these villages remitted 8 per cent of their cash wages to their parents, this sum equalled the annual poor relief expenditure in these communities. It should be stressed that these calculations are based on the cash wages of servants. The cash wage only represented between 30 and 40 per cent of total remuneration. When the value of board is taken into account, the relative value of poor relief expenditure drops to less than 5 per cent.

Table 3: Servants' wages and poor relief in the 'Eight Parishes', c.1700.

	population ^a (n)	male servants ^a (n)	female servants ^a (n)	Total wages servants (£ p.) ^b	income poor tables (£ p.) ^c	relief/wages (%)
Elverdinge	800	74	60	9494	1000	10.53
Noordschote	500	57	59	7901	732.3	9.27
Vlamertinge	846	65	63	8813	729.8	8.28
Zuidschote	311	42	29	5156	392.6	7.61
Reningelst	1072	86	77	11368	848.7	7.47
Watou	1487	98	93	13196	928.5	7.04
Loker	485	34	25	4244	262.4	6.18
Woesten	324	22	18	2830	61	2.16
Total		478	424	63002	4955.3	
Weighed average						7.87

Sources: ^a data from 1697 in Dalle, 1953-1954: 34; ^b see Appendix A; ^c State Archives Bruges, *Acht Parochies*, nr. 258.

The data for this group of parishes c. 1700 needs to be placed in a wider chronological and geographical context to assess their relative value. It is only when these data are compared with other regions and periods that we can truly evaluate their importance. The results of my exercise for three regions at a later date are reported in Table 4. This table includes data for Flanders (the province of East-Flanders in particular), northern France (the so-called Département ud Nord) and four counties in England (Bedfordschire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire). For all these regions, the same data have been collected as presented in Table 3.

Table 4: Servants' wages and poor relief in the North Sea area, c. 1800.

Country	Region	Date	relief/wages (%)
Belgium	Eastern Flanders	1795	7
	Eastern Flanders	1803	4
France	Northern France	1789	52
England	Bed, Berk, Bu and Ox	1785	92 - 115
	Bed, Berk, Bu and Ox	1802	127 - 159

Source: see appendix C.

The relief/wage ratio of Flanders in the late eighteenth century closely resembles that of c. 1700. In this period too, poor relief expenditure amounted to c. 7 % of the annual cash wages of servants. Between 1795 and 1803 there is a decline in this ratio. This was the result of both rising wages of male servants (an effect of forced military conscription) and the loss of income by local poor relief boards from the abolition of feudal rights. In any case, these data largely confirm the pattern that we could find one century earlier. In Northern France, these rates were much higher. Although the total cash wages of servants were still much higher than poor relief expenditure, there is a clear difference with the Flemish results. The data for northern France are probably too high as the some of the poor relief expenditure also relates to small urban centres and only the wages of rural servants have been taken into account. The most striking result from this exercise however is the ratio obtained for late eighteenth-century England. If all English farm servants remitted all of their cash wages to their family, this still would not suffice to match poor relief expenditure. In light of recent claims about the high wage economy of eighteenth-century England (Allen, 2009), this is a remarkable finding. Whilst English labourers and their households enjoyed high wages and earnings, this did not result in a great capacity to support their needy family members. Viewed from this perspective late eighteenth-century England was a low wage economy when measured against poor relief expenditure. Off course, the data presented in table 4 do not claim complete accuracy. There are a number of unknown factors that can not be reconstructed in great detail. As such, these ratio's should be treated with some reservation. However, the differences between the three regions are so vast that even a large margin of error would not substantially change the pattern than can be observed.

From these data it is clear that Flanders was more likely to be a region where family welfare was more important than institutional welfare. On the other hand, English data suggest that collective welfare provisions vastly outstripped the potential of family welfare. In this region a model of institutional welfare is more likely to have been the most common experience. This does not mean that family welfare was not important in eighteenth-century England. Numerous authors have shown that the kin group provided various types of assistance to their needy members. However, when placed in a comparative perspective the potential of this type of assistance was rather low in England. These crude estimates thus confirm what could be expected from the review of the evidence concerning the frequency and importance of remittances in these rural societies. In regions such as rural France and Belgium welfare was provided first en foremost by the family. Institutional support was available, but the capacity of these societies to mobilize larger relief resources was limited compared to England. English households in need of assistance had a much more secure and generous source of welfare in the form of the Old Poor Law. This comparative exercise also lends some support to the hypothesis formulated by Peter Laslett about the role of the collectivity and the family. According to Laslett, family and collectivity complement each other (Laslett, 1988: 156). Table 4 suggests that the balance between family and institutional support was very different in late eighteenth-century Europe. It is worth noting that in regions characterized by low poor relief expenditure farm servants also frequently appear as sources of assistance. In eighteenth-century Ireland farm account books reveal similar patterns of family assistance that can be encountered in Belgium and France (Pollock, 1995: 29-31). Witnesses that presented evidence before the parliamentary committee on the poverty in Ireland (1834) confirmed this picture of family as an important source of assistance. One witness stated: *'Children, but more particularly those who are unmarried, evince a strong desire to support their parents, and many do so with the wages they earn by service* (Selection, 1835: 159-160). In eighteenth-century Italy rural households used the cash wages of their children in service to pay their taxes, rent and debts. Employers of servants also supplied the families of their servants with wine and grain (Cavallo, 1998: 101). When unmarried offspring is analyzed in different geographical and chronological settings the English study objects are also characterized by their financial independence and marginal contribution to the household economy of their parents (see the comparative case

