



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Economic History Working Papers

No: 353

Respectable Standards of Living: The Alternative Lens of Maintenance Costs, Britain 1270-1860

Jane Humphries, LSE;

April 2023

Respectable Standards of Living: The Alternative Lens of Maintenance Costs, Britain 1270-1860

Jane Humphries

JEL Codes: N00 N33 B54

Keywords: Cost-of-living; consumption; welfare; respectability; domestic labour

Abstract

This paper argues that in all societies there is considerable agreement about the goods and services needed to provide a *respectable* standard of living and that this can be measured by what it cost to maintain people of good standing. Such a measure allows for the inclusion of two neglected components of living costs: first, changes in the composition and quality of consumption, as opposed to concentrating on the price of a fixed consumption basket; and second, the value of the household services required to turn commodities into livings. More than 4400 observations, drawn mainly from diverse primary sources, trace levels and trends in maintenance costs for Britain, 1270-1860. These can be compared with conventional cost of living indicators to offer a complementary perspective that accommodates aspirational consumption and the input of household labour. The struggle to support families at respectable standards emerges as driving industriousness and motivating prudence among a class that played a major role in economic development. More speculatively, estimates of the time necessary to turn material goods into livings is then combined with evidence on women's wages to evaluate the contribution of *unpaid* domestic labour to total income.

Introduction

Wage series lie at the heart of economic history. Relatively high wages in comparison with capital costs are held to motivate technological change and so promote long-run growth, while the evolution of wages charts trends in living standards and comparative economic development. Recently, considerable effort has been devoted to improving wage series, including the compilation of fresh

evidence.¹ But equally important for economic analysis is what wages could buy.² ‘Real’ wages are determined by money wages divided by a measure of changes in the prices of purchased commodities, that is in the cost of living. Less attention has been devoted to measuring living costs, although when nominal wages were stable and prices volatile, their movement determined living standards.³ Economists measure changes in the cost of living, by changes in the prices of individual commodities weighted by their importance in expenditure. There are both methodological and practical problems: what prices to use; what to do about new goods and changing quality; and, how to identify a representative pattern of expenditure and chart its changes over time. For the economic historian who deals with long periods and lacks the market data and official statistics available to the modern statistician, these problems are compounded.

We have inherited voluminous price data, but both classic and recent contributions sidestep the need to identify representative consumption and changing expenditure weights, assuming instead that the relative importance of goods remains constant even over extended periods. The resulting Laspeyres (or base-weighted) index changes in value only in response to changes in the prices of component commodities. Thus, Phelps-Brown and Hopkins in their classic contribution used unchanging weights for their major categories of expenditure, emphasizing that the resulting series represented the changing cost of a composite unit of consumption, and only in a general sense could be considered a cost-of-living index.⁴ Moving forward, Greg Clark modified expenditure weights by drawing on historical household budgets, but a breakthrough came when Robert Allen introduced two stylized patterns of expenditure or *Allen baskets*.⁵

¹ Recent contributions on England include: Clark, ‘Long march’; Humphries and Weisdorf, ‘Women’s wages’; Stephenson, ‘“Real” wages?’; Hatcher and Stephenson, *Seven centuries*; Humphries and Weisdorf, ‘Unreal wages’. Classic series include: Gilboy, *Wages*; Phelps-Brown and Hopkins, ‘Building wages’.

² Feinstein, ‘Pessimism perpetuated’; Clark, ‘Long march’; Allen, ‘Great divergence’, Horrell, ‘Household consumption patterns’.

³ For an important exception, see Horrell, ‘Household consumption patterns’.

⁴ Phelps-Brown and Hopkins, ‘Seven centuries of the price of consumables’.

⁵ Clark, ‘Long march’; Clark, ‘Condition’; Allen, ‘Great divergence’; Allen, *British Industrial Revolution*.

The first ‘barebones’ basket represents a physiological minimum of consumption with just enough necessities to survive, while the second, a ‘respectability’ basket, is more generous providing for a better standard of clothing and a richer diet.⁶ Criticism of the parsimony of the bare-bones basket has led to a focus on its respectable counterpart,⁷ widely used to deflate wage series, and compute *welfare ratios*, that is the numbers or fractions of baskets that could be purchased. The welfare ratio methodology is now standard and dominates the comparative study of historical wellbeing. The respectability basket has also been used, though not without reservations, to impute the value of perquisites when workers were boarded and lodged as well as paid a money wage.⁸

However, Allen baskets are also Laspeyres indexes: their composition remains fixed, costs changing only as a result of changes in prices. Most recently, Sara Horrell has constructed a price index (CPI) based on a chained-Laspeyres methodology that reflects changing patterns of household expenditure.⁹ Horrell’s index, though an important contribution, relies on the same classic price data used to construct the Allen baskets, while the scarcity of historical evidence limits revision of the expenditure weights to eight points through the years 1260-1869. Moreover, these revisions have to rely on fragmentary accounts of budgets that might not reflect spending by those aspiring to respectability.¹⁰ Perhaps, not surprisingly, the Horrell index confirms Allen’s basket CPI as a reliable indicator of living costs at least until industrialization gathered pace.

Given partial information on household expenditure and the difficulties of splicing in the prices of newly available commodities, the use of constant expenditure weights is defensible. However, the idea that consumption patterns

⁶ Allen baskets provide a historical template which can be customized to reflect different climatic conditions and dietary standards and combined with local price data, to compute comparable cost-of-living indices for different times and places, see: Bassino and Ma, 2006; Malanima, 2013; Gary, 2018; Federico, Nuvolari and Vasta, 2019; Rota and Weisdorf, 2020; Melacrinis, 2021; Kumon, 2022.

⁷ Humphries, ‘Lure’.

⁸ As in Humphries and Weisdorf, ‘Women’s wages’; Humphries and Weisdorf, ‘Unreal wages’. For a critique of the approach see, Claridge et al, ‘Wages and the middle ages’.

⁹ Horrell, ‘Household consumption’.

¹⁰ Horrell, ‘Household consumption’.

remained even roughly constant over time is in direct conflict with grand narratives of economic history that rely on the impact of new or hitherto prohibitively expensive commodities trickling down the socio-economic structure, to explain trends in international trade, structural change and even the motivation to work. Thus, Jan de Vries' influential 'industrious revolution' relies on the appearance and falling prices of attractive commodities to persuade working people to reallocate time from leisure and household production to market work, a reallocation that presaged the industrial revolution.¹¹ Social historians also reject notions of consumption inertia, citing improvements in diets, cleanliness, comfort and dress as markers of the respectable 'middling sort' and so targets of aspirant working people.¹²

There is another problem. The basket methodology reflects one of the most egregious omissions of modern economics: the failure to recognise the labour required to transform commodities into *livings*, to turn foodstuffs into meals, wield soap to ensure cleanliness, and mobilize fuel to provide warmth. If paid for this domestic labour is captured in costs and included in output measures, though seldom recognised as an important economic activity.¹³ If, as is common, the labour is unpaid, it remains unrecognised. Feminist economists and some economic statisticians have long championed the need to acknowledge the economic and social worth of commercialised care and impute values to its unpaid counterpart. Plausible estimates of the value of unpaid household services confirm its macro importance at between 19 to 60 per cent of GDP depending on country and valuation strategy.¹⁴ Of late, the United Nations has

¹¹ De Vries, *Industrious revolution*.

¹² From an extensive literature see: Brewer and Porter, eds., *Consumption and the world of goods*; Dyer, 'Changes in diet'; Lloyd, *Food and Identity*; Trentmann, *Empire*; Magagna, 'Food and politics'; Larson, *Rethinking the Great Transition*; Styles, *Dress*; Dyer, 'Georgian washerwomen'; Rawcliffe, 'Marginal occupation'; Styles, *Dress*; Styles, 'Custom or consumption'; Muldrew, *Food*; Crowley, *Invention of comfort*; French, *Household goods*; Smith, *Consumption*; Horrell, et al, 'Consumption conundrums'.

¹³ Witness its almost complete neglect in Broadberry et al, *British economic growth*.

¹⁴ See Mitchell, Macaulay, King and Knauth, *Income in the US*, for an early discussion; Beneria, 'Enduring debate', Antonopoulos and Hirway, eds., *Unpaid work*, and Jefferson and King, 'Domestic Labour', for the feminist economist position; Hawrylyshyn, 'Value of household services', for imputation strategies; and, Wagman and Folbre, 'Household services and economic growth' for a historical illustration.

begun to include unpaid domestic labour in certain ‘satellite’ accounts, while the recent pandemic has highlighted the importance of the care sector.¹⁵ However, as Jane Whittle has argued, historians’ recognition lags behind and they cling to an ahistorical definition of work.¹⁶ This blinkered perspective may well have misled accounts of economic progress, especially as estimates of the historical value of unpaid work suggest an even larger contribution, perhaps almost as much as money national product in late nineteenth-century England.¹⁷

There are huge problems in imputing historical value to unpaid household work, particularly the estimation of the time involved and its opportunity cost. Earlier attempts at imputation, recent applications of the ‘verb-oriented’ approach to historical time use, and new data on women’s wages provide methodological and empirical guidance.¹⁸ But difficulties are exacerbated as imputed contributions are unlikely to be stable. A more varied diet, more domestic comfort, and a higher standard of cleanliness entail a greater input of labour especially if housework technology lags behind, while the shadow price of household services also changes. The need to account for changing consumption and for domestic labour are intertwined problems and demand an integrated approach.

This paper proposes a radical departure. Economists, from Smith to Sen, as well as historians have recognised that evaluations of living standards are socially and culturally determined.¹⁹ Poverty has long been understood as contingent, conceptualized in terms of relativities or the influential ‘consensual’

¹⁵ For recent reviews of the background and politics of the exclusion of unpaid household services from GDP measurement see, Messac, ‘Outside the economy’; and Derock, ‘Hidden in plain sight’.

¹⁶ Whittle, ‘Critique’.

¹⁷ Clark, ‘Economics of housework’.

¹⁸ See n. 14 for guidance on historical imputation as well as Clark, ‘Economics of Housework’. For the verb-oriented approach to the identification of tasks and its application to the English evidence see: Linström et. al, ‘Mistress or maid’, and, Whittle and Hailwood, ‘Gender division’. For women’s wages, see Humphries and Weisdorf, ‘Women’s wages’.

¹⁹ ‘By necessities I understand, not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people even of the lowest order to be without,’ Smith, *Wealth*, pp. 869-70; ‘For the person studying and measuring [the standard of living] the conventions of society are matters of fact And not issues of subjective search’, and see also the discussion of ‘contemporary standards’ compared with ‘self-evaluation’, and the possibility of rankings based on ‘commonly accepted values’, Sen, *Standard*, pp.30-33.

approach whereby necessities are distinguished by public opinion and their absence used to identify hardship.²⁰ *Respectability*, since it means ‘regarded by society to be good, proper or correct’ is even more socially grounded and can be identified from local habits, customs, and demands. Thus, Adam Smith famously noted that a linen shirt and leather shoes were essential to an eighteenth-century English artisan’s self-respect, while the Lowell mill girls objected to the frequency with which lobster appeared on boarding-house menus, considering it a demeaning foodstuff. Accepted standards are rarely stationary, as Smith emphasized.²¹ Changes in respectability’s accoutrements often coincide with the appearance or accessibility of new goods, for example, pocket watches and excursions to the seaside in the nineteenth century, but also reflect broader shifts in social values. Children’s toys were deemed a luxury in the past but today their absence would be widely considered deprivation. The task is to identify what people in particular times and places took respectability to involve and then cost this standard.

The paper argues that such agreed standards are reflected in, and can be measured by, what individuals and institutions paid to maintain people of respectable standing. The approach builds on the philosophical ideas of several distinguished economists,²² imputes values from ‘market equivalents’ as is standard in economic accounting,²³ and, while not intended to replace the conventional methodology, can provide a complementary perspective on trends in respectable living.

Section 2 describes the evidence. More than 4400 observations of maintenance costs ranging across seven centuries have been recovered from British sources.

²⁰ Townsend, *Poverty*, emphasizes the importance of ‘the endeavour to define the style of living which is generally shared or approved in each society’ p. ; Mack and Lansley, argue that there is ‘substantial social consensus about what constitutes an unacceptable living standard’, see *Breadline Britain, Poor Britain*.

²¹ ‘A linen shirt is, strictly speaking, not a necessity of life. The Greeks and the Romans lived, I suppose very comfortably though they had no linen. But in the present times, a creditable day labourer would be ashamed to appear in public without a linen shirt’, Smith, *Wealth*, p. 870.

²² Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, *Mismeasuring*.

²³ Reid, *Economics of household production*; Hawrylyshyn, ‘Value of household services’,

Costs vary according to the content of maintenance *packages*: food alone; full board; board and lodging; and, board, lodging and other household services. Section 3 summarizes the literature on the evolution of ‘respectable’ standards, focussing on its association with certain commodities and services, while Section 4 demonstrates corresponding trends in the qualitative evidence on maintenance. Contents *within* packages evolved; for example, the quality and quantity of food improved, and the services that accompanied board became more extensive. In addition, changing ideas about respectability required *transition from one package to another*: from the baseline of food, to the niceties of board, followed by the greater comfort and privacy of lodging, and, finally, to command of washing and additional household services. Section 5 follows standard practice applying regression analysis to control for the heterogeneity of the data and circumvent potential compositional problems, then using the estimated coefficients to reconstruct, in this case, the costs of different packages in different contexts.²⁴ After the Black Death, these costs always exceed those of the respectability basket, but vary according to the assumptions modelled. The gap conflates any drift of the raw materials of decent upkeep away from the narrow confines depicted in the respectability basket with changes in the quantity and price of the labour required to transform baskets into livings. Although it is difficult to separate these constituents, it is possible to investigate divergence by correlating trends with changes in consumption targets, as well as with women’s wages to reflect the cost of domestic labour. Section 6, explores the implications of the changing components of a respectable living and the costs of its domestic delivery. Welfare ratios are constructed to illustrate whether male wages could maintain a single man at a respectable standard let alone achieve a decent livelihood for a whole family and brings into view the pressures that consumption aspirations imposed on male earnings capacity, exposing them as *drivers of industriousness* and *motivators of ‘moral restraint’* and so plausibly vital factors in long run growth.²⁵ Finally, section 7 uses the evidence on

²⁴ For the use of regression analysis to control for heterogeneity see Clark, ‘Long march’, Horrell and Humphries, ‘Children’s work’.

