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## NOTES

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### *The Distribution of Wealth in Belgium in 1814-1815*

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It is extremely difficult to find substantive statistical information dealing with the distribution of wealth in a country in the revolutionary period at the end of the eighteenth century. There are organized statistics dealing with property values for the whole of England and Wales in 1798, Castile and Spain in 1797, and the United States in 1798, but these do not tell us the number of properties owned by any one individual nor the total of all his wealth. The only complete wealth distribution that is available is that for Denmark in the year 1789. Several estimates, based on the estates of the deceased, have appeared for major cities in France in the 1820's and for the United States in 1776, but little has been done with wealth data for the living.

It is for this reason that we should examine carefully the data of Dr. F. G. C. Beterams dealing with the wealth of the richest 1,818 individuals in Belgium in 1814-1815.<sup>1</sup> Detailed studies can be made of the ages, occupations, and numbers of children of these men.<sup>2</sup> When this top group is compared with its counterpart in Denmark, strong similarities in wealth can be noted. Inferences

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. F.G.C. BETERAMS, *The High Society Belgo-Luxembourgeoise au Début du Gouvernement de Guillaume Ier, Roi des Pays-Bas (1814-1815)* (Wetteren, Belgium: Imprimerie Cultura, 1973). Dr. Beterams has been kind enough to read an earlier version of this paper and to offer several meaningful suggestions. It would be possible to study the landed properties handled by each individual throughout his life by consulting mortgage registrations and at his death by examining records of successions.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* The following table is presented to show the sources of my figures as well as the figures listed by Beterams:

can also be made concerning the entire distribution of wealth which are based on fascinating patterns demonstrated within the élite group of 1,818.

### The Data

Dr. Beterams has published the lists of individuals who, in 1814-1815, possessed the greatest wealth (*les plus imposés*) in various regions largely encompassing Belgium's eight departments. The annual value or rent of the vast majority of individuals was reported for 1814, and these are all included in our analysis for six of the eight departments or provinces. In the case of Escaut, I have substituted the 1815 data because many more individuals were listed; for Ourthe, I have substituted the 1815 information because wealth figures were not stated for 1814. Data for the 1,818 wealthy men, listed by department, are presented in Table 1. The men of greatest wealth were found in the department of Dyle which included Bruxelles.

The overall distribution of wealth among the 1,818 men to be analysed can be arranged in descending order of wealth, as presented in Table 2. All but a few were above 10,000 F; the modal class is between 2,000 and 4,000 F, with decreasing frequencies appearing above that level. It is generally true that the data represent the upper tail of the frequency curve. The truncation takes place effectively above 2,000 F except for a few in our list below this level and perhaps a few dozen unreported cases between 2,000 - 3,000 F for La Dyle. Later we shall extrapolate from the information for the upper tail to make an estimate of the wealth distribution for all people.

A basic premiss of this paper is that the inequality of wealth exhibited within the group of 1,818 is strategic in demonstrating the general level of inequality

Department	(a) Beterams' list giving children in family	(b) Number in (a) and others stating wealth	Page source in Beterams
Dyle	173	167	1 - 22
Deux Nèthes	453	376	74 - 95
Escaut	222	533 *	167 - 202
Lys	276	266	204 - 227
Jemappes	179	180	229 - 252
Sambre-et-Meuse	95	94	296 - 307
Ourthe	105	114 *	377 - 393
Meuse-Inférieure	928	88	435 - 445
	1,595	1,818	

\* 1815 data used in place of 1814 data.

Note: A few individuals without wealth were listed.

TABLE 1

THE AVERAGE ANNUAL WEALTH OF THE RICH  
FOR THE EIGHT DEPARTMENTS OF BELGIUM, 1814-1815

Department	Arrondissement with greatest number	Number of rich	Average wealth (F)	Inequality coefficient, G	Range of wealth values (F)
Dyle	Bruxelles	167	25,600	.49	400,000 - 3,000
Deux-Nèthes	Anvers	376	10,200	.48	80,000 - 400
Escaut	Gand	533	13,100	.51	90,000 - 1,000
Lys	Bruges, Courtrai	266	8,200	.44	80,000 - 400
Jemappes	Tournai, Mons	180	14,300	.50	120,000 - 1,000
Ourthe	Liège	114	12,900	.56	150,000 - 1,000
Sambre-et-Meuse	Namur	94	8,500	.51	50,000 - 800
Meuse-Inférieure	Maestricht	88	8,600	.46	50,000 - 800
		1,818	12,582	.517	400,000 - 400

Source: Dr. F.G.C. BETERAMS, *The High Society Belgo-Luxembourgeoise au Début du Gouvernement de Guillaume Ier, Roi des Pays-Bas (1814-1815)* (Wetteren, Belgium: Imprimerie Cultura, 1973).