studies of single female urban textile workers in nineteenth-century Scotland, England and the United States in Gordon, 2005).

Conclusion

In a recent overview of the history of the British working family and household Jane Humphries stated that all too often historians only have attention for the outside appearance of the family as reflected in their size and composition (Humphries, 2010: 48). Although these are undoubtedly important indicators of social and economic change, historians also need to address the internal dynamics of these households. This paper has tried to delve more deeply into the internal relationships of rural labouring households. It has illustrated that the institution of service was not uniform across different countries. Historical demographers tend to treat north-western Europe as a region characterized by a set of shared household characteristics. Studying remittances in these countries shows that external demographic characteristics might be identical, but that the internal dynamics can vary greatly. For rural households the institution of service in France and Belgium had a different meaning compared to England. In the Continental countries children in service were an asset for the parents. Although they had left the parental household they were nevertheless still involved in the household economy of their parents. In England on the other hand, service in husbandry can be associated with a high degree of independence.

Off course, many questions still need to be explored in greater detail. The next step is explaining how these different patterns concerning remittances can be explained. For eighteenth Flanders I have argued that strong property rights enabled parents to coerce their children into filial solidarity (Lambrecht, 2012). If children could rely on a significant transfer of resources later in their life-cycle, it was beneficial to support their parents with their earnings from service. If no land or other resources were owned by the parents, such an arrangement was not mutually beneficial. Perhaps the lack of land owned by English labouring households can serve as an explanation for the relative absence of remittances? As Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly have recently suggested, the degree to which relationships of reciprocity can develop largely determine the extent and importance of family support (Lis and Soly, 2009: 73). The effects of these differences in remittance behaviour also need to be studied. Could these different child-parent

relations also be connected to other factors ? For example, English unmarried adolescents were far more mobile and married earlier than their Belgian and French counterparts. Also, English farm servants were able to save a higher share of their cash wage than in Flanders (Lambrecht, 2009). Future research will hopefully uncover how these internal family dynamics influenced and shaped structural transformation and change in eighteenth-century Europe.

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Appendix A: Annual wages of servants in the rural district of Furnes, 1701 (£. p.).

Wage	men		Women	
	n	%	n	%
0-14	5	0.8	14	3
15-29	22	3.32	67	14.8
30-44	52	7.85	137	30.3
45-59	67	10.12	103	22.8
60-74	108	16.31	113	25
75-89	62	9.37	14	3.1
90-104	94	14.2	4	0.9
105-119	38	5.7	0	0
120-134	132	19.9	0	0
135-164	65	9.8	0	0
> 165	17	2.6	0	0
Total	662	100	452	100
Mean	91		46	
Median	96		48	
Maximum	256		96	
Female/male wage rate		50.55 %		

Sources: City Archives Furnes, *Oud Archief*, nr. 914.

Appendix B: Thomas Haweis' alternative scheme for raising poor relief resources in Aldwinkle All Saints (Northamptonshire), 1788.

	Scenario A			Scenario B			Scenario C		
	rate*	£	%	rate*	£	%	rate*	£	%
1. "Landholders"	9.36 %	93-12-6	100	7.02 %	70-4-6	75	5.85 %	58-10-6	62,5
2. "Industrious"	/	/	/		23-8-0	25		35-2-0	37,5
<i>(a) male day labourers</i>	/	/	/	2.7 %	11-14-0		4,2 %	17-11-0	
<i>(b) farm servants</i>	/	/	/	5.6 %	9-6-4		8,3 %	13-19-6	
<i>(c) unmarried male day labourers & female day labourers</i>	/	/	/	2,6 %	2-7-8		3,8 %	3-11-6	
Total		93-12-6	100		93-12-6	100		93-12-6	100

* for landholders based on rental value of land, for industrious based on earnings.

Source: calculations based on Haweis, *Hints Respecting the Poor*, 56-60.