²⁵ Malthus himself suggested that it was ‘a decided taste for the conveniences and comforts of life, [and] a strong desire for bettering their condition’ that prompted ‘a laudable spirit of

commercialised household services to estimate the time needed to support respectable living. Combined with data on women's wages and class composition, it is then possible to impute the value of housework in those millions of households without servants, and provide the first long-run estimates of the contribution of *unpaid* domestic labour to total income.

Sources and methods

More than 200 mainly archival and printed primary sources were searched for evidence on what it cost to maintain respectable working people from 1270 to 1860. Appendix table 1 lists the kind of sources used alongside illustrations.

One of the most reliable kinds of observation occurs when employers fed and/or housed employees, costs *recorded alongside wages in accounts*. Given the underdevelopment of historic transport systems, workers were often boarded and lodged on site to save them having to return home for meals or sleep.²⁶ Such observations are most common earlier, diminishing when it became easier to commute. But even in the industrial revolution, if workplaces were located far from population centres, employers often fed and housed employees to facilitate recruitment, while the need to have some agricultural workers available at all times meant that farm servants were routinely boarded until the late nineteenth century.²⁷

A second kind of observation, also from accounts, relies on opportunities to compare workers' wages when they were fed and sometimes housed (variously recorded as '*ad mensa*', 'at the Lord's Table', 'with meat & drink', etc.) with wages for the same or similar workers when they did not receive such perquisites

industry and foresight' among the English working class, Malthus, *Principle*, cited in Crowley, *Invention*, p. 168.

²⁶Salzman, *Building*; Airs, 'Social and economic aspects'; Woodward, *Men at work*; Dils, 'Reading St Laurence Churchwardens' Accounts'.

²⁷ For example, pauper apprentices were regularly housed and fed on the sites of early factories, see Honeyman, *Child workers*; For farm workers see Devine, *Farm servants*; Short, 'Decline'; Howkins, 'Peasants'; Whittle, ed. *Servants*.

(variously recorded as ‘finding himself’, ‘on his own table’, ‘without meat’, etc.). The *differences* between remuneration when food, board or lodging was provided and when workers fended for themselves indicate the values attached to perquisites. Prudent employers were vigilant in ensuring that when workers were either fed or accommodated the cost was recouped in lower wages. Thus, Sir John Scott annotated the accounts of the Manor of Mote for 1468 to the effect that when working Richard Grey had been ‘at my board therefore deduct from wages’.²⁸ The third type of observation occurs when payments to cover workers’ upkeep were made to a *third person*, often a named woman. Thus in 1561, Wandsworth Churchwardens paid Goodwife Jackson ‘ffor mete and drynke ffor te Clokemaker that s’tayn tymes when he cam’, while a century later, Sarah Fell recorded payments to James Kendall’s wife for ‘tabling’ mowers who were working away from home.²⁹

Leaving accounts, a fourth type reproduces *estimates made by social commentators* such as Arthur Young or Frederic Eden. These are second-hand but allegedly based on local knowledge. A fifth type values *grain liveries* received by servants on medieval demesnes, though these may have been supplemented by outside labour or self-provisioning, or intended to support workers’ families as well as the workers themselves. A sixth type consists of the *billeting* costs of military personnel or parishioners who were unable to fend for themselves. Care has to be taken with these records as standards were more likely barebones than respectable.³⁰

The seventh type of observation relates to *maintenance contracts, corrodies* or *pensions*. In earlier times, people occasionally surrendered property in return for promises of support, agreements recorded in the manorial court. Such contracts

²⁸ Gardiner and Whittick, ‘Accounts’, p. 33.

²⁹ Davis, ‘Wandsworth’, p.13; Penney, ed., *Household accounts*.

³⁰ Care was taken to try and select only recipients of ‘good standing’. Also included in this category are a few valuations of board and lodging gleaned from settlement examinations. Examinees were not necessarily impoverished candidates for removal and accounts of their transition from posts which included board and lodging to ones where they had to provision themselves but on higher wages imply the value of the previously provided keep.

are a rich and neglected source, not only specifying the resources due the respectable elderly, but often, the compensation owed in the event of disagreement.³¹ Thus, in 1632, Shropshire widow Anne Donne, contracted with her yeoman son, Henrie, allowing him a significant reduction in the rental on her land in exchange for maintenance. But the canny widow included a get-out clause: the contract was to run ‘from Ladyday next for a term of 3 years and so from 3 years to 3 years for the term of her living’ but ‘if she publish her dislike 6 months before the end of the term, Henrie shall deliver up quiet possession, Henrie to have the right to give her the same warning’. If his mother was not satisfied with her living she could resume exclusive possession of her property which could then be rented without deduction. Of course, Henrie would henceforth have to pay the market rent on any land and Anne would have to maintain herself. The rental consideration afforded Henrie captures the cost and value of the widow’s subsistence.³²

Corrodies were livings provided in religious houses. Royal pensioners were often foisted on reluctant establishments, but corrodies could be bought by humble people to provide food and lodging in old age and were also awarded to the superannuated servants of the institutions themselves. Occupational descriptors enable cases to be screened by status. Thus, in the fourteenth century, Lilleshall Abbey continued to maintain its thresher John of Garmston even when he became old and infirm, while the Cathedral Priory at Bath granted corrodies to its physician and its plumber and glazier.³³ The contents of corrodies were often defined, and sometimes legally contested, illustrating changing consumption patterns, and again agreements sometimes specified default valuations. Pensions, if screened to exclude elite allowances, also benchmark decent livings.

³¹ Homans, *English villages*; Clark, ‘Aspects of social security’; Dyer, *Standards of living*; Smith, ‘The manor court’.

³² Shropshire Record Office, XMO/445/14/25.

³³ British History Online, Angold et al, *History of the county of Shropshire*, pp.70-80; Page, *History of the County of Somerset*, 69—81.

The eighth type of observation derives from regulations whereby the authorities sought to cap labour costs following the Black Death.³⁴ Whether or not uniformly enforced, such *wage assessments* list maximum wages for workers of different kinds, varying according to whether or not ‘meat and drink’ was provided. The differences, as with type 3 observations, shadow the cost of a respectable diet.³⁵

The final type of observation is of *board wages*, that is money paid employees, usually domestic servants, to compensate for the suspension of maintenance when their masters and mistresses were absent. With houses and kitchens closed, servants had to fend for themselves. Board wages covered the costs of food and accommodation, and, since servants remained on furlough, removed the stress of new hiring when employers resumed residence. Care has to be taken to ensure that board wages do not include rewards for service, as skeleton staff were often tasked with cleaning and repairs, and to exclude cases when servants continued to be housed and perhaps fed. On the other hand, the term was increasingly used to specify maintenance costs provided alongside wages analogous to the observations recorded as type 1 above. Source type was recorded so that it could be controlled in analysis.

Skeptical readers might doubt whether such observations capture the costs of a decent living. Were people in the past watchful of the content and quality of their maintenance, cognizant of its value, and sensitive to the status conveyed? The answer is emphatically affirmative. Within employment relations, workers did not long tolerate a poor living, while employers who were mean risked both reputational damage and shirking employees. Thus, William Ellis in his well-known advice book *The Country Housewife’s Family Companion*, reported that a

³⁴Putnam, *Enforcement*.

³⁵The differences for annual workers, which often explicitly included ‘livery’, were assumed to cover basic housing, as these employees likely ‘lived-in’. As well as assessing wages, local justices were also tasked with fixing maximum prices. Such price assessments were not so commonly undertaken though occasional listings for items of accommodation have survived and assessed prices of accommodation and eating at inns, for example, enables spot checks on the costs of board and lodging.

local farmer had ‘disgraced himself’ by feeding his servants ‘apple pasties ... with the stalks and cores of the apples included’ and crusts of water and suet instead of milk and yeast. As a result, ‘he could hardly get a good servant to live with him, and those that did, grumbled much and worked the worse for it’.³⁶ Some employers adopted devious cost-cutting stratagems. Mary Ann Ashford remembered a Scots employer encouraging her to eat less by suggesting that dieting would enhance her sexual appeal: ‘Mary, child, you would be very handsome were it not that your cheeks are too large; if you would eat less, they would be thinner’.³⁷ Mary moved on.

Where employment was available with or without upkeep, arbitrage ensured that its value was reflected in the associated wage gap. If workers thought they could do better provisioning themselves they sought to ‘live out’, while masters constantly compared the costs of provisioning their employees against paying higher wages if ‘on their own table’. John Bennett, for example, described how c.1805, his master pressured him to ‘live in’ on a lower wage. Bennett experimented but ‘the living did not suit me. I had for my breakfast some thin broth water a little thicker with something and a piece of bread. The dinner was good at one o’clock...’ but as a result of this diet and his heavy workload, Bennett found that he was ‘getting very weak’ and so negotiated an ‘outdoor’ apprenticeship on a higher wage.³⁸ Across the bargaining table, farmer Robert Loder regularly calculated how much it cost to board his farm servants, and pondered whether having them at his beck and call justified the expense, concluding that that ‘...it were (sic) good to keep as few servants as a man cane by any means convenient’.³⁹ Maintenance did not come for free and offsets in terms of wage reductions were scrupulously sought and carefully calculated. When George Culley was advising on whether or not to hire a specific servant he asked ‘what he expects with and without meat’ and emphasized that ‘If he has

³⁶ Cited in Muldrew, *Food*, p. 41.

³⁷ Ashford, *Life*, p.30.

³⁸ Bennett, Autobiographical manuscript, p. 5.

³⁹ Cited in Fussell, ed., *Robert Loder’s Farm Accounts*, p. 9.

his meat that must be deducted'.⁴⁰ In parallel, David Davis included the value of victuals provided by employers in the incomes of labouring families.⁴¹

The same sensitivity to value and status was manifest in maintenance contracts. Even humble retirees, selected by erstwhile occupation for inclusion,⁴² insisted that support reflect propriety. Livings were to be '...as befit such a woman', '...fitting his degree and quality'; '....convenient for a Cristian'; and, '...fit for her station'.⁴³ Corrodies and pensions remained benchmarked to common standards of decency. During the Reformation, former monks, nuns, friars and chantry priests were 'not generally popular' but their pensions were fixed at levels thought appropriate to their ecclesiastical status: 'a tribute to the tolerance of Englishmen in the sixteenth century'.⁴⁴

Wage assessments were patchily enforced and drifted over time from imposing a ceiling to underpinning a floor,⁴⁵ but the valuations implicit in rates with and without food and drink reflected local knowledge not only about prices but also acceptable standards.⁴⁶ Board wages, while problematic as a straightforward measure of living costs, nonetheless index respectability. They were paid to servants selected for retention and by employers seeking to be thought fair-minded, so unlikely to be cheeseparing.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Cited in Orde, ed., 'Matthew and George Cully', p. 106.

⁴¹ Davis, *Labourers*, see accounts numbered 4 and 5.

⁴² Indeed, some pensioners remained committed to their occupations as when John in the Hale promised to work the man to whom he had ceded his tenement 'to the best of his ability', Homans, *English Villages*, p. 147, while Isaac Holmes in return for 'meat, drink, washing, and lodging', promised his son 'all sorts of reasonable service as a carpenter that his age and infirmity will allow', East Sussex Record Office, SAS-RF/8/26, and John Geares retained rooms so that he could continue as a chandler, Shropshire Archive, 1045/1/4/164.

⁴³ Homans, *English villages*, p. 145; Warwickshire Record Office, CR/908/200/7-8; Hertfordshire Record Office, DE/W/156; Lancashire Archives, DDX 243/2/35.

⁴⁴ Hodgett, 'The state', p. xii.