TABLE 2

THE WEALTHIEST 1,818 MEN, CLASSIFIED BY WEALTH CLASS

Wealth class, in F	Number of men in wealth class
400,000	1
100,000 - 199,000	6
50,000 - 99,000	70
20,000 - 49,999	262
10,000 - 19,999	429
5,000 - 9,999	492
2,000 - 4,999	479
1,000 - 1,999	63
400 - 999	16
	1,818

Source: BETERAMS, *The High Society Belgo-Luxembourgeoise*, pp. 1-445. As Table 1 shows, there is underrepresentation in the case of La Dyle which reported values to only 3,000 F.

of the entire labour force of the economy, even though it represents but 0.3 percent of the population of 600,000 adult males in Belgium. The hypothesis must be that Belgium would exhibit conditions of a traditional economy, with strong levels of wealth inequality in general; this would be reflected even within our subset of 1,818, or 0.3 percent of the population ( $N = 0.003$ ), and the argument would be that dispersion should be large, no matter how we measure it. We will be able to test our hypothesis by comparing this dispersion with that exhibited within the top groups in such diverse areas and times as Denmark in 1789, England and Wales in 1798, and the United States in 1860.

A standard procedure for measuring inequality is to consider all of the possible differences in wealth between one man and another, and to express the average difference ( $\Delta$ ) as a proportion of the mean ( $\bar{X}$ ). The Gini coefficient of inequality is defined as  $G = \Delta/2\bar{X}$  (the 1/2 was introduced to adapt the measure to a graphic technique). In the case of our 1,818, we have  $G = 13,010 F/2(12,582 F) = .517$ ; for the 1,802 the 1,802 men above 1,000 F,  $G$  is .513. This measure ( $G$ ) varies between 0 (perfect equality), when all persons have the same wealth, and 1.0 (perfect inequality), when one man possesses all of the wealth.

The wealth distribution in Denmark is known in its entirety for the year 1789, a date reflecting an economy before any appreciable liberalization of land tenure policies or radical changes in traditional methods or institutions. The population of adult Danish males 26 and older was about 210,000 in 1789, and we can examine the inequality level of the top 600 men, or 0.3 percent of the labour force. It is not surprising that  $G$  was .503, a level effectively the same as that in Belgium. One must make comparisons where data are available and this situation presents itself for wealth of the top 0.3 percent of men 26 and older in the United States in 1860, a time reflecting rapid economic change and development. In this case,  $G$  is .30 for total estate for  $N_w = 0.003$ .<sup>3</sup>

Inequality levels in other countries generally are not known. A very laborious count of the number of properties owned by England's most affluent man in 1798, the Duke of Bedford, showed that he owned 319 properties whose value constituted 0.07 percent of the property wealth for the country at the time. This proportion far surpasses that of the 0.02 percent share of Belgium's largest reported value. Perhaps more to the point are the data available from the new Domesday Survey for England in 1873 which show that the top 0.3 percent of 958,000 families in each of 54 counties of England and Wales had an inequality coefficient of .42, a figure less than the  $G = .50$  or .51 value for Belgium.<sup>4</sup> This difference can be expected, since inter-county holdings

<sup>3</sup> LEE SOLTOW, *Men and Wealth in the United States, 1850-1870* (New Haven: 1975), pp. 111-115. The 1860 data are based on a disproportionate stratified sample of 709 above \$ 70,000, and 688 above \$ 100,000. Smaller sized samples yield about the same results in 1850 and 1870.

<sup>4</sup> *British Sessional Papers, 1874, LXXII, Part I, pp. 1-14, 15; British Sessional Papers, 1876, LXXX, p. 706.* See also JOHN BATEMAN, *The Great Landowners of Great Bri-*

of the very rich were not collated. These wealthiest owners could have held land in two to five counties; thus, it is possible that England may have had larger inequality. The top 84 men in the County of Bedfordshire in 1798 accounted for but 0.6 percent of the families yet they had 22 percent of the property wealth. This appears to be in line with the figures for Belgium.

