

Standards of Living 1700-1870

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Introduction

The event with potentially the most far-reaching consequences for standards of living during the period under study in this volume is the Industrial Revolution which began in the United Kingdom and spread, in varying degrees, to other parts of Europe. In hindsight it is clear that in the long run this led to a strong acceleration of economic growth in Europe and to a vast increase in the standard of living of Europeans continuing until today. For contemporaries this was not always clear, however. Industrialization often led to increased concentration of the poor in urban conglomerates dominated by ‘dark satanic mills’, to increased exploitation of women and children, to declining incomes for craftsmen who had to compete with the new steam driven technology, to increased inequality in income and wealth, fuelling the social movements arising in the wake of industrialization that tried to resist or modify these changes. Recent research has added that, indeed, there was a ‘early growth paradox’, that economic growth (in terms of an increase of per capita GDP) only after some decades resulted in increases in real wages earned by industrial and agricultural labourers, and that the ‘biological standard of living’ as read from the evidence on heights sometimes tended to lag behind even more. All this points to the fact that industrialization went hand in hand with a major redistribution of income – few profited quickly, many had to wait a lifetime before returns came in. But to this must be added that no industrialisation – economic stagnation – was of course no alternative, and also that patterns of rising inequality inside Britain and across Europe began to be reversed after 1870.

This chapter will place the impact of the Industrial Revolution at the center of analysis, not only for those parts of the Continent that began to industrialise before 1870 but also for those parts that were influenced by it more indirectly, primarily through trade. We will focus on two related topics: what were the consequences of industrialisation for the standards of living, and how did it affect (income and wealth) inequality. The direction of change in standards of living in the first industrialising country during this period has been the focus of extensive debate between

the so called optimists and the pessimists. The inconclusive nature of the evidence has encouraged the search for new measures and evidence, supplementing the information on the development of real wages and of GDP per capita. Quarter of a century later, it is clear that improvements in standards of living were limited until 1870, especially in comparison to the later decades. We will also study what happened in those countries and regions which did not industrialise – or only after 1830 or 1850. This chapter will attempt to gather, analyse and present evidence related to the standard of living – including data on heights, literacy and life expectancy - especially for those parts of Europe for which evidence has been less available until recently.

A debate clearly linked to the one on the standard of living relates to what happened to income and wealth inequality during the 1700-1870 period. Again, the British discussion will be the starting point, but we will also pay attention to what is known about levels and trends in income and wealth inequality in the rest of the Continent. In the conclusion we hope to be able to offer an answer to the question how the benefits from industrialisation and economic growth in Europe were distributed until 1870.

Economic Growth

Before examining the pattern and changes in the various measures of standards living, we will briefly review the existing evidence or estimates for income per capita across Europe. Economic historians agree that increases in per capita GDP remained limited across Europe during the eighteenth century and even during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In the period before 1820, the highest rates of economic growth were experienced in Great Britain. Recent estimates suggest per capita GDP increased at an annual rate of 0.3 percent per annum in Great Britain or by a total of almost 50 percent during the period 1700-1820. In other countries and regions of Europe, changes in GDP per capita were much more limited, at or below 0.1 percent per annum or less than 20 percent for 1700-1820 as a whole. As a result, per capita incomes in Great Britain began to exceed those in the Netherlands, the country with highest per capita incomes until that date, some time in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Moreover, differences in per capita incomes between different regions of Europe remained limited until 1820 or even until the middle of the nineteenth century. Around 1820 per capita

incomes in western and northwestern Europe varied from 60 to 90 percent of those of Great Britain in 1820. Incomes in the less developed regions of the continent were certainly lower, but the differences were not very large. Recent estimates suggest that incomes in eastern or southeastern Europe, for example, were around 40 percent of those in Great Britain in 1820. In view of the higher rates of growth in Great Britain before 1820, it is clear that these inter-country or regional differences inside Europe were smaller during the eighteenth century. (Van Zanden, 2001, Pamuk, 2006) With the acceleration of industrialisation and economic growth, however, these west-east differences were going to increase considerably until World War I.