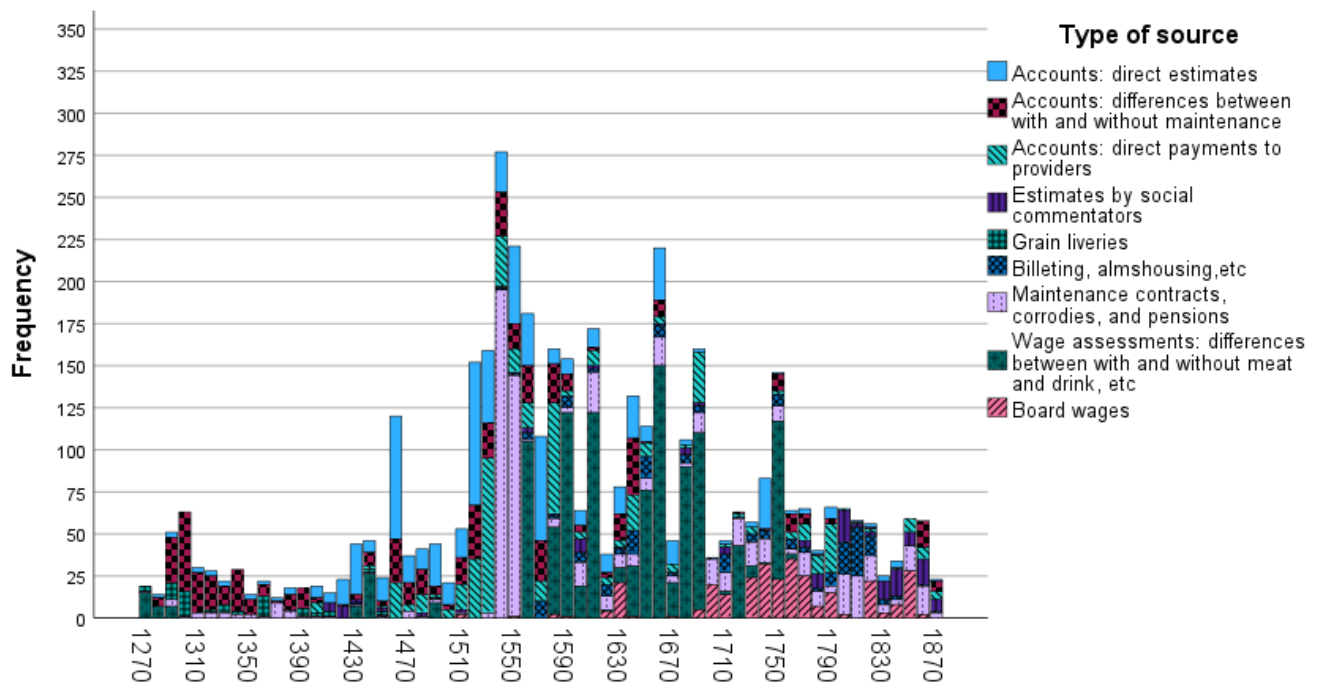
⁴⁵ Rogers, *History*.

⁴⁶ Since Assessments list a number of occupations and grades (workpeople of the first, second and third class for example), they enable classification by skill.

⁴⁷ Since they were paid at different rates by seniority and grade, like wage assessments, they can be sorted by status.

The distribution of cases by type of source is shown in figure 1 below. Types cluster in certain time periods. Grain liveries are limited to the medieval era while board wages clump in the eighteenth century. However, even in the earliest sparsely-documented decades, reliance is never on less than three kinds of source and from 1350 usually on five or six.

Figure 1: Cases by type of source and decade



Making this diverse historical evidence amenable to quantitative analysis is challenging. The foremost problem is that maintenance varied in composition and therefore cost. Five packages were identified. Being fed provides a baseline (package 1).⁴⁸ Board went further involving the provision of daily meals in a domestic setting and some basic housing (package 2). Lodging improved on board by providing access to a specific and usually private space implying greater

⁴⁸ Where only individual meals were provided their costs were added together to provide a complete diet, breakfast and supper together counting the same as the cost of the main mid-day meal.

comfort (package 3). Washing added the laundering of clothing and bedding and provision of other household services (package 4). Package 5 involved eclectic components.⁴⁹

It was not possible to identify maintenance packages according to whether they contained clothing. Though apparel was specified as a component in several maintenance contracts,⁵⁰ its provision to workers was extemporized, of hugely variable quality and often unspecified.⁵¹ Where valued separately clothing was excluded from costings, but it is likely that in some cases its provision went unrecognised. Since clothing, or at least clothing's raw materials, is included in the basket, its costs should exceed those of respectable maintenance.

Board was the most ambiguous category. Language helped as 'board', and similarly with 'tabling', appeared to signify a series of meals rather than just food. Duration of provision was also a signal, as if given for days or weeks together it was likely that shelter was included, though of a rudimentary kind to distinguish it from 'lodging'. Construction workers, for example, were often boarded on site in workshops or buildings that had already been roofed,⁵² while agricultural workers were routinely housed in outbuildings, barns and stables. Even if board involved accommodation in the village inn or home of a local craftsman, it might be basic. A rare price assessment for Woodstock, Oxford, in 1604 lists a 'fetherbedd for j ma j night & so to departe' at a maximum price of 1d, but goes on to suggest economies of scale in the reduced cost if the bed was

⁴⁹ In the occasional instances when the individual components (e.g. food, drink, heating, lighting, bed space) were costed separately, these were combined to provide an overall estimate as in the case of the 'dauber' whose board and bed are costed separately or in the case of price assessments where the individual elements of a living are separated out and need to be recombined to cover the total cost. The individual costs can be recovered and used later as spot checks on valuations suggested by the regression analysis.

⁵⁰ For example, Margaret Adams in 1692 along with food, washing, lodging, and firing was promised 'all manner of needful and necessary wearing apparel as lining wooling stockings shoes & all other things convenient' in her maintenance contract, Hertfordshire Record Office, DE/W/156.

⁵¹ Henry Best reported that 'some servants will (att theire hyringe) condition to have an old suite, a paire of breeches, an olde hatte, or a paire of shoes and mayde servants to have an apron, smocke, or both but it is sometimes and with some servants that such things are desired', Woodward, *Men*, p. 139.

⁵² Airs, 'Social and economic aspects', p. 25.

inhabited for a week, and the premia attached to privacy and comfort by the much lower costs if two men were to share or if a ‘flockbedd’ was substituted for the feathers.⁵³ Again, language was important as ‘lodging’ particularly if combined with ‘board’ was read to imply a higher standard of housing in terms of space, privacy and access, as illustrated in the gradations of accommodation covered in the Woodstock assessment. Another ambiguity was whether pensions and corrodies were intended to cover all living costs or were additional to separate provision of housing (in almshouses for example). Most uncertainties were resolved by careful reading.

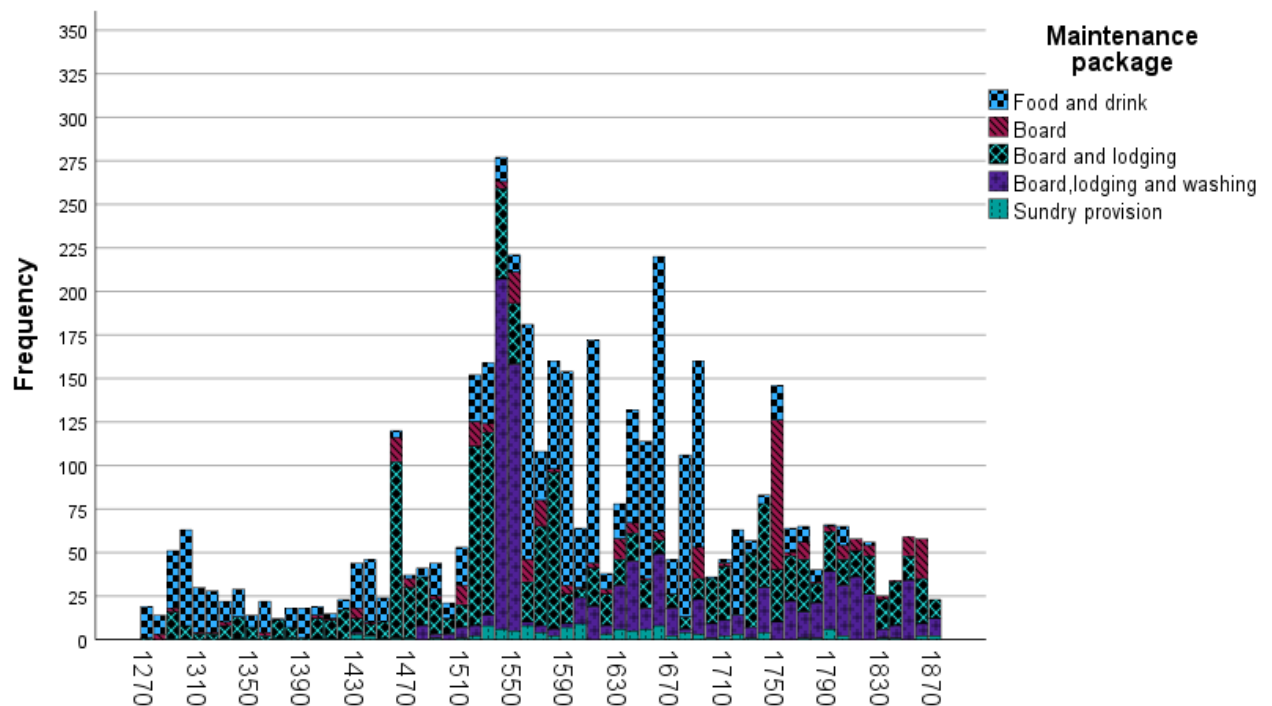
Costs varied by package. All included food so that its variation in quality and cost impacted similarly across packages and are assumed anchored to the cost of the respectability basket but allowed to increase at an increasing rate as better quality and newer foodstuffs were introduced. Where packages really differed was in their domestic labour-intensity. More time was required to furnish board than just food, and more again to service lodgers and to provide laundry services, so the costs of the packages likely depended on the wages of the female providers.⁵⁴ The distribution of observations by package is shown in Figure 2. The more extensive packages appear to be more common over time.⁵⁵ Whether this indicates trends in what was thought indispensable for respectability is considered in the context of the qualitative evidence in section 3.

⁵³ McArthur, ‘Prices at Woodstock’, p. 715.

⁵⁴ The overwhelming historical evidence is confirmed from within the maintenance dataset of that women supplied the household services.

⁵⁵ Food alone packages decline from more than 70 per cent of all packages in 1200s and 1300s to 17 and 3 per cent in 1700s and 1800s, whereas packages that include food, board, lodging, and washing, non-existent in 1200’s and 1300s, to 24 and 40 percent of all packages in the final two centuries. Excluding observations of type 7 which are more likely to detail contents and record laundry, the same general trends are evident. Food only packages decline significantly over time while the extensive packages increase, with food, board, lodging and washing 22 per cent in the 1700s and 43 per cent in 1800s.

Figure 2: Observations by package and decade



In addition to variation by package, costs likely depended on status. Age and gender played an obvious role and since men also dominate the sample the statistical analysis looks separately at their experience.⁵⁶ Men were themselves not homogeneous, their occupational descriptors suggesting different skill levels and tiers of respectability. Three categories were coded: skilled, as indicated by a white-collar occupational title, a managerial position, or designation as a master craftsman or artisan (e.g. master mason); semi-skilled, as indicated by a trade or craft (e.g. mason) occupational title or secondary managerial position (e.g. foreman); and unskilled, as indicated by designation as apprentices, servants, or labourers. Exceptions were made. Men described as ‘serving’ or ‘helping’ master craftsmen were recorded as semi-skilled. Harvesters were considered skilled given their market power. Beneficiaries of maintenance

⁵⁶ There are 3604 cases relating to men and a further 115 cases which involve the maintenance of a group which included men out of the total number of 4413 (overall 84.3%). A separate project hopes to study the female and child cases.

contracts, corrodies and pensions were defined according to erstwhile occupations though uplifted by the respect afforded kin.

Since maintenance was provided for varying lengths of time, (days, weeks, months, etc.) observations had to be reduced to a day rate assuming that a week's board covered 7 days, a month's 28-31, and so on. Duration was recorded as economies of scale likely made longer-term upkeep cheaper.⁵⁷ Remember that a bed in Woodstock in 1604 was assessed at a higher rate for a single night than for a week (see, p.14).

Cases were linked to other probable confounders. Place was recorded to enable the exploration of regional variation, and year to capture time trends, as well as link to women's wages to account for variation in service costs.⁵⁸ Finally, maintenance costs are not recorded consistently. Data collection followed certain protocols to ensure comparability and an abstemious use of the available evidence.⁵⁹

Changes in the nature and content of respectable consumption

Economic historians claim a 'consumer revolution' in England from c. 1600 to 1750. The desire for tempting, newly-available commodities, including tropical groceries and tobacco, but also clothing, household furnishings, and furniture, capable of delivering greater domestic comfort, stimulated trade and industry.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ For a discussion of economies of scale in household consumption, see Folbre et al (2018).

⁵⁸ Humphries and Weisdorf, 'Women's wages'.

⁵⁹ Cases were defined by an entry in an account book or reference in a document and recorded once only even if payment was for several days or weeks or even years. Costs which were recorded say weekly over time generated a series of cases, while if the bills were paid less frequently the number of cases fell. No account was taken of payments specified as ongoing but not appearing in subsequent accounts. Where payments were for groups of boarder/lodgers and to several providers they were recorded as specific cases only when specified individuals were involved. For example, the payments for victualling and lodging the 170 shipwrights, caulkers, sawyers and smiths described in table 2 at 7d per day for victuals and 2d per week for a feather bed per man was treated as 22 observations as four named women and eighteen additional providers are indicated in the Admiralty record.

⁶⁰ For the classic account see, McKendrick, et. al. *Birth of Consumer Society*. See also, Berg, *Luxury*; Berg and Clifford, *Consumers*.

Change was spearheaded by the elite, which used exotic goods to signal its elevated rank, but spread to the middle class and aspirant workers, the purveyors of the 'industrious revolution'. These groups sought similar but cheaper commodities. Such *populuxe* became part of a 'counterfeit culture' that gave non-elite consumers an opportunity to emulate the lifestyles of the upper-classes without paying as much, while simultaneously distancing themselves from those they considered less-reputable.

While historians are generally agreed that the consumer revolution was distinctive, the previous centuries were not marked by timeless frugality. Diets are especially important since food, as Paul Lloyd has shown, conveyed identity, rank and social distance.⁶¹ But other components of living standards such as accommodation, cleanliness and comfort also expressed status and they too evolved.