There is enough similarity in the Danish and Belgian distributions to merit the rather elaborate analysis of Table 3. Denmark's population of adult males 26 and older was 210,000 in 1789, and its top 0.3 percent would consist of about 600 men, giving a ratio of one rich man in Denmark for every three in Belgium. There was greater wealth among the top few in Denmark, as one might expect from the well-established royal hierarchy. At level 3 in the table we see that the top 26 men in Denmark had 29 percent of the wealth of its top 600, while the wealthiest 77 in Belgium (about 3 times 26) had 23 percent of the wealth of the 1,802. The top 256 in Denmark and the top 768 in Belgium had about the same shares as subsets of their rich groups. The patterns are sufficiently close in levels 5, 6, and 7 of the table to lead us to the question, what proportion of all wealth held by all men in Denmark was owned by its top 600? This can give us a better idea of the rich in Belgium. The answer to our question is that the rich 600 owned 46 percent of wealth. Our 1,802 above 1,000 F may have owned almost half of Belgium's wealth and means that the list of 1,802 is a very significant group. Corroborating evidence is found with landed property in England in 1873, where the top 0.3 percent had 51.4 percent of aggregate value.<sup>5</sup> Adeline Daumard has studied the wealth of deceased in major cities in France in the 1820's. The published data do not allow us to make exact calculations for the top group, but the highest 0.3 percent of all successions, with and without positive wealth, accounted for 31 percent of aggregate value in Paris in 1820, and much smaller percentages in Bordeaux and Toulouse.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Lognormal Distribution*

One other remarkable quality appears in the wealth distribution for Belgium. This is the fact that its distribution conforms closely to one defined by mathematical statisticians as the lognormal curve, a distribution whose logarithms plot as the familiar bell-shaped curve. There are several theoretical reasons for believing that this configuration is appropriate. Even more compelling is the fact that the distributions of values of individual properties (not collated by name of owner, tenant, or manager) also appear as lognormal curves for England

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*tain and Ireland* (1883; Leicester University Press, 1971; and GEORGE C. BRODERICK, *English Land and English Landlords* (1881; Augustus Kelly, 1968), p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> BATEMAN, p. 515.

<sup>6</sup> ADELIN DAUMARD, *Les Fortunes Françaises Au XIXe Siecle* (Paris: Mouton, 1974), pp. 124, 127, 189.

TABLE 3

THE WEALTH OF THE TOP 1,802 MEN IN BELGIUM  
IN 1814-1815 AND THE TOP 600 MEN AND ALL 210,000 MEN  
26 AND OLDER IN DENMARK IN 1789

Level	Annual rent, W in francs or riksalder	Cumulative Number of Men above W	Top proportion of all men, (2)/600,000	Cumulative Amount of Annual wealth of men above W (millions	Cumulative proportion of wealth of men above W as a proportion of wealth: Above 1,000 F, (4)/22,864	Inequality coefficient G above W
	(1) = W	(2)	(3) = N <sub>w</sub>	(4)	(5)	(6)
					Above 1 F	(7)
<i>Belgium</i>						
1 (top man)	400,000	1	.0000017	.4	.017	—
2	100,000	7	.000012	1.1	.052	.24
3	50,000	77	.00013	5.3	.23	.21
4	20,000	339	.00056	12.4	.54	.29
5	10,000	768	.0013	18.1	.79	.35
6	5,000	1,260	.0021	21.3	.93	.43
7	2,000	1,739	.0029	22.8	.99	.50
8	1,000	1,802	.0030	22.9	1.00	.40-.59?
9	1	600,000	1.000	?	1.00	.86?.95?
Denmark in 1789 arranged essentially at the same N <sub>w</sub> for levels 2-9						
1 (top man)	2,016,800	1		2.0	.053	.024
2	800,000	2		2.8	.075	.034
3	200,000	26		11	.29	.14
4	80,000	113		19	.57	.39
5	40,000	256		29	.77	.44
6	24,000	430		34	.91	.48
7	19,200	580		37	.99	.45
8	19,000	600		38	1.00	.46
9	1	210,000		83	1.00	.93

Source: See Table 1 and Lee Soltow, "Wealth Distribution in Denmark in 1789," *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, Oct. 1979.

in 1798, Castile and probably Spain in 1750-1759, the state of Ohio and probably the United States in 1798, and Belgium in 1846.<sup>7</sup>

To find a possible match between the Belgian distribution and this mathematical configuration, one needs to look in tables of possible lognormal curves

