



Panel 3.3. The provision of poor relief in rural Europe. Part II

Panel organiser: Marfany, Julie, University of Oxford, UK

Outside of England, the provision of poor relief in the countryside in the past is a neglected topic, in part due to the assumption that it was minimal compared to the provision of relief by large urban institutions and in part because of a lack of evidence. Nonetheless, those historians who have studied rural poor relief have shown that many types of assistance were available for the poor, such as local hospitals, bread doles, dowry funds, other endowed charities, confraternities and almsgiving of different kinds. By and large, these forms of charity were private, though sometimes administered by public bodies. More recent work has stressed that these forms of private charity were important even in England, operating alongside statutory poor relief as part of a mixed economy welfare. What has largely not been addressed for anywhere in Europe is the role and significance of such charities. Were funds adequate enough to provide relief in any systematic and sustained fashion? What contribution could they make to the household 'economy of makeshifts'? Did migration to the cities represent the only option in times of hardship? How did poor relief change over time? In posing these questions, historians also need to consider the different relationships between family forms and poor relief that may have existed. Richard Smith and Peter Solar have suggested that the English poor law provided a safety net that mitigated against the hardship traditionally associated with the nuclear family, in particular through provision of relief to the elderly. This raises the question of how poor relief may have functioned in association with other family forms over different stages of the life-cycle and to what extent it substituted for or supplemented provision of relief by kin. The papers presented in these two panels investigate the role of poor relief, broadly defined, for different areas of rural Europe.

Chair: Marfany, Julie, University of Oxford, UK

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 // 0800 – 1000 // Session 3 – Room A-122

Paper 3.3.1. Poor relief in eighteenth-century rural Spain: a case study of Catalonia

Marfany, Julie, University of Oxford, UK

Almost no research has been done on poor relief in rural Spain. The assumption has often been that the poor in rural Spain and southern Europe more generally either relied on extended kin networks for support or were forced to migrate to the large institu-

tions of the cities. In fact, though the evidence is scattered, rural parishes had a variety of institutions that offered relief, including small local hospitals, endowed charities (mostly bread doles and dowry funds), confraternities and almsgiving. In the late eighteenth century, there were attempts to co-ordinate these different funds under the auspices of local charity committees. At the same time, reformers were debating the best method of relieving the poor, with a vocal number calling for an end to 'indiscriminate charity' in the form of almsgiving and bread doles in favour of more discriminatory and supposedly efficient relief schemes, often more centralised and including indoor relief. This paper presents some preliminary findings for one Spanish region, Catalonia, focusing in particular on a survey of endowed charities from 1772-4. The paper considers the role these charities and other forms of poor relief played in the local economy in the light of contemporary debates. While endowed charities in particular saw their income decline over the eighteenth century, some parishes still fought hard to keep them. More generally, rural poor relief appears to have been more dynamic and adaptable to the needs of local inhabitants than either contemporaries or historians have given it credit for.

3.3.2. The provision of poor relief in the Polish countryside during the preindustrial period. A case study of Cracow and its surroundings.

Wynga, Mateusz, Institute of History, Pedagogical University in Cracow, Poland

Paupers in the Polish countryside could count on various forms of social welfare. In principle, it was the Church that took care of poor relief. Often, however, it was not formalized. Rural shelters usually gave places to only a few individuals, who in turn helped in the church and were godparents. Sometimes mere sojourners, including orphans, disabled war veterans, single mothers with children, sick traders or handcrafters, were located in rural shelters. These so-called "hospitals" were generally neglected, small, wooden houses. The poor were also supported by confraternities and the gentry. It is known that many paupers lived in peasants' households. They did lighter, additional work on the farm. The nuclear family type (parents and their children) dominated in the Polish countryside of the 18th century. Sometimes, there was no place for the elderly in the household. Many poor left their place of birth or habitation because of poverty, hunger and old age. This situation escalated during natural disasters, epidemics, war and famine. Parish registers contain information about wandering children, who died from exhaustion, or people seeking for food, who arrived in the environs of Cracow, sometimes from a long distance. It seems that a chance of a better life for the poor was to go to the towns. This paper investigates these issues through a study of 13 parishes near Cracow, using parish registers from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, episcopal visitations and the census of 1790-2 for the province of Cracow.