Since the existing estimates for per capita incomes are more reliable for 1820 and the later period for most regions of the continent, we can talk more confidently about the basic pattern of income increases across Europe until 1870, and more generally until World War I. However, estimates for GDP per capita in eastern and southeastern Europe until World War I are still subject to a higher degree of uncertainty than other parts of Europe. According to the series prepared by Angus Maddison, GDP per capita in Western Europe increased by about 200 percent from 1820 until World War I. If we divide this century into two roughly equal sub-periods, until and after 1870, the current estimates suggest that rates of increase in per capita incomes were higher in the earlier period for Great Britain and Belgium but higher after 1870 for most of the rest of the continent. In other words, Great Britain and Belgium surged ahead until 1870 with rates of growth of GDP per capita exceeding 1 percent per annum. Parts of the continent then tended to catch up, with rates of growth again exceeding 1 percent per annum. Catch up or convergence after 1870 applied especially to France, Germany, Austria and Scandinavia. Southern European countries Italy and Spain experienced rates of growth only marginally higher than those of Great Britain after 1870. As a result, their catch up was weak but the gap between them and the higher income parts of the continent did not continue to expand after 1870, at least. In contrast, even though eastern and southeastern Europe began to experience increases in per capita incomes after 1820, rates of increase in GDP per capita in most countries of these two regions remained below those of the rest of the continent until World War I. It would thus be more appropriate to use the term “growth without convergence” for the experience of these two regions during both sub-periods of the nineteenth century. To sum up, the gap in per capita incomes between northwestern Europe and the rest of the continent was wider in 1870 than it had been in 1820. The disparities between the early industrialisers and the rest of the continent tended

to decline for parts of Europe after 1870. Other countries of western Europe and the Scandinavian countries, and to some extent Italy tended to catch up until 1914, but the income per capita gap with the northwest widened even further for other parts of the continent. On the eve of World War I, the gap between western and northern Europe, on the one hand, and southern, eastern and southeastern Europe, on the other, was wider than it had been in 1820. (Maddison, 2003)

Real Wages

One of the big debates among economic and social historians in the 1960s and 1970s was whether and to what extent the growth that occurred during the Industrial Revolution resulted in an increase or a decline in the standard of living of the working population – in particular in Great Britain, but also in Belgium, the Netherlands and elsewhere on the Continent. The development of real wages was one of the key variables the debate centred on. One of the limitations of this debate was that it tended to deal with individual countries in isolation, because an international-comparative framework for analysing real wage trends was missing. In recent years, however, indices of the real wages of construction workers have been developed for many parts of the continent for the period since the fourteenth century. Even if these wage series offer narrow coverage and exclude manufacturing, they have the very attractive advantage of providing a common measure for virtually the entire continent. For these reasons, the wage series are probably the best place to begin to compare standards of living in different regions of the continent during and after the Industrial Revolution. In fact, for the period before the Industrial Revolution, real wage evidence arguably provides more insights into levels of income and the standards of living in different parts of Europe than any other measure.

The standards of living debate on the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain between the optimists and the pessimists has greatly expanded the coverage and improved the quality of the wage and cost of living indices. Thanks to this effort, the wage series for Great Britain now include farm laborers, artisans engaged in various trades and white collar employees as well as manufacturing and construction workers. In the early 1980s Lindert and Williamson constructed new indices with broader coverage to argue that standards of living improved sharply in Britain by as much as 50 or more from 1780 to 1830 and about 100 percent for the period 1780 to 1850 as a whole. (Lindert and Williamson, 1983a) The optimists' position was later challenged,

however, by Feinstein whose critical contribution to the debate was a new cost of living index with many new goods which indicated that prices fell less in the decades after the Napoleonic Wars than was earlier thought. (Feinstein, 1998) In contrast, there was little disagreement about the nominal wage series. The Feinstein indices showed much smaller increases for real wages, about 20 percent for the period 1820-1850 and less than 40 percent for the entire period 1780-1850. They indicated another increase of 9 percent for the period 1850-1870. When adjustments were made for unemployment, the gains were even for the period before 1850 and higher for the later period.