Analyses of non-elite medieval consumption dwell on food. They cite the liveries provided to workers, which, while generous in quantity, were dominated by coarse grains and dried legumes. However, after the Black Death when wages boomed, some working people could afford better food and began to expect it. Central to progress, as Christopher Dyer has demonstrated, was a move to wheat bread,⁶² which by the sixteenth century had transitioned from status symbol to must-have of the 'meaner sort'.⁶³ Nor was this the only dietary change. Dyer's study of the provisioning of fifteenth-century harvest workers suggests a gradual increase in the quantity and quality of meat, fish, and ale.⁶⁴ While the harvest was the culinary apex of the agricultural workers' year, improvements at the peak suggest general progress.

By the early seventeenth century, for yeomen farmers, urban professionals and artisans, the process of establishing and consolidating their identity as a distinct

⁶¹ Lloyd, *Food and Identity*.

⁶² Dyer, 'Changes'; Dyer, *Standards of living*

⁶³ Magagna, 'Food and politics'.

⁶⁴ Dyer, *Standards of Living*.

social class, was associated with blurring the ‘edible distinctions’ between themselves and the gentry, while simultaneously creating distance from labourers, cottagers and paupers, who were satisfied with, indeed thought suited to, a calorically intense but less refined diet.⁶⁵ Food involved both a hierarchy of maintenance and the maintenance of hierarchy.⁶⁶ Sweets, comfits, the cheaper spices, and meats previously reserved for elite consumption, began to appear in the pockets and on the tables of the middling sort and to be targeted by the upwardly mobile, who were often initially exposed to such delights in the households of superiors.⁶⁷ Although some of these new edibles could be purchased in consumable form, many required more sophisticated preparation and cooking, the additional time and skill needed in the kitchen further enhancing their prestige.

Board, as distinct from merely being fed, involved the preparation, cooking and presentation of a series of meals, which even in medieval times, involving some ceremony: food served ‘on a table covered with a linen or canvas cloth’, seating provided, and hands washed.⁶⁸ Changes in middling-sort diets were accompanied by the acquisition of pewter and brass dishes and eating utensils.⁶⁹ These made eating more pleasant but increased the labour involved in food service.

Board also implied the provision of shelter which in earlier centuries was shared and rudimentary. George Homans concluded that medieval houses were ‘poor things’ and even in those of the respectable most family members ‘may have eaten and slept together in the room which was dominated by the hearth’.⁷⁰ Similarly, better off Londoners, as Katherine French has noted, ‘lived in cramped and minimally furnished rooms’ with few social distinctions: merchants and

⁶⁵ Lloyd, *Food and Identity*, Ch. 4; but see also Fox, ‘Food, drink and social distinction’.

⁶⁶ Batstone, ‘Hierarchy’.

⁶⁷ Goodall, ‘Consumption’.

⁶⁸ Dyer, *Standards of living*, p.160.

⁶⁹ Larson, *Rethinking*.

⁷⁰ Homans, *English villages*, p.144-5; see also, Crowley, *Comfort*.

artisans shared ‘a common way of inhabiting domestic space’.⁷¹ The Black Death has again been suggested as a divide. After its ravages, more space, a separate kitchen, own fireplace, and more furnishings became the trappings of rank and markers of respectability.⁷² ‘Board’ gave way to ‘lodging’. The elite led the way, but soon common people were aspiring to personal space and their own front doors, as reflected in contemporary almshouse architecture.⁷³ Comfort was targeted with beds and their furnishings, the consumer goods of the early modern era.⁷⁴ Again, these widened material lives necessitated new forms of housekeeping to manage both the enlarged dwellings and their expanded contents.⁷⁵

Nor was it just bedding and furnishings that required cleaning. Carole Rawcliffe has challenged the conventional view that linen was rarely laundered before the sixteenth century, projecting backwards early modernists’ emphases on the hygienic, aesthetic and even moral connotations of the regular and ostentatious use of clean undergarments.⁷⁶ Laundered clothing, Rawcliffe claims, was essential for health as well as status. Changing sanitary standards also required new furnishings and labour inputs: slop buckets, chamber pots, commodes, earth closets and privies were all needed by those aspiring to refinement and anxious about hygiene and all needed emptying and cleaning. When exactly the pursuit of cleanliness became standard for the respectable remains uncertain, but by the early modern period laundry along with other cleaning tasks appeared regularly in the work associated with housekeeping.⁷⁷

Altogether, the many authors interested in the foods, goods and houses of the past, have, consistent with the broader debate on ‘medieval’ to ‘modern’, pushed

⁷¹ French *Household goods*, p.37, p.20.

⁷² *Ibid*; Nicholls, *Almshouses*.

⁷³ Nicholls, *Almshouses*.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Consumption*.

⁷⁵ French, *Household goods*

⁷⁶ Rawcliffe, ‘Marginal occupation’; Pelling, ‘Appearance and reality’; Thomas, ‘Cleanliness and godliness’.

⁷⁷ Mansell, *Female servants*; Rawcliffe, ‘Marginal occupation’; Dyer, ‘Georgian washerwomen’; Malcolmson, *English laundresses*.

the origins of consumer society further back, seeing the Black Death as a major divide and arguing for evolution rather than revolution.⁷⁸ Some have also noticed that increasing amounts of domestic labour were needed to transform changing consumption baskets into achieved livings.⁷⁹ Thus, John Crowley concluded that a late medieval man's physical requirements for comfort were 'clean clothes, a well-appointed bed, a fire, *and someone to serve him these amenities*'.⁸⁰ Does the evidence on trends in the composition and cost of maintenance support this more nuanced account of changes in consumption, punctuated by the Black Death as well as the classical consumer revolution, and emphasizing gradual change?

Changes in the nature and content of respectable maintenance

The *qualitative* evidence on the maintenance of those considered respectable chimes with the overview of consumption history. It suggests that as well as the contents of the different maintenance packages being upgraded over time, simultaneously there was a drift away from the basic provision of food towards packages that included board, then separate accommodation, and, finally a wider array of household services.

Medieval maintenance standards and their gradations are illustrated by the perquisites assured the Bishop of Chichester's chamberlain at Battle Abbey before the Black Death. He was to have a furred robe and a decent room along with a daily allowance of 2 loaves of 'Simnel bread', 1½ gallons of convent ale, and 1½ cooked dishes from the kitchen. Attendance was to be provided by an accompanying servant whose living is more representative of the classes studied here. The servant was to have 2 loaves of black bread, a gallon of ale, and from the kitchen the same as the Abbey's servants, while he presumably dossed down

⁷⁸ Thirsk, *Food*; Sear and Sneath, *Origins*.

⁷⁹ French, *Household goods*.

⁸⁰ French, *Household goods*; Crowley, *Comfort*, p.18. emphases added.

in some communal dormitory or on his master's floor: a telling comparison with the chamberlain's situation.⁸¹

Change is difficult to detect in grain liveries, and early maintenance contracts which rarely itemized support in detail.⁸² However, even medieval agreements described respectable dietary provision as needing to be 'reasonable' or 'as is proper', while by the early modern period it was to be 'good', 'wholesome', 'competent' and 'sufficient'.⁸³ Corrodies were sometimes more specific. On the eve of the Black Death, John de Trentam, the elderly servant of Vale Royal Abbey, was promised in 'retirement' one loaf of convent bread and one loaf of black bread along with a flagon of ale and a dish from the kitchen. By 1365, the corrody of John Machon and his wife Edith specified 'a white loaf' daily along with a gallon of ale and 'a pittance of food and drink' from the priory of St Denis.⁸⁴ Almshouse residents, when provided with food collectively also appear to have enjoyed increasing variety and quality.⁸⁵

Workers' diets too suggest increasing variety, and consistent with standard accounts, greater consumption of meat. Thus, the carpenters and plumbers employed by the churchwardens of St Mary at Hill in 1428 were fed by (a carefully costed) 'sholdere and a brist of moton' for their 'none mete' and a rib of beef 'on the morwe' as well as bread and ale.⁸⁶ A few years later, the Guild of the Holy Cross provided its carpenters with bread, beer, herrings, fish, onions and garlick, mustard, salt, 'otemde', fruit, white peas, and 'symnel', and later meat, butter, cheese and eggs, all costed in the accounts.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Searle and Ross, *Accounts*, p.16

⁸² Smith, 'Manor Court', p.49.

⁸³ Homans, *English villages*, pp. 144-6; West Sussex Record Office, SAS-BA/97; East Sussex Record Office, SAS/G28/15; Sheffield City Archives, CM/393.

⁸⁴ British History Online, Brownbill, *Ledger Book*; British History Online, Doubleday and Page, *History of the County of Hampshire*; although these differences might reflect status.

⁸⁵ Nicholls, 'Comfortable lodging'; Nicholls, *Almshouses*.

⁸⁶ Cited in Salzman, *Building*, p. 80.

⁸⁷ Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, BRT/1/3/40.

By the sixteenth century even ‘fillers of dung’, low down on the respectability scale, could on the Manor of Lord Bergaveny, expect ‘breade and cheese & drinke good and sufficient in quantity for a labouringe man all the day, and at the end of the day his dyner at the costs and charges of the Lord or his farmer’, while reapers had ‘...two drinkings in the forenoone of breade and cheese, and a dyner at no one econsistinge of rost meat & other good victuals meete for men & women in harvest time; and two drynkings in the afternoone, one in the middle of their afternoones worke; & the other at the end of the days worke, And drinke always during their worke as neede shall require’.⁸⁸ At Hayton reapers were also promised ‘...at the end of the dayeapple pyes or such like repast’.⁸⁹ In 1666, John Aldrich spent 2s 6d on beer for his sheepshearers and 5d on ‘milk and eggs for their puddings’.⁹⁰ By the eighteenth century, the social commentators, Ellis, Batchelor, and Young, all suggest that the food provided to agricultural workers included more meat and dairy, and was less reliant on the older standbys of bread and herrings. Ellis claimed that his own servants enjoyed pickled pork and apple dumplings for dinners and suppers and at harvest time ate ‘Puddings, Pyes, Pasties, Cheese, Milk, with other Culinary Preparations, and with well brew’d and strong and small Beer and Ale ...’.⁹¹

Harvest was, as noted above, the gastronomic highpoint for agricultural workers, but other meals also indicate rising standards. In 1746, Susan Browning, apprenticed aged 15 to a local yeoman, ran away after a beating only to return, a homecoming made memorable according to her settlement examination, because she was in time for the Christmas dinner of ‘a shoulder of mutton, a plum pudding and some white cabbage and turnips’.⁹² Such indulgences were not daily experiences but occasional exposure generated ambition. John Harrower, travelling via London to America, was short of money and usually ate economically (bread, cheese, ale and occasional meat), but splurged occasionally

⁸⁸ Godfrey, ‘Book of John Rowe’, p.28.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁹⁰ Hickley, ‘John Aldrich’.

⁹¹ Cited in Muldrew, *Food*, p. 41, p.43

⁹² Pilbeam and Nelson, ‘Poor law records’, p. 226

on ‘good suppers’, punch, porter and roast beef, and on one memorable occasion, 8 oysters, with bread and two pints of ale.⁹³ Respectable diets had moved beyond the Allen basket.

Maintenance records also show how ‘board’ went beyond the delivery of ‘meat and drink’ to the provision of meals in a domestic setting. Women were paid not just for providing food but ‘tabling’ their boarders, while corrodial dishes were to be sent from the kitchen, or seats provided at collective counters. Additional services were incorporated, as for example, when John de Trentam’s serving was to be ‘reasonably cut up in the kitchen.’⁹⁴ In these ways, boarding increased household labour and put pressure on costs, witness the references to the scouring of pots and washing of table linens in late medieval and early modern kitchen accounts.

By the nineteenth century, boarders claiming respectability expected cooked meals served regularly in a tidy domestic setting. John Birch Thomas remembered two ‘gentlemen’ lodging in his London household as ‘... always in a hurry for their breakfast’.⁹⁵ Specific references to the domestic labour involved are rare but occur in the early nineteenth-century diary of grocer George Heywood. Heywood and his business partner had shared accommodation above their grocery and employed a woman to serve meals and clean, but on Heywood’s marriage his partner expected to ‘save this’. He was willing to pay ‘for the meat’ and for a porter to fetch the water but balked at paying for domestic help now Mrs. Heywood was in residence! George cited the market equivalent of his wife’s time and pressed his case for reimbursement.⁹⁶

Growing expectations about space and privacy are also detectable. William Leygh indicated his status as a ‘gentleman’ when in 1560, he specified *two* chambers, one to contain a chimney, in his retirement contract with a Hertford

⁹³Harrower, *Diary*. I am grateful to Amy Erickson for this reference.

⁹⁴ British History Online, Brownbill, *Ledger book*.

⁹⁵ Thomas, *Shop boy*, p.1.

⁹⁶ Barker and Hughes, *Business and Family*, pp.252-3.

yeoman, but some 70 years later Anne Donne was not alone in wanting a 'convenient' chamber with its own chimney, while others too sought private means of entry and exit and control of their own heating.⁹⁷ Although, non-conformist minister and farmer Peter Walkden in early 1700s Lancashire, was content to share a bed when travelling with a fellow preacher and routinely 'lay down' with a child when his wife was absent, he retreated to his 'lodging room' (sic) to read and write.⁹⁸ By the nineteenth century, private domestic space had become a hallmark of respectability creating contentious boundaries when employees lived in.⁹⁹

The late medieval maintenance contract between John Thornton and his wife Margaret and shoe-maker John Clay and his wife Jenet illustrates these transitions alongside new requirements for respectability. The old couple gifted 'two messuages' in exchange for meat and drink 'sufficiently competently and onestly holsum for monis body, howse rowme and rent, fre fire and flet, weshing & wringing clenly and wele'.¹⁰⁰ Laundry had been added to the attributes of respectable living, and, consistent with historians' emphasis on the moral as well as hygienic and aesthetic connotations of clean clothing, from this time onwards appears increasingly frequently in descriptions of a decent lifestyle. Thus, Walkden, surely not exceptional, records washing and changing his linen with great regularity almost always more than once a week.¹⁰¹ By the late eighteenth century, indentures show that even apprentices were deemed to merit 'washing'.¹⁰² Given the labour involved, its provision was often grudging. George Heywood resisted washing for a prospective junior assistant, and Mary Hardy said firmly that while the Ansell family lodged in her 'best parlour and green chamber' they were 'to find their own linen & washing...'.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Derbyshire Record Office, D779B/T 140; Shropshire Record Office, XMO/445/14/252; and, 1045/164; see also Sheffield City Archives, CM/393; Cornwall Record Office, RP/2/3; Shropshire Record Office, 1045/164.