Paper

3.3.3. Poor relief and taxation in the Southern Low Countries during the eighteenth century.

Lambrecht, Thijs, University of Ghent, Belgium
Winter, Anne, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium

Until the end of the eighteenth century, poor relief in the rural Southern Low Countries was organized by so-called 'armendissen' or poor tables, dating back to the late middle ages. Poor tables pooled charitable gifts and redistributed them to poor inhabitants of the parish. The bulk of their income consisted of charitable endowments: gifts of land and annuities. From the early seventeenth century, parishes could raise taxes to supplement the income of the poor table. However, it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that poor taxes became a widespread measure, as poor tables experienced difficulties in attracting charitable gifts. The decline in charity can be attributed to legal measures concerning mortmain and different attitudes to poverty. After 1750, more parishes introduced local poor taxes and the weight of these increased relative to other sources of charitable income. In some regions, poor taxes constituted up to three-quarters of the resources raised for the poor. In this paper, we explore the origins and effects of poor taxes in some 20 rural parishes in the western part of the Southern Low Countries. In this region, characterized by farm engrossment and high levels of mobility, poor taxes were introduced in nearly all parishes in the second half of the eighteenth century. The transition from a charitable to a tax-based model of welfare was much debated and resulted in social tensions within parishes. By the end of the eighteenth century, the organization of poor relief resembled English practices under the Old Poor Law.

Paper

Participants

Lambrecht, Thijs
 Thijs Lambrecht studied history at Ghent University and obtained his PhD in 2007. He was postdoctoral research fellow of the FWO (2007 to 2012) and visiting scholar at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (2008-2009). In August 2012 he started working as an archivist at the General State Archives. His research focuses on rural society in the Southern Low Countries and he has published on the history of credit markets, labour organization and poor relief. In recent years, he has developed an interest in rural welfare provisioning in the eighteenth century.

Marfany, Julie
 Julie Marfany received her PhD from the University of Cambridge in 2003. Since then, she has been a researcher and lecturer at the University of Cambridge and is now a Departmental Lecturer in Economic and Social History. Her research interests are in the transition to capitalism in southern Europe, focusing on Catalonia. She has published several journal articles and a monograph *Land, proto-industry and population in Catalonia, c. 1680-1829. An alternative transition to capitalism?* (Ashgate, 2012).

Vanhaute, Eric
 Eric Vanhaute is professor of economic and social history and world history at Ghent University, Belgium. He is head of the cross departmental research group CCC – Communities-Comparisons-Connections at Ghent University (<http://www.ccc.ugent.be>). He coordinates the collaborative research project "Trajectories of peasant transformation. A comparative and global research into the decline and disappearance of

peasantries, 1500-2000". He is member of the board of the International Research Community CORN Comparative Rural History of the North Sea Area.

Winter, Anne
 Anne Winter studied history at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the London School of Economics. She obtained her PhD at the VUB in 2007 and was appointed lecturer in urban history at that same university in 2010, after carrying out research visits at Somerville College (University of Oxford), at the EHESS in Paris and at the University of Salzburg. Her research focuses on social and economic problems of the early modern period and the long nineteenth century in an international comparative perspective, with a particular interest in migration, social policies, urbanization and labour conditions in the transition period 1750-1850.

Wynga, Mateusz
 Mateusz Wynga is assistant professor in the Institute of History at the Pedagogical University in Cracow since 2010, graduate of history and doctoral studies at the Jagiellonian University and the Pedagogical University in Cracow, member of Historical Demography Team (Polish Academy of Sciences), member of the Polish Historical Society. Author of *Parish Raciborowice from the Sixteenth to the Late Eighteenth Century. Study of the Local Community* (2011). Research interests: historical demography, history of the City of Cracow, history of settlement, parish archives, local history.