Another development that has important implications for this debate is the recalculation of the growth rates in Great Britain for the early decades of industrialisation. GDP series constructed by Crafts and Harley indicate that industrial and overall growth in Britain until the 1830s was much slower than estimated earlier. These estimates made it very difficult to sustain the optimists' case for the period before 1830 because the optimists argued for wage increases significantly higher than rates of increases in GDP per capita until 1850 suggested by Crafts and Harley. The downward revision in economic growth rates thus indicate that standards of living improved slowly in the early decades of industrialization not only because of the uneven distribution of the benefits of growth as assumed earlier but also because these benefits were limited. Even with the lower rates of economic growth, however, the pessimists' case remains: Feinstein indices continue to indicate that real wage increases lagged well behind GDP per capita increases until 1870. (Table 1) (Harley, 1982, Crafts 1985b, 1987, Crafts and Harley, 1992)

Table 1

Estimates for Economic Growth and Real Wages in Great Britain, 1780-1870

total increase for each sub-period, in percent

	GDP per capita		Real Wages		
	Crafts-Harley Maddison	Lindert and Williamson	Feinstein	Allen	Clark
1780-1830	25	50	14	12	35
1830-1850	33	30	20	4	13
1850-1870	37	n.a.	9	20	24

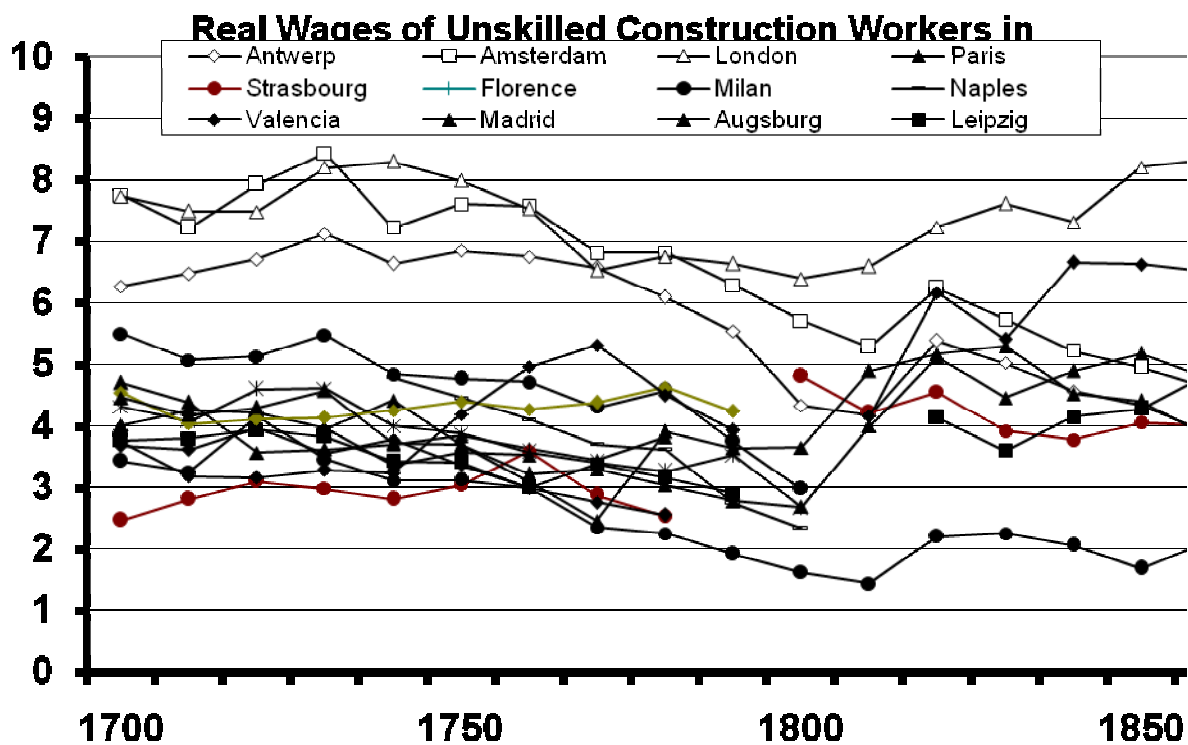
Note: Estimates for GDP per capita increases are from Crafts and Harley for 1780-1830 and Maddison for 1830-1870. For further details, see the text.