⁹⁸ Walkden, *Diary*.

⁹⁹ Barker and Hamlett, 'Living above the shop'; Barker, *Family*; Barker and Hughes, *Business*.

¹⁰⁰ Lincolnshire Archive, HOTCHKIN 2/1/18.

¹⁰¹ Walkden, *Diary*.

¹⁰² Lane, *Apprenticeship*.

¹⁰³ Barker and Hughes, *Business*; Bird, *Diary of Mary Hardy*, p. 162

Other emerging components of decent livings might be overlooked by modern eyes. Chimneys, bedding, access to a privy, and use of a horse or gelding, were all stipulated as inputs into respectability as it extended to include the utility of a fixed fireplace, comfort while sleeping, a modicum of privacy in personal hygiene and a means of transport, the latter essential for attendance at church and so a key attribute of the upright. Thus in 1560, ‘gentleman’ William Leygh’s contact, specified access to ‘a house of office’ and ‘free keeping’ of two geldings. ¹⁰⁴

Additional attributes of respectability all required additional household services. Clothing and bedding had to be washed, wrung and sometimes starched, fuel delivered, and domestic spaces swept and cleaned. Packages at the apex of respectability specified access to an individual servant, while those lower down the social scale stipulated particular services. Thus, Jane Ormandy who worked for many years for Clement Taylor of Finisthwaite agreed a remuneration package that included ‘her Dame to mend her’. ¹⁰⁵

By the eighteenth century, the novel commodities of the industrious revolution appear. In his will of 1723, yeoman Robert Pake instructed his son to maintain his mother ‘in claother, meate, drink, washeing and lodging wit tobaccke fit for a person of her degree’. ¹⁰⁶ Walkden recorded regular enjoyment of his pipe and purchases of tobacco whose progress down the social scale is illustrated by its 1757 inclusion in Kendal Poor Law’s provision for ‘lunatick’ John Bland.¹⁰⁷

Medical services and contemporary pharmaceuticals, also come into view, so by 1780 Widow Elizabeth Smerdon added ‘physick and attendance on her’ to the maintenance package that her son promised in exchange for her property. ¹⁰⁸ Responsibilities could even extend beyond life, as when Ann Whibby Price required her umbrella-maker brother to provide, in due course, a ‘Christianlike’ burial.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Derbyshire Record Office, D779B/T 140.

¹⁰⁵ Martin, ‘Account book’, p.79.

¹⁰⁶ Cornwall Record Office, CA/B47/55.

¹⁰⁷ Walkden, *Diary* Cumbria Archive Centre, WQ/SR/264/19-20.

¹⁰⁸ Devon Archives, 4930B/L/22.

¹⁰⁹ Hereford Record Office, CM20/25-27.

So, as predicted by the cultural historians, respectable maintenance involved increasing comfort and less tolerance for dirt. John Harrower, after his memorable oyster dinner, paid 3d for a bed warmed with a warming pan ‘... being the first time I ever seed it done’.¹¹⁰ George Heywood fled lodgings when mice were allowed to run over his food. Co-resident vermin were not part of his early nineteenth-century aspirant identity: ‘It was not riches I wanted it was to live comfortable and respecable (sic)’.¹¹¹

Modelling maintenance costs

Nominal maintenance costs are estimated by regression in order to be able to control for source, age and gender, skill, duration, region, and isolate variation by package (see p. 6). Women’s wages are included in the model to account for the changing cost of household services and used to weight the package dummies given that the different packages had different intensities of domestic labour. The cost of the respectability basket and its square are included to account for changes in the cost of the material inputs into respectability, the nonlinearity in this term suggested by the increasing quantity and quality of the goods needed to ensure respectability.

$$COM_{it} = \alpha + \sum_i \gamma_j AaG_j + \sum_k \eta_k Region_k + \sum_l \varphi_l Type_l + \sum_m \rho_m Skill_m + \sum_n \sigma_n Duration_n + \sum_o \rho_o Package_o \times Casual WW_T \text{ or } Annual WW_T + \beta_1 COL_t + \beta_2 COL_t^2 + \beta_3 CasualWW_T + \beta_3 Year_t + e_{it}$$

COM_{it} is the cost of boarding/lodging individual i in year t; AaG_j is a dummy variable for each of the 4 categories of age and gender (man, woman, mixed group, and child); Region_k is a dummy variable for each of the 9 geographical categories (Scotland, Wales, East Anglia, Midlands, North East, North West, Other, South West, and South East); Type_l is a dummy variable for each of the 9

¹¹⁰ Harrower, *Diary*.

¹¹¹ Barker and Hughes, *Business*, p. 242.

types of observations; Skill_m is a dummy variable for the 3 categories of skill (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled); Duration_n is a dummy variable for the 4 categories of employment duration (day, week, year, and other); Package_o is a dummy variable for the 5 packages of support (food and drink; food, drink and board; food, drink, board and lodging; food, drink, board, lodging and washing; and sundry components) weighted by either women's casual or annual wages in decade T; COL_t is the cost of the respectability basket in year t; COL_t² is the cost squared; Casual WW_T is women's casual wages in decade T; Annual WW_T is women's annual wages in decade T; year_t is the year (standardised 1270=1); and e_{it} is the error term. ¹¹²

The results are reported in table 1 below.

Table 1: Ols regression analysis of maintenance costs

	All observations	Men and mixed groups only
Constant	2.049*** (0.161)	1.1947*** (0.153)
Skill (relative to skilled)		
Semiskilled	-1.064*** (0.087)	-0.962*** (0.084)
Unskilled	-1.815*** (0.103)	-1.674*** (0.100)
Age and gender (relative to adult man)		
Women	-1.113*** (0.110)	
Mixed group	-0.874*** (0.200)	
Children	-2.446*** (0.177)	

¹¹² Packages 2 and 5 are weighted by women's casual day wages assuming that the provision of food and board was casual work as was the eclectic provision provided in package 5; Packages 3 and 4 are weighted by women's annual wages converted to a day rate, assuming that the provision of accommodation and washing provided regular employment. Reweighting all packages by women's casual wages or an average of women's casual and annual wages produces only minor changes in the estimates.

Type of source (relative to accounts: direct estimates)		
Accounts: differences between with and without board and lodging	-0.182 (0.121)	-0.198 (0.111)
Accounts: direct payments to providers	0.285* (0.122)	0.176 (0.116)
Estimates by social commentators, etc	-0.542* (0.214)	-0.354 (0.230)
Grain liveries	0.801* (0.325)	0.682* (0.317)
Billeting, etc	-1.944*** (0.188)	-2.158*** (0.203)
Maintenance contracts, corrodies and pensions	-0.557*** (0.162)	-0.657*** (0.165)
Wage assessments	0.049 (0.132)	-0.055 (0.126)
Board wages	0.374* (0.170)	0.053 (0.192)
Duration (relative to day)		
Week	-0.038 (0.139)	0.275* (0.118)
Year	-0.749*** (0.150)	-0.738*** (0.261)
Other	-0.563*** (0.108)	-0.412*** (0.105)
Region (relative to London and South East)		
Scotland	-2.204*** (0.236)	-1.677*** (0.242)
Wales	-2.751*** (0.630)	-3.411*** (0.709)
East Anglia	0.009 (0.100)	-0.140 (0.094)
Midlands	-0.845*** (0.108)	-0.801*** (0.103)
North East	-0.911*** (0.140)	-0.934*** (0.132)
North West	-1.049*** (0.142)	-1.035** (0.151)
Other	-0.725*** (0.217)	-0.564* (0.225)
South West	-0.487*** (0.095)	-0.576*** (0.094)

Cost of respectability basket	0.561*** (0.125)	0.436*** (0.124)
Cost of respectability basket squared	0.044** (0.016)	0.077*** (0.017)
Women's daily wage	0.347*** (0.047)	0.343*** (0.048)
Food and board (package 2) x women's daily wage (relative to food only (package 1))	0.153*** (0.028)	0.106*** (0.027)
Food, board and lodging (package 3) x women's annual wage (relative to food only (package 1))	0.350*** (0.018)	0.295*** (0.019)
Food, board, lodging and washing (package 4) x women's annual wage, per day (relative to food only (package 1))	0.502*** (0.018)	0.495*** (0.019)
Sundry provision (package 5) x women's daily wage (relative to food only (package 1))	0.228*** (0.045)	0.178*** (0.045)
year	0.002* (.001)	0.002** (.001)
R-squared (adj)	0.745	0.766
SEE	2.057	1.8299
F	404.602***	392.058***
N	4413	3719

Notes: Dependent variable is the cost of maintenance. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
*** p \leq 0.001, **p \leq 0.01* p \leq 0.05

Sources: See text and online Appendix

The model accounts for around 75 per cent of variation in costs and reassuringly almost all the variables have signs that make sense. Not surprisingly, men, and particularly skilled men, enjoyed more costly maintenance, and groups which included men also cost more than exclusively female or child groups, the beneficial effects of working with men spilling over from wages to perquisites.¹¹³ Differences by source type are only significant in readily explained categories. The generosity of grain liveries confirms that they were geared to family not

¹¹³ Supporting the inclusion of mixed groups with men in the second sample.

individual maintenance, ¹¹⁴ and lower billeting costs that soldiers and the parish poor were thought less than respectable if not downright disreputable. The lower cost of maintenance contracts, corrodies and pensions is more surprising. Perhaps older people were held to need less food and a lower quality housing, or the status of beneficiaries has been overestimated. While weekly upkeep cost marginally more than daily maintenance, annual and other longer-term support is significantly less expensive offering strong evidence for economies of scale. Location too is highly significant. It cost more to board and lodge in the South East than elsewhere except East Anglia (which included Essex) and 'Other' (a residual category with few observations). ¹¹⁵ Maintenance costs are positively, significantly and non-linearly related to the costs of the basket, suggesting that respectability required distance from such a benchmark and that as that as this standard itself increased what was needed to stay aloof increased even more. Women's daily wages are positively, and significantly related to maintenance costs as domestic labour was an input into all packages, in all locations. Even more telling are the significant coefficients on the different packages weighted by women's wages. These show costs rising as a proportion of women's wages if board, then accommodation, and finally washing was included, and the step increases increase in size as suggested by the additional domestic services needed.¹¹⁶

The regression coefficients can be used to reconstruct the costs of specific packages in particular circumstances over time and so circumvent the compositional biases that would distort findings from the raw data. Since the sample is dominated by observations for men and mixed groups, equation 2 provides more reliable estimators, and is used in the reconstructions. Three costings are explored as shown in Figure 3. The first, costing A relates to a semiskilled man who works in the Midlands, and is supported on a daily basis as recorded in accounts. Costing B is also for a semi-skilled, Midlands man but he is

¹¹⁴ The concentration of such cases in the medieval period suggests caution in interpretation.

¹¹⁵ Wales is insufficiently documented in the sample excluding women and children.

¹¹⁶ Malcolmson, English laundresses; Dyer, 'Georgian washerwomen'; Humphries and Thomas, 'Best job'.

supported annually. The big difference is the composition of the maintenance packages. Both include food but costing B only covers board (package 2), whereas A includes lodging and washing (package 4).¹¹⁷

The qualitative evidence from the sources, consistent with the broader literature on consumption, suggests that respectability over time required movement from one package of support to another, as board was added to the simple provision of food, lodging to board, and eventually washing and housecleaning to lodging. These transitions can be included in a linked total costing. Holding constant skill level, (semi-skilled), residence, (Midlands), and allowing for economies of scale via annual provision, assume before 1350, respectable status was supported through a ‘food only’ package but to add some realism and connect with the content of the respectability basket assume too that this involved a relatively generous grain livery. Post 1350, the standards of respectability transition to require boarding, though at this point the costs are taken from accounts not grain liveries. This phase lasts until 1480 when the qualitative evidence suggests that another transition is required, this time to the inclusion of lodging. By 1650, a third and final transition is needed if standards are to keep pace: washing must be added.¹¹⁸ Figure 3 shows all three costings along with the raw data (men only) for comparison.

¹¹⁷ The estimating equations are:

Costing A = 1.947 -.962 -.801 + (.436 x cost of respectability basket) + (.077 x cost of respectability basket²) + (.343 x women’s casual wages) + (.495 x women’s annual wages) + (.002 x year). The estimating equation is: Costing B = 1.947 -.962 -.801 -.660 + (.436 x cost of respectability basket) + (.077 x cost of respectability basket²) + (.343 x women’s casual wages) + (.106 x women’s casual wages) + (.002 x year).