More recently, two additional indices of real wages have been made constructed for Great Britain during and after the Industrial Revolution. These long term indices are limited to skilled and unskilled construction workers but are still useful for the light they shed on the standards of living debate. The series by Allen the rest of which will be discussed in greater detail below, are limited to London and Oxford and they indicate that real wages increases until 1850 were small, comparable or even less that those suggested by Feinstein. On the other hand, the long term series constructed by Clark for England point to real wage increases somewhere between original optimist and pessimist positions for the period 1780-1870. (Table 1) (Allen, 2001, Clark, 2005) These more recent indices on the wages of construction workers also suggest that wage increases lagged behind increases in per capita GDP not only in the earlier decades of industrialisation until 1830, but also in the mid-century decades until 1870.

Evidence for real wages in the rest of the continent has not been studied to the same extent. In an important recent study, however, Allen (2001) examined the real wages of skilled and unskilled construction workers in the leading cities in Europe from the second half of the fifteenth century until World War I. He utilized a large body of data most of which had been compiled during the early part of the last century by studies commissioned by the

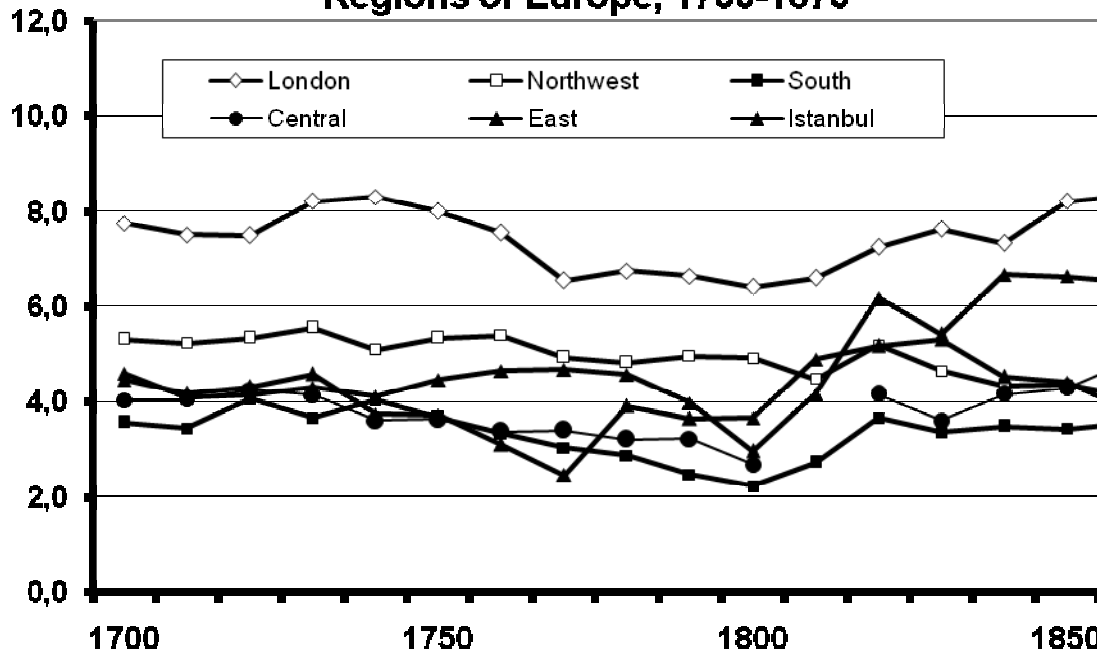
International Scientific Committee on Price History. (Cole and Crandall, 1964) In order to facilitate cross-sectional and inter-temporal comparisons, he converted all price and wage series into grams of silver and deflated nominal wages in grams of silver by a common consumer price index which allowed for north-south differences in the consumer basket to arrive at new real wage series. While his series include only one sector, they have the important advantage of facilitating intertemporal and inter-regional comparisons.

Allen's series indicate that while there were short and medium term movements, urban real wages did not show upward or downward trends during the eighteenth century in any region of Europe. Moreover, levels of urban wages were close to each other in most parts of Europe with one significant exception. Real wage levels in Great Britain and the Low Countries were distinctly higher than the rest of the continent during the eighteenth century even as real wage levels in the Low Countries were declining. (Graph 1, Allen, 2001, Ozmuur and Pamuk, 2002 added for Istanbul)



(or alternatively, because this figure is difficult to read; the averages per region:)

Real Wages of Unskilled Construction Workers in Regions of Europe, 1700-1870



Since increases in real wages in Great Britain were limited until the middle of the nineteenth century, one should not perhaps expect large real wage movements in the rest of the continent until the 1850s and even until 1870. In many parts of Europe real wages declined modestly, by 10 to 20 percent during the last decades of the eighteenth century and the Napoleonic wars and then recovered in varying degrees after 1820. Outside Great Britain the countries in Europe where real wages of construction workers in mid-century were higher than their levels in 1780, say, by more than 20 percent, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Poland. The evidence from real wages thus indicates that the impact of the Industrial Revolution on real wages was limited outside Great Britain until the middle of the nineteenth century and even until 1870 except for the recovery after the Napoleonic Wars. Allen's real wage series also indicate that there was a slight widening of the gap in urban real wages between Great Britain and northwestern Europe, on the one hand, and the rest of the continent, on the other, during the decades before 1870. The exception to this pattern was Poland and where urban wages rose faster than they did in Great Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century. Indices recently constructed for St. Petersburg by Boris Mironov (2004) indicate that real wages in that city tended to decline by

about 20 percent during the eighteenth century, but they rose sharply, by as much as 80 percent during 1800 to 1870. Similarly, real wages in Leipzig also went up more than in other parts of Germany. There may be a common pattern here for eastern Europe. One possible cause of these wage increases may be the rise in agricultural prices and incomes along with the expansion of exports, mostly of cereals, during this period. The same pattern would also apply to the grain producing areas of southeastern Europe during this period. (Graph 1)

In the rest of the chapter we will discuss the extent to which one may observe a similar pattern in other measures of the standards of living and measures of inequality

Biological standard of living – the pessimistic case revisited

Incomes or wages as a measure of economic welfare or well being have been criticised a good deal in recent decades. Focusing on incomes tends to ignore the various disamenities of urban life and economic growth, for example. Real wages generally concern the earnings of men, who developed into the ‘male breadwinner’, but trends in the standard of living of children and women may have been different. More generally, while incomes are an “input”, welfare or well being is an “output” or an outcome measure. For this reason, other, broader measures of welfare or human development have been gaining in popularity. Similarly, recent attempts to use body measurements, and heights in particular, to establish trends in living standards have generated much enthusiasm. The search for evidence about the standard of living of children and women has also led to the use of indicators related to mortality and health.