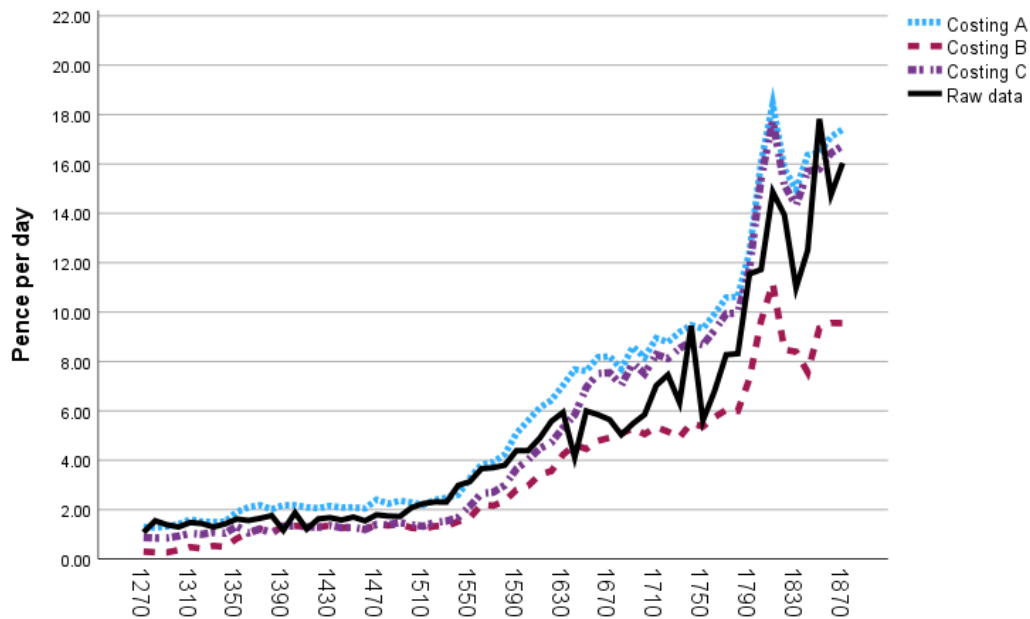
¹¹⁸ The estimating equation is: Costing C = 1.947 -.962 -.801 -.660 + .682 + (.436 x cost of respectability basket) + (.077 x cost of respectability basket²) + (.343 x women’s casual wages) + (.002 x year) IF DECADE < 1360

1.947 -.962 -.801 -.660 + (.436 x cost of respectability basket) + (.077 x cost of respectability basket²) + (.343 x women’s casual wages) + (.106 x women’s casual wages) + (.002 x year IF DECADE ≥ 1360 < 1480

1.947 -.962 -.801 -.660 + (.436 x cost of respectability basket) + (.077 x cost of respectability basket²) + (.343 x women’s casual wages) + (.295 x women’s annual wages, per day) + (.002 x year) IF DECADE ≥ 1480 < 1650

1.947 -.962 -.801 -.660 + (.436 x cost of respectability basket) + (.077 x cost of respectability basket²) + (.343 x women’s casual wages) + (.495 x women’s annual wages, per day) + (.002 x year) IF DECADE ≥ 1650

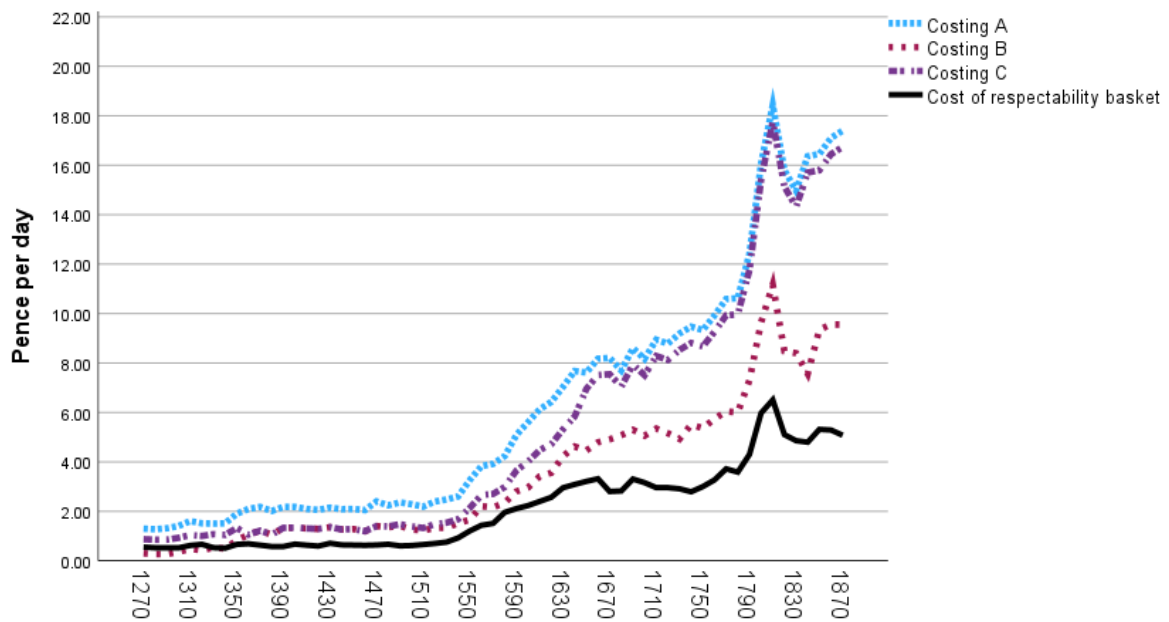
Figure 3: Cost of respectable maintenance, three scenarios, compared with raw data



Source: see text.

Figure 3 shows how the constructed costings smooth the volatility caused by the sample's shifting composition. The differences between the costings relate to the different modelling assumptions; these could be modified to illustrate the shift effects of skill level, region, duration etc., but the specific trajectories depend on the assumptions about the packages of support. Figure 4 removes the raw data but includes instead the cost of the respectability basket for comparison.

Figure 4: Costs of respectable maintenance with transitions across packages compared with costs of respectability basket



Until the Black Death, apart from the generous package costed up in A, there is little difference in the cost of respectable maintenance and of the basket.¹¹⁹ The break comes around 1350 and can be related to the boom in wages after the Black Death, which not only raised consumption standards, as described above, but also increased the cost of domestic labour. Although women did not share in the Golden Age to the same extent as men, their wages were boosted by the initial mortality in 1348 and by the subsequent secondary outbreaks.¹²⁰ At the height of the post plague boom costing B was more than twice the cost of the respectability basket.

There was some convergence in the late 1400s and early 1500s but the cost of respectable maintenance even when limited to the provision of board (as in costing B) never fell back level with the basket, and from c.1590 grew at a faster rate opening another gap. It is around this time that accounts of a respectable

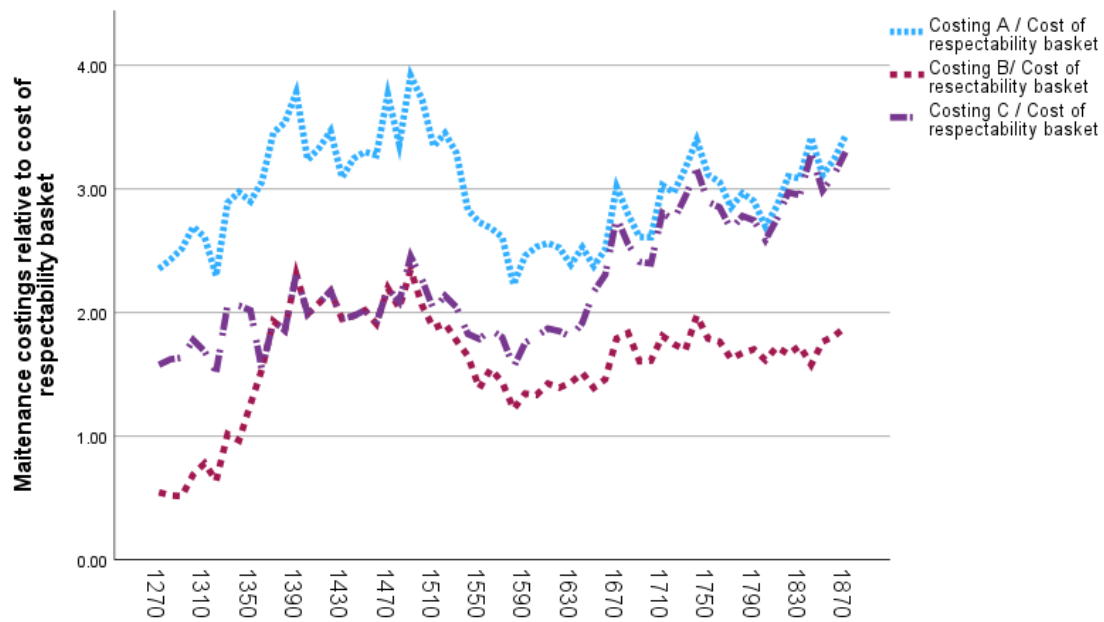
¹¹⁹ Indeed, before the Black Death costing B is less than that of the basket.

¹²⁰ Humphries and Weisdorf, 'Women's wages'.

living began to insist on a further improvement in diet, additional household services, and greater comfort. Although the civil war interrupted rising aspirations, growth subsequently resumed and a new divergence coincided with the well-documented appearance of new goods, reflected in respectable maintenance but missing in the basket. Retrenchment marks all series in the eighteenth century, though earlier and more severe in the costs of the basket, creating another era of divergence. The modest level of maintenance implied in costing B eventually also plateaued, but the gap was not closed, indeed for more generous maintenance involving more extensive household services, as given in A, the cost gap widened, to around three times that of the basket by the end of the century. In this case, the contemporaneous growth of women's wages, and so the costs of domestic labour, put additional pressure on the expenses associated with respectability.

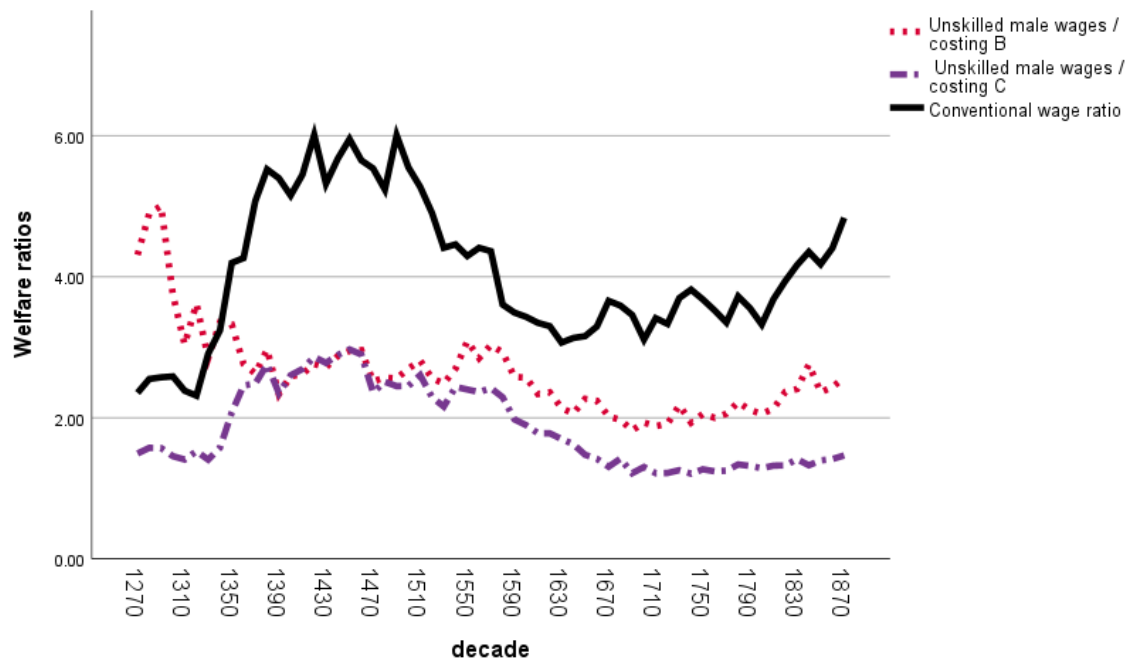
When shifts from one package to another are modelled, the gap between the costs of respectable maintenance and the respectability basket widens. Beginning around 1.5 times the basket before the Black Death the costs of respectable maintenance increase to more than twice the basket during the Golden Age. While the late medieval era and Tudor years see some convergence, costs remain almost twice those of the basket. After the civil war there was a new era of divergence with the costs of respectable maintenance increasing faster than the basket, climbing to 2.5 times the latter by the middle of the eighteenth century, see Figure 5 which shows the ratios of the different maintenance costs to those of the basket.

Figure 5: Maintenance cost relative to costs of the respectability basket



The greater costs of respectable maintenance compared with the basket obviously put pressure on male wages. Figure 6 compares a conventional wage ratio, rural male wages divided by the cost of the respectability basket, with the ratio of the same wages to the costing of a modest maintenance, B, and the expansive upkeep described in C.

Figure 6: Maintenance cost welfare ratios compared with conventional welfare ratio



While the Black Death impacted what was understood by respectability, its cost was less elastic than male wages, creating an (albeit muted) golden age. But this situation did not last and the extent to which unskilled male wages could support two respectability packages became increasingly uncertain by the late 1400s as the inputs into respectability became increasingly costly. Nor was there any sustained recovery from then on as aspirations did more than keep pace with wages. Clark’s unskilled workers could barely support themselves at a respectable level let alone provide for their families. Of course, these workers’ wages would be lower than those of the men pursuing the kind of lifestyle depicted particularly in costing C.¹²¹ Families supported by men on unskilled wages likely reduced their standards, and fell back to a ‘barebones’ level. Or they worked harder and longer to live respectably. Post 1650, even men on better wages probably had to follow suit if they were to purchase respectability for a whole family. Here then is a motive for industriousness that does not rely on the temptations of individual commodities, and recruits from skilled artisans

¹²¹ The regression coefficient for skill level suggests that unskilled men’s maintenance costs would be .712 pence per day less than costing B, however this deduction would be heavily offset for locations other than the Midlands and completely offset considering the costs in the South, which is where many of Clark’s wage observations come from.

and the middling sort, people who aspired to a better life but also had the potential to drive growth. Moreover, as Malthus noted, the quest to better their condition provided English men and women with a motive to delay marriage, and perhaps limit fertility within marriage, so contributing to reduced demographic pressures and enabling the transition from Malthusian stagnation to modern economic growth. These links from aspiration to industriousness and prudence means that the study goes beyond offering an alternative lens on living standards to provide fresh insight into the wellsprings of long-run development.