In a recent study Komlos has reviewed the evidence of heights from different parts of Europe and what they might mean for the possible linkages between urbanization, economic growth and the biological standard of living in the early stages of industrialization. (Komlos, 1998) A large body of evidence indicates that heights of males born in different parts of western and northern Europe began to decline beginning with those born after 1760 and lasting until 1800. After a recovery, heights resumed their decline for males born after 1830 and lasting this time until about 1860. Total decline in heights of English soldiers, for example, reached two centimetres during this period. Similar declines were found elsewhere: in the Netherlands, for example, where the

economy did rather well from the 1820s onwards, from the mid 1830s to the mid 1850s average heights of recruits tended to decline. In particular in the case of England, it is clear that the decline in heights of males born after 1830 occurred at a time when real wages were rising, albeit gradually, as we have seen.

This pattern has brought into question the common wisdom that increases in per capita income should bring about an unambiguous increase in human condition. It also led some to question whether heights and socio-economic variables were causally related during this period. Komlos emphasizes that the causal linkage between socio-economic and structural changes and heights should be retained for this period as well. He argues that a number of developments may have adversely influenced average heights during the early decades of industrialization. Amongst them, he cites rapid population growth and rising relative prices of nutrition that may have led to the substitution of more carbohydrates for proteins, rapid urbanization which may have put the town dwellers at a disadvantage for nutrition, growing inequalities in income and intensification of labor. These structural changes may have created a divergence between average incomes and wages on the one hand, biological well-being on the other. Komlos concludes that the limited gains in incomes during these early decades of industrialisation may have been too low to offset the declines in health in the newly created social environment. Baten, on the other hand, found that in most cases real wages and heights appear to move more or less in the same direction, suggesting that the 'early growth paradox' is limited to England (and the United States). (Baten 2000).

Relative prices may therefore be part of the story; for the Netherlands, for example, it has been established that the agricultural sector profited a lot from the industrialization that occurred in the UK, leading to growing exports of livestock products to the other shores of the North Sea, which drove up food prices (and especially the prices of high quality products such as butter, cheese and meat), and lead to a worsening of diet, helping to explain the stagnation in heights until the mid 1850s (Van Zanden and Van Riel 2004). More in general, until the 'agricultural invasion' beginning in the 1860s and 1870s, food prices in Europe showed a rising trend, which tended to undermine some of the gains in terms of purchasing power resulting from the increase in nominal wages. In this respect, the real breakthrough in standards of living only occurred after ca 1865 (or even 1870), when the growing exports of cheap cereals and livestock products from

the other side of the Atlantic radically changed prices trends and led to a sudden and very strong increase in real wages during the ‘ agricultural depression’ of the 1873-1896 period.

Urban disamenities are clearly another part of the story. Simon Szreter (1997) has demonstrated that in ‘laissez-faire’ England investment in social overhead by cities lagged behind urban growth, causing four D’s to occur: ‘disruption, deprivation, disease and death’. Cities on the Continent generally did not fare much better – in the case of Hamburg, for example, the wake up call only came during the cholera epidemic of 1892, which disclosed the extent to which investment in social overhead had lagged behind the strong economic expansion of the city (Evans 1987). More in general, the demographic record of industrializing Europe is indeed mixed: population growth accelerated, but life expectancy probably rose only very slowly until the 1860s and 1870s – and in some regions not at all. Some of the best evidence pointing towards ‘pessimistic’ interpretations of the development of the standard of living relate to infant mortality, which did increase in large parts of Western Europe until the middle decades of the 19th century. Only in Scandinavia the record is much better, where infant mortality declined continually from about 1810 onwards. Even in industrializing northern England this measure of the standard of living only began to register progress after the middle of the 19th century – before the 1850s, infant mortality still went up (Huck 1995). Similar, rather pessimistic stories of increasing infant mortality are found in Germany and Austria (where it continued to be extremely high: 3 out of ten babies died before age 1 in Germany in the 1860s!), the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain. (Lee and Marschalck 2002; Chesnais 1992: 58-9, 580-1). Spatial patterns in this measure of hygiene and health care show no clear correlation with income per capita – Scandinavia led the way in the mortality decline (except for Finland), but in particular the dismal record of Germany is striking (Hungary, Romania and Russia, for example, all did rather better in terms of infant mortality). One of the explanations for this poor demographic record is the decline of breast-feeding: as more and more women participated on the labour market, breast feeding gave way to less hygienic ways of nursing infants.