A speculation on the contribution of domestic labour to total income

The regression analysis identifies women's wages as a significant factor in maintenance when this was provided commercially. Even if only providing basic foodstuffs, .343 of a unit rise in women's wages was passed on increasing the cost of support. This suggests that it took around a third of women's daily working time to transform the raw materials of a food package into a respectable living. If board was added, then lodging, then washing, maintenance took .449, .638, and finally .838 of a woman's daily paid hours of work, in the latter two cases some of the time provided by a 'professional' landlady/washerwoman. Full maintenance for one man required almost a whole day of female paid labour. These estimates of time use ground an assessment of the contributions of *unpaid* domestic labour to national income.

The first step is to move from the time needed to sustain individuals to that required to support families. If the necessary domestic labour was proportional to the number of adult male baskets needed to maintain a representative family. then the standard assumption is that it would need to be multiplied by 3-3.5. Assuming economies of scale in household consumption and production, it is plausible that (conservatively) only twice as much domestic labour time would be needed for family reproduction but that this effort was needed 365 days in the year. Time series of women's wages can then be used to value the labour time.¹²²

¹²² Humphries and Weisdorf, 'Women's wages'.

The next step is to identify the number of families at different points in time both reliant on *unpaid* domestic labour and able to secure *respectable* livings. The well-known English social tables, by King in 1688, Massie in 1759 and Colquhoun in 1801-2, as revised by various historians, alongside Bruce Campbell's social table for 1290, enable such families to be identified and counted.¹²³ Allen's revised tables use family size to identify the presence of servants. Led by the sources, Allen assumed an average family consisted of 4.5 related people and that families bigger than this benchmark contained servants. These families were then excluded as their housework was provided through the market. Families falling below the poverty line or whose heads' occupations did not suggest respectable status ('common seamen', 'cottagers & paupers', e.g.) were also dropped. The rest, middling-sort households above the poverty line but too small to have contained servants, were assumed to have relied on unpaid domestic labour provided by family members to deliver a respectable lifestyle.¹²⁴ The methodology is extended to Bruce Campbell's medieval table.

The final step builds on the analysis of the evolution of consumption to recognize that different levels of maintenance and so of domestic service were needed for respectability at the widely separated times of the social tables: food and board before the Black Death, food, board and lodging in 1688 at the time of King's survey, and food, board, lodging and washing, at the later times of Massie's and Colquhoun's. The results are shown in table 2 below.

¹²³ Lindert and Williamson, 'Revising'; Allen, 'Class structure'; Campbell, *Great Transition*, pp.262-3.

¹²⁴ Where Allen's revised tables show 0.5 servants per family, half the totals were included in the estimates of numbers reliant on unpaid family labour, while all families of lesser freeholders and farmers were included as the servants in their households were assumed to be farm servants, see Allen, 'Class structure', Appendix Table A1

Table 2: Valuation of unpaid domestic labour

Date	Source of table	Maintenance package	Value-added by unpaid domestic labour to maintenance, £ per annum for single adult male/for family	Estimated number of 'respectable' households without servants (per cent total households)	Value-added by domestic labour as per cent of total household income
1290	Campbell, 2016	Food and board	0.62/1.24	300,000 (27.4)	8.9
1688	Allen, 2019 (revision of Gregory King)	Food, board and lodging	5.67/11.35	504,770 (36.3)	10.3
1759	Allen, 2019 (revision of Joseph Massie)	Food, board, lodging and washing	9.34/18.69	572,860 (37.2)	14.3
1801-2	Allen, 2019 (revision of John Colquhoun)	Food, board, lodging and washing	14.32/28.64	537,645 (24.1)	7.5

Three important qualifications must be made. First, the classifications in the various social tables vary, and even with Allen's helpful revisions it remains difficult to compute the number of households reaching up to respectability but remaining reliant on unpaid domestic work. The numbers are tentative. In particular the drastically decreased contribution in 1801-2 mainly derives from the reduced number of servant-less but decent families estimated from applying Allen's methodology to Colquhoun's snapshot of England in 1801-2. If such families represented a similar slice of the population as in 1759, although the contribution would still be attenuated, it would have represented c. 12 per cent of total income. Second, these estimates are limited to the domestic labour required to transform basic inputs into maintenance packages. Although they take account of improving standards and the extra work these created for unpaid family members, they neglect the value of work additional to domestic service

but performed gratis in support of the family economy. Moreover, they exclude childcare. Third, although families that lacked the income and status associated with respectability are excluded from the calculations on the grounds that the domestic work required to turn their barebones baskets into livings would be negligible, it might well be that women in these families had to work particularly long hours to secure bare bones survival from the meagre provisions of the subsistence basket and that these hours had some opportunity cost. Similarly, women in many of the household with servants probably also worked to manage, augment and enhance the services provided commercially, contributions again ignored here.

Thus, this first attempt to estimate the historic value of unpaid domestic work is provisional and the findings must be read with caution. But omissions and biases lead in the direction of under not over estimation, which supports the claim that the historic value of unpaid domestic labour was far from insignificant and is ignored at historians' peril.

Conclusion

The paper makes contributions in several different areas of economic history. First, it provides pioneer estimates of the long-run costs of providing food, board, lodging and washing for persons of good standing. These charges are taken to indicate the costs of a socially and culturally defined *respectable* lifestyle. Essentially, the approach endogenizes the materiality of respectability and reads its value from the market signals of the past. So, second, it provides an alternative approach to the cost of living, which, while not replacing conventional indexes, has some advantages. It reflects changes in the composition and kind of goods and services that were in the past considered essential for decency, and in the costs of the domestic labour needed to transform this changing collection of commodities into a decorous lifestyle. In this way it circumvents the problems with Laspeyres cost of living indices relating to new goods and to shifting expectations, and simultaneously exposes the importance of domestic work. A

third contribution is that comparisons between maintenance costs and the costs of the respectability basket relative to men's wages provide a fresh perspective on living standards. Periods of divergence identify eras when new or improved goods and services, edged into respectable livings, and became reflected in costs, sometimes muting gains implied in conventional welfare ratios. The fifth contribution is that this alternative history helps to explain long run economic change. The quest for respectability through its pressure on wages contributed to industriousness, though this perhaps took a different turn to that anticipated by de Vries, for it was upwardly mobile, able and ambitious men, like George Heywood and John Harrower, who were motivated to work harder, and the inhabitants of Mokyr's upper tail of human capital, who were spurred to enterprise and innovation.¹²⁵ For women, on the other hand, respectability involved increasing demands of a traditional kind as domestic labour, whether wages or unwaged, increased in intensity, probably adding additional hours to any time spent in the labour market. And this raises a final more speculative point. The regression identifies the time and cost of the housework required to support respectability in different contexts, and so provides a market equivalent for the value of *unpaid* domestic service. A computation limited to middling sort and aspirant working-class families suggests that its value was not insignificant and nor did it change in line with total income. Further work imputing the historical values of unpaid domestic service from market equivalents would provide wholly new insight into women's contribution to economic growth and wellbeing, a vital task for the future.

¹²⁵ Mokyr, 'Holy land'.

References

Secondary and Printed Primary Sources

- Airs, Malcolm, Some Social and Economic Aspects of Country House Building in England, 1500-1640. DPhil. Thesis, Oxford, 1971.
- Allen, R. C., 'The Great Divergence in European wages and prices from the middle ages to the first world war', *Explorations in Economic History*, 38, (2001), pp. 411-47.
- Allen, R. C., 'Pessimism preserved: real wages in the British industrial revolution', Oxford University, Department of Economics working paper no. 314 (2007).
- Allen, R. C., *The British industrial revolution in global perspective* (Cambridge, 2009).
- Antonopulos, R. and Hirway, I., eds., *Unpaid work and the economy: Gender, time use and poverty in developing countries* (London, 2010).
- Ashford, M. A., *Life of a licensed victualler's daughter* (London, 1844).
- Barker, H., and Hamlett, J., 'Living above the shop: Home, business, and family in the English "industrial revolution"', *Journal of Family History*, 35 (2010), pp. 311-28.
- Barker, H., *Family and business during the industrial revolution* (Oxford, 2017).
- Barker, H., and Hughes, D., eds., *Business and family in the north of England during the early industrial revolution: Records of the lives of men and women in trade, 1788-1832* (Oxford, 2020).
- Bassino, J-P., and Ma, D., 'Japanese unskilled wages in international perspective, 1741-1913', *Research in Economic History* (2006), pp. 229-48.
- Batstone, E., 'The hierarchy of maintenance and the maintenance of hierarchy', in A. Murcott, ed., *The sociology of food and eating* (Aldershot, 1983), pp. 45-53.
- Beneria, L., 'The enduring debate over unpaid labour', *International Labour Review* no. 3 (1999), pp. 287-309.
- Bennett, J., Untitled autobiographical manuscript, Bristol Record Office, no date.
- Berg, M., and Clifford, H., eds., *Consumers and luxury: Consumer culture in Europe 1650-1850* (Manchester, 1999).
- Berg, M., *Luxury & pleasure in eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2005).
- Bird, M., ed., *The diary of Mary Hardy, 1. 1773-1809* (Kingston upon Thames, 2013).
- Britnell, R., ed., *Durham priory manorial accounts* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, , 2014).
- Broadberry, S., et al. *British economic growth 1270-1870* (Cambridge, 2015).
- Claridge, J., Delabastita, V., and Gibbs, S., 'Wages and the middle ages: Its not (all) about the money', London School of Economics, Department of Economic History, Working Papers, 2023.
- Clark, C., 'The economics of housework', *Bulletin of the Institute of Statistics* 20 (1958), pp. 205-211.
- Clark, E., 'Some aspects of social security in medieval England', *Journal of Family History* 7, 4 (1982), pp. 307-321.
- Clark, G., 'Price history of English agriculture, 1209-1914', *Research in Economic History* 22 (2004), pp. 41-124.

- Clark, G., 'Condition of the working-class in England, 1209-2004', *Journal of Political Economy* 113 (2005), pp. 1307-40.
- Crowley, J.E. *The invention of comfort: Sensibilities and design in early modern Britain and early America* (Baltimore, 2000).
- Davis, C. T., *Wandsworth churchwardens' accounts from 1558-1573* (London, 1902).
- Davis, D., *The case of labourers in husbandry, stated and considered in three parts with an appendix containing a collection of accounts showing the earnings and expenses of labouring families in different parts of the kingdom* (London, 1795).
- Derock, D., 'Hidden in plain sight: Unpaid household services and the politics of GDP measurement', *New Political Economy* 26, 1 (2021), pp. 20-35.
- Devine, T., *Farm servants and labour in lowland Scotland 1770-1914* (Edinburgh, 1984).
- Dils, J., ed. , 'Reading St Laurence churchwardens' accounts, 1498-1570', *Berkshire Record Society* 20 (2013), pp.
- Dyer, C., 'Changes in diet in the late middle ages: The case of harvest workers', *Agricultural History Review* 36, 1 (1988), pp. 21-37.
- Dyer, C., *Standards of living in the later middle ages. Social change in England c. 1200-1520* (Cambridge, 1989).
- Dyer, J., 'Georgian washerwomen: Tales from the tub from the long eighteenth-century', *Continuity and Change* 36, 1 (2021), pp. 89-110.
- Federico, G., Nuvolari, A., and Vasta, M., 'The origins of the Italian regional divide: Evidence from real wages, 1861-1913', *Journal of Economic History* 79, 1 (2019), pp. 63–98.
- Folbre, N., Murray-Close, M., and Suh, J., 'Equivalence scales for extended income in the US', *Review of Economics of the Household* 16 (2018), pp. 189-227.
- Fox, A., 'Food, drink and social distinction in early modern England', in S. Hindle, A. Shepard and J. Watter, eds., *Remaking English society: Social relations and social change in early modern England* (Woodbridge, 2013).
- French, K.L., *Household goods and good households in late medieval London: Consumption after the plague* (Philadelphia, 2021).
- Fussell, G.E., ed., *Robert Loder's farm accounts, 1610-1620* (London, 1936).
- Gardiner, M.F., and Whittick, C., eds., 'Accounts and records of the manor of Mote in Iden, 1442-1551, 1673', *Sussex Record Society* 92 (2008).
- Gary, K., *Work, wages, and income. Remuneration and labor patterns in southern Sweden, 1500-1850*, PhD Thesis, Lund, 2018.
- Godfrey, W.H., ed., 'The book of John Rowe, steward of the manors of Lord Bergaveny, 1597 -1622', *Sussex Record Society* XXXIV, (1928).
- Goodall, M., *Consumption of sugar in the British Atlantic world, 1650-1720*. DPhil. Thesis, Oxford, 2022.
- Harrower, J., *Diary of John Harrower, 1773-1776*, Early Journal Content on JSTOR, https://archive.org/stream/jstor-1834690/1834690_djvu.txt.
- Hattendorf, J.B., Knight, R.J.B., Pearsall, A.W.H., Rodger, N.A.M., and Till, G., eds., *British naval documents. 1204-1960* (Aldershot, Hants., 1993).
- Hawrylyshyn, O., 'The Value of household services. A survey of empirical estimates', *Review of Income and Wealth* 22, 2 (1976), pp. 101-131.

- Hickley, A., 'John Aldrich of Eaton farm accounts, 1663-1667', *Norfolk Record Society* LXX (2006).
- Hobhouse, E., 'Churchwardens' accounts of Croscombe, Pilton, Patton, Tintinhull, Morebath and St Michael's, Bath, ranging from AD 1349 to 1560', *Somerset Record Society* XXVI (1890).
- Hodgett, G.A.J., ed., 'The state of the ex-religious and former chantry priests in the diocese of Lincoln, 1547-74', *Lincoln Record Society* 53 (1957-8).
- Honeyman, K., *Child workers in England, 1780-1820. Parish apprentices and the making of the early industrial labour force* (Aldershot, Hampshire, 2007).
- Homans, G.C., *English villagers of the thirteenth century* (Cambridge, MA., 1941).
- Horrell, S., 'Household consumption patterns and the consumer price index, England, 1260-1869', *Economic History Review*, early view, doi.org/10.1111/her.13236.
- Horrell, S., and Humphries, J., 'Children's work and wages, 1280-1860', *Explorations in Economic History* 73 (2019), pp. 1012-72.
- Horrell, S., Humphries, J., and Weisdorf, J., 'Beyond the male breadwinner: Life-cycle living standards of intact and disrupted English working families, 1260-1850', *Economic History Review* 75, 2 (2022), pp. 530-560.
- Howkins, A., 'Peasants, servants and labourers: The marginal workforce in British agriculture c.1870-1914', *Agricultural History Review* 42 (1994), pp. 49-62.
- Humphries, J., 'The lure of aggregates and the pitfalls of the patriarchal perspective: A critique of the high wage interpretation of the British industrial revolution', *Economic History Review* 66, 3 (2013), pp. 693-714.
- Humphries, J., and Weisdorf, J., 'The wages of women in England, 1260-1850', *Journal of Economic History* 75, 2 (1915), pp. 405-47.
- Humphries, J., and Thomas, R., "'The best job in the world": Breadwinning and the capture of household labor in nineteenth and early twentieth-century British coalmining', *Feminist Economics* 29, 1 (2023), pp. 97-140.
- Jefferson, T. and King, J.E., "'Never intended to be a theory of everything"; domestic labor in neoclassical and Marxian Economics', *Feminist Economics* (2001), pp. 71-101.
- Kumon, Y., 'The labor-intensive path: Wages, incomes, and the work year in Japan, 1610-1890', *Journal of Economic History* 82, 2 (2022), pp. 368-402.
- Lane, J., *Apprenticeship in England, 1600-1915* (London, 1996).
- Larson, P.L., *Rethinking the Great Transition: Community and economic growth in county Durham, 1349-1660* (Oxford, 2022).
- Lindström, J., and Hasson Jansson, K., Fiebranz, R., Jacobsson, B., and Ågren, M., 'Mistress or maid: the structure of women's work in Sweden, 1550-1800', *Continuity and Change* 32, 2 (2017), pp. .
- Lemire, B., *Fashion's favourite: The cotton trade and the consumer in Britain, 1660-1800* (Oxford, 1991).
- Lloyd, P.S., *Food and identity in England, 1540-1640. Eating to impress* (London, 2015).
- McArthur, E.A., 'Prices at Woodstock in 1604', *English Historical Review* (1898), pp. 711-716.

- McKendrick, N., Brewer, J., Plumb, J.H., *The birth of a consumer society: The commercialization of eighteenth-century England* (London, 1982).
- Mack, J., and Lansley, S., *Poor Britain* (London, 1985).
- Malanima, P., 'When did England overtake Italy? Medieval and early modern divergence in prices and wages', *European Review of Economic History* 17, 1 (2013), pp. 45–70.
- Malcolmson, P.E., *English laundresses: A social history* (Urbana, 1986).
- Mansell, C., *Female servants in early modern England* (London, forthcoming).
- Martin, J.D., ed., 'The account book of Clement Taylor of Finsthwaite, 1712-1753', *Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, CXXXV (1997).
- Magagna, V., 'Food and politics: The power of bread in European culture' in B. Kumin, ed., *A cultural history of food in the early modern age* (London, 2012).
- Melacrinis Fiore, F., Explorations in Italian Little Divergence before unification. Wages and prices in the south of Italy from 1800 to 1860, PhD Thesis, Rome, 2021.
- Messac, L., 'Outside the economy: Women's work and feminist economics in the construction and critique of national income accounting', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 46, 3 (2018), pp. 552-578.
- Mitchell, W.C., et al., *Income in the US, Its Amount and Distribution, 1909-1919* (Cambridge, MA., NBER, 1921).
- Mokyr, J., "'The holy land of industrialism": Rethinking the industrial revolution', *Journal of the British Academy*, 9, (2021), pp.223-247.
- Muldrew, C., *Food, energy and the creation of industriousness: Work and material culture in agrarian England, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2011).
- Nicholls, A., 'A comfortable lodging and one shilling and four pence a day: The material benefits of an almshouse place', *Family and Community History*, 15, 2 (2012), pp. 81-94.
- Nicholls, A., *Almshouses in Early Modern England. Charitable Housing in the Mixed Economy of Welfare, 1550-1725* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2017).
- Northeast, P., 'Boxford churchwardens' accounts. 1530-1561', *Suffolk Record Society*, 23 (1982).
- Orde, A., ed., 'Matthew and George Culley. Farming letters, 1798-1804', *Surtees Society*, 210 (2006).
- Pelling, M., 'Appearance and reality: Barber surgeons, the body and disease', in A.L. Beier and R. Finla, eds., *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London, 1986) pp. 82-112.
- Penney, N., ed., *The household account book of Sarah Fell of Swarthmoor Hall* (Cambridge, 1920).
- Phelps-Brown, E.H., and Hopkins, S., 'Seven centuries of the prices of consumables, compared with builders' wage rates', *Economica* 23, 92 (1956), pp. 296-314.
- Phelps-Brown, E.H., and Hopkins, S., 'Seven centuries of building wages', *Economica* 22, 87 (1955), pp. 195-206.
- Pilbeam, N., and Nelson, I., eds., 'Poor law records of mid Sussex', *Sussex Record Society* 83 (1999).
- Putnam, B.H., *The enforcement of the statutes of labourers during the first decades after the Black Death, 1349-59* (London, 1908).

- Reid, M., *Economics of household production* (New York, 1934).
- Rawcliffe, C., 'A marginal occupation? The medieval laundress and her work', *Gender and History*, 21, 1 (2009), pp. 147-169
- Rogers, J.E.T., *A history of agriculture and prices in England*, Vol. VI. (Oxford, 1887).
- Rota, M., and Weisdorf, J., 'Italy and the little divergence in wages and prices: Evidence from stable employment in rural areas', *Economic History Review*, 74, 2 (2020), pp. 449-470.
- Salzman, L.F., *Building in England* (Oxford, 1952).
- Sear, J., and Sneath, K., *The origins of the consumer revolution in England* (Abingdon, Oxford, 2020).
- Searle, E., and Ross, B., eds., *Accounts of the cellarers of Battle Abbey, 1275-1513* (Sydney, 1967).
- Sen, A., *The standard of living* (Cambridge, 1987).
- Short, B., 'The decline of living-in servants in the transition to capitalist farming, A critique of the evidence', *Sussex Archaeological Collection*, 122 (1984), pp. 147-64.
- Smith, R.M., 'The manorial court and the elderly tenant in late medieval England', in M. Pelling and R.M. Smith, eds., *Life, death and the edlderly. Historical perspectives* (London, 1999), pp. 39-61.
- Smith, W.D., *Consumption and the making of respectability* (New York, 2002).
- Stiglitz, J.P., Sen, A., and Fitoussi, J-P., *Mismeasuring our lives: Why GDP doesn't add up* (New York, 2010).
- Thirsk, J., *Food in early modern England; Phases, fads, and fashion, 1500-1760* (London, 2006).
- Thomas, K., 'Cleanliness and godliness in early modern England', in A. Fletcher and P. Roberts, eds., *Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994). pp. 56-83.
- Thomas, J.B., *Shop boy. An autobiography* (London, 1983).
- Thomson, A., ed., 'The impact of the first civil war on Hertfordshire, 1642-1647', *Hertfordshire Record Society*, 23 (2007).
- Townsend, P., *Poverty in the United Kingdom: A survey of household resources and standards of living* (Harmondsworth, 1979).
- de Vries, J., *The industrious revolution: Consumer behaviour and the household economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008).
- Wagman, B., and Folbr, N., 'Household services and economic growth in the United States, 1870-1930', *Feminist Economics*, 2, 1 (1996), pp. 43-66.
- Walkden, P., *A diary from January 1733 to March 1734* (Chipping Local History Society, Settle, 2000).
- Waterman, E.L., 'Some new evidence on wage assessments in the eighteenth century', *English Historical Review* 43, 171 (1928), pp. 398-408.
- Whittle, J., and Hailwood, M., 'The gender division of labour in early modern England', *Economic History Review*, 73 (2020), pp. 3-32.
- Whittle, J., 'A critique of approaches to "domestic work": Women, work and the pre-industrial economy', *Past & Present*, 243 (2019), pp. 35-70.
- Woodward, D., *Men at work. Labourers and building craftsmen in the towns of northern England, 1450-1750* (Cambridge, 1995).

Young, A., *A Six Weeks Tour Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales* (London, 1772).

Primary Sources:

British History Online

M J Angold, G C Baugh, Marjorie M Chibnall, D C Cox, D T W Price, Margaret Tomlinson and B S Trinder, 'Houses of Augustinian canons: Abbey of Lilleshall', in *A History of the County of Shropshire: Volume 2*, ed. A T Gaydon and R B Pugh (London, 1973), pp. 70-80. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol2/pp69-81> [accessed 11 August 2022].

'Houses of Benedictine monks: The cathedral priory of Bath', in *A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1911), pp. 69-81. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol2/pp69-81> [accessed 11 August 2022].

'Houses of Austin canons: Priory of St Denis, Southampton', in *A History of the County of Hampshire: Volume 2*, ed. H Arthur Doubleday and William Page (London, 1903), pp. 160-164. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/hants/vol2/pp160-164> [accessed 11 August 2022].

'Pleas and evidences: Fos.69-89', in *The Ledger Book of Vale Royal Abbey*, ed. John Brownbill (Manchester, 1914), pp. 149-166. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lancs-ches-record-soc/vol68/pp149-166> [accessed 12 August 2022].

Bodleian Library

Oswestry Parish Church. The Churchwardens' Accounts, 1579-1613. Transcribed by William Day, GA Salop c. 12, 1970.

Stanford-in-the Vale Churchwardens' Accounts 1552-1725. Transcribed by Violet M. Howse, GA. Berks 80 550, 1987.

Cornwall Record Office,
CA/B47/55

Cumbria Archive Centre
WQ/SR/264/19-20

Derbyshire Record Office
D779B/T 140

Devon Archives
4930B/L/22

East Sussex Record Office
SAS/G28/15

Hereford Record Office
CM20/25-27

Hertfordshire Record Office
DE/W/156

Lancashire Archives
DDX 243/2/35

Lincolnshire Archive, HOTCHKIN 2/1/18
Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust
BRT/1/3/40
Sheffield City Archives,
CM/393
Warwickshire Record Office
CR/908/200/7-7
Wiltshire Record Office
Estate and Household Bills (Talbot at Lacock)
2664/1- 2664/3

Appendix table 1: Types of source with examples of observations

Type	Example
1. Accounts: costs of workers' board and lodging	In 1548, the Boxford Churchwardens employed Thomas Armysbye for 'dawbynge of the town shopps'. He was paid 12d for 3 days work, his 'meate & dryke' was costed separately at 9d, and his bed at 1d (Northeast, ed., 1982)
2. Accounts: differences in wages between with and without board and lodging	In 1578 at Stanford in the Vale, a thatcher's servant was paid 8d for two days work 'with meat' in addition, while in 1580 he was paid 5d per day but had to 'boorde himselffe' (G.A. Berks, 80 550)
3. Accounts: direct payments to providers of board and lodging	Admiralty records record payments c.1562 to 'Joan Kinge, Alice Bary, Elizabeth Ffrances, Joan Rocke and eighteen other persons of Deptford, Greenwich, Lewisham, and thereabouts for the lodging of 170 shipwrights, caulkers, sawyers, smiths.....'. (Hattendorf, et al, 1993).
4. Estimates by social commentators	Arthur Young estimated harvest board in the 1770s as high as 10d per day (Young, 1772)
5. Grain liveries	In 1303-5, on various Durham Priory manors ploughmen received 4.33 quarters of wheat, which Richard Britnell (2014) valued at 21s per year.
6. Billeting soldiers, and sailors, etc.	Billeting in Hertfordshire of 5 men for 3 days was costed at 7s 6d in 1643 (Thomson, 2007).
7. Maintenance contracts, corrodies, pensions, etc.	Agnes att Wode, 'the lord's beadswoman' on the Manor of Mote was boarded with a servant for 3 months in 1479 at a cost of 2s 6d (Gardiner and Richardson, 2008).
8. Wage Assessments: differences in wages with and without food and drink	A 1724 Kent wage assessment determined that the 'second sort' of artificers were to get 14d per day in summer or 7d and food (Waterman, 1928)
9. Board wages	In February 1756, Duke Duck received 15s for 5 weeks 'board wages' alongside his regular remuneration for the same time period (Wiltshire Record Office, 2664/2/1B/10).

Source: see text