A third element in the pessimistic interpretation is related to the negative effects of the rise of the factory system. This meant that labourers had to be disciplined – because the capital intensive mode of production of the factory system demanded constant labour input to keep the machines going –, that labour times were extended, and that on top of this the labour of women and children was also increasingly ‘exploited’. It were the external effects of this transformation

in the regime of work (as analysed already by Thompson 1967) that may have held back real improvements of the standard of living of the urban/industrial population. That working hours went up until the middle decades of the 19th century is now well documented, in particular for England (Voth 2000) but similar tendencies are apparent in other industrializing countries as well. Social reformers from the 1840s onwards saw this as one of the main drawbacks of the factory system, and began to argue in favor of new social policies to limit the harm that was being done.

The story is probably more complex, however. According to Jan de Vries' hypothesis of an 'industrious revolution', the increased working hours and more intensive use of women's and children's labour were responses of households to growing market opportunities/incentives arising from a developing market economy offering new goods (tea, sugar, coffee etc.) in return for extra income that was generated in this way (De Vries 1994). But increased labour input of women and children had its negative effects as well. What is remarkable about England's development in the 18th and 19th century is that it made much more intensive use of children's and women's labour than industrialization on the Continent did.

A side effect of this specific pattern of labour-intensive industrialization that was arguably characteristic of the English Industrial Revolution (in which textiles making heavy use of cheap women's and children's labour was quite important) was that in a period of strong economic expansion human capital formation stagnated. The level of literacy (of men) remained more or less constant during the 18th century, and increased rather slowly during the first half of the 19th century. As Crafts (1985a: 64) has demonstrated, levels of human capital formation during the British Industrial Revolution were much lower than those of similar continental countries during their industrialization. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Scotland, the Netherlands and Prussia simply outperformed England in this respect; Belgium, which was still doing well in these terms during the 18th century, lost its relative position during the first half of the 19th century, when (perhaps similar to the English example) rapid industrialization went hand in hand with a stagnation of the level of literacy (Van den Broeke 1985). The catching up of the south in terms of literacy – of Spain, Italy, Austria – did only start seriously during the second half of the 19th century – before 1850 or even 1870, the gap between the north and the south increased (Boonstra 1993: 20-28).

On top of all of this, under the guidance of liberal economics, the state also developed policies that were hardly favourable for the working population. Following the new insights by political economists, commons, traditional sources of subsistence for large parts of the rural population, were distributed among their owners, leaving the poor often dispossessed. Guilds, in many cities an important part of the urban networks supplying social security, were similarly abolished in the wake of the French Revolution (De Moor et.al. 2002). Poor Laws were ‘reformed’ in order to limit the number of people dependent on them and lower their costs. Liberal economic policies were not always bad news for the mass of the population, though – traditional forms of bondage and serfdom were also abolished in large parts of Europe, privileges of the few sometimes swept away. The economic rationale behind this programme was perhaps rather sound, and some measures may even have enhanced the living standard of the working population (such as the abolition of the Corn Laws and other forms of protectionism), but in particular in the most developed parts of Europe it were often the poor who bore the burden of the liberal reforms.

Table 2									
Life Expectancy at birth across Europe, 1820-1870									
	UK	France	Germany	Netherlands	Sweden	Italy	Spain	Turkey	Russia
1820	40	37	32	32	37	30	30	29	25
1870	41	42	36	37	45	33	34	31	30
Literacy across Europe, 1820-1870*									
	UK	France	Germany	Netherlands	Sweden	Italy	Spain	Turkey	Russia
1820	53	38	65	67	75?	22	20	3	8
1870	76	69	80	81	80?	32	30	6	15
GDP per Capita across Europe, 1820-1870**									
	UK	France	Germany	Netherlands	Sweden	Italy	Spain	Turkey	Russia
1820	100	67	63	108	70	66	59	38	43
1870	187	110	108	162	97	88	71	48	55

*ability to sign a document

** Indices UK in 1820=100

Source: Baten and Pamuk, 2007, Maddison 2003.

Question: are we going to add a discussion on HDI here? ¹

Here are some observations I have for Table 2.

Would you please expand these and insert them somewhere in the second half of the chapter in any way you wish ?

While GDP per capita differences inside Europe tended to widen from the Industrial Revolution until 1870, it is clear from Table 2 that inequality in two other basic measures of standards of living, tended to stabilize (in life expectancy at birth) or even to decline (in literacy) during the same period.

On the other hand, (judging from the pattern of the coefficients of variation), just as the gap in GDP per capita tended to increase between western Europe and the rest of the continent until 1870, so did the gap or the inequality in the two in other measures of the standards of living between western Europe and the rest of the continent between 1820 and 1870.

both the gap between western Europe and southern Europe and
the gap western Europe and eastern Europe

If western Europe is treated as a single country, but Italy, Spain, Turkey and Russia are included in Table 2, the coefficients of variation for life expectancy at birth and literacy would actually increase from 1820 to 1870.

¹ However, I believe that trying to calculate separate HDI's for individual countries may not be very useful since :

- we would have to explain the HDI to the reader
 - we are not sure whether the authors of the chapters on standards of living during next two periods 1870 to 1914 and 1914 to 1945 will also use HDI.
- calculation of the HDI may be a hazardous exercise in view of the quality of the data. As far as I know, estimates of HDI for the year 1870 are available for only a small number of countries (two Crafts articles in EREH)

Conclusion

It is clear that economic growth accelerated during the 1700-1870 period – in northwestern Europe earlier and more strongly than in the rest of the Continent – that real wages tended to lag behind (and again, were higher in the Northwest than elsewhere), and that real improvements in other indicators of the standard of living – heights, infant mortality, literacy – were often (and in particular for the British case) even more delayed. The fruits of the Industrial Revolution were spread very unevenly over the Continent – both in spatial terms (but that is perhaps not that surprising as the Industrial Revolution emerged in one corner of Europe), and in social-economic terms. Spatial inequality increased, and social inequality exploded, in particular in those parts of Europe that profited most from the new industrial age (Williamson 1985). This increase in inequality came on top of an already rising inequality in distribution of income and wealth, the result of economic expansion and urbanization in the centuries before 1700. In particular in the most dynamic parts of the Continent, in England, Holland, France, levels of inequality in the 18th century were already very high – due to the concentration of land ownership and or mercantile wealth (Van Zanden 1995). Proto-industrialization often added to the growing inequality, creating a class of wage labourers on the one hand, and a group of wealthy merchants on the other. In the less dynamic parts of Western Europe – in southern Italy for example – income inequality was probably much lower than in the North-west (Malanima 2006).

Industrialization in Western Europe did therefore occur in an environment of high income inequality, and tended to even sharpen it. Theorists who have sought to understand the links between inequality and growth can therefore not refer to Western Europe as an example of growth occurring in an environment of low inequality. This statement has to be qualified a bit, though: in terms of political rights, and the protection of their property rights, citizens of Western Europe may have been better off than the inhabitants of other parts of the world. In the wake of the ‘Atlantic Revolution’ and of course in particular the French Revolution new concepts of citizenship developed which gave – in theory at least – the citizens of Western Europe increased political rights, a change that was not really undone by the conservative movement that dominated national and international politics in the decades after 1815. The prize paid was that traditional ways of organizing ‘voice’ - through guilds, cities, and other corporations – were

suppressed. Again, the rather difficult transformation of political systems occurring in the 1776-1848 period laid the basis for the real progress that was made during the second half of the 19th century.

Many of the basic patterns of rising intra- and inter-country inequality that we observe in Great Britain and across the continent for the period until 1870 began to be reversed between 1870 and 1914.

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