<sup>7</sup> LEE SOLTOW, "The Distribution of Property Values in England and Wales in 1798," *Economic History Review*, forthcoming; A. MATILLA TASCÓN, *La Única Contribución y el Catastro de la Ensenada* (Madrid: Servicio de estudios de la inspección general

for the one where the top 0.3 percent ( $N_w = 0.003$ ) has an inequality coefficient  $G = .50$ . This means a search is being made for a curve whose very upper tail demonstrates the same degree of relative inequality as did the Belgian wealth distribution in 1814-1815. The results of this choice are given in Table 4. The lognormal curve suggests greater shares for the few rich at the very top, but the match becomes readily apparent at level 4, with those above 20,000 F having a 54 percent share in actuality, and a suggested 57 percent share if it were conforming exactly to the normal curve. The entire scheme projects to an extensive inequality degree, with  $G_w = .93$ .

We now have two hints that Belgium's inequality would produce a  $G$  greater than .90 for the entire labour force. A third method also leads to the same general conclusion. A logarithmic parabola was projected from the 1,802 to 600,000 men to simulate an often-used form, the inverse Pareto curve. This form depicts the relationship between wealth,  $W$ , and the cumulative population above that level. This method, projected for 22 points for  $W$  greater than or equal to 1,000 F, leads to a  $W$  of 1 F at 600,000. The curve implies a Gini coefficient of .946 for the entire labour force. This  $G$  of .93-.95 is our best

TABLE 4

THE WEALTHY 1,802 MEN ABOVE 1,000 F  
AND THE LOGNORMAL DISTRIBUTION WITH  $G = .93$

Level	Cumulative Number of Men above W	Inequality coefficient G above W		Relative share of wealth among the top .3 percent		Relative share of wealth among all persons Lognormal with $G = .93$
		Belgium	Lognormal with $G = .93$	Belgium	Lognormal with $G = .93$	
1 (top man)	.0000017	.00	.28	.02	.04	0.2
2	.000012	.24	.33	.05	.12	0.5
3	.00013	.21	.39	.23	.34	.14
4	.00056	.29	.43	.54	.57	.24
5	.0013	.35	.46	.79	.75	.33
6	.0021	.43	.48	.93	.90	.38
7	.0029	.50	.50	.99	.99	.42
8	.0030	.513	.501	1.00	1.00	.43
9	1.00	?	.930			1.00

Source: See Tables 1 and 4.

del Ministerio de Hacienda, 1947); LEE SOTROW, "Inequality Amidst Abundance: Land Ownership in Early Nineteenth Century Ohio," *Ohio History* (Spring, 1979); the United States data are based on a sample of 48,968 property values in 1798. *Census of Agriculture of Belgium* (1866), pp. lxvi-lxvii.

estimate of inequality in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The same level is found in the new Domesday data for England in 1873, and an independent calculation yields the same level in 1798. The succession data for Paris and Bordeaux in the 1820's also give this  $G$  since there were so many poor without estates at death.

The distribution of the 572,550 farms, by size, for Belgium in 1846 strategically conforms to a lognormal distribution, as shown in Table 5. It can be shown that if the distribution of the number of farms owned is also a logarithmic normal curve and if the average size of a farm is independent of the number owned, then the distribution of ownership value in land is also logarithmically normal in shape. Studies for other countries indicate that these two assumptions are not at all unreasonable and it is possible to demonstrate that the curve of farm sizes in Table 5, with its inequality  $G$  of .746, can produce an ownership distribution with a  $G$  of .90 - .95. It will be argued later that the distribution of inheritances in 1814-1815 could very well leave a lognormal distribution of wealth in the following generation. One of the manifestations of this procedure would be to yield the property distribution as we find it to be for 1846.

TABLE 5

THE DISTRIBUTION OF FARMS BY SIZE IN BELGIUM  
IN 1846 AND THE LOGNORMAL DISTRIBUTION WITH  $G = .75$

The proportion of farms above $H$ , the number of hectares $N_h$	The Proportion of aggregate hectares accounted for by the $N_h$ group	
	Actual share	Lognormal share with $G = .75$
.005	.17	.17
.01	.20	.24
.02	.30	.33
.05	.47	.49
.10	.60	.63
.20	.79	.78
.30	.87	.86
.40	.92	.92
.50	.95	.95
1.00	1.00	1.00
Inequality, $G$	.746	.75

Source: *Census of Agriculture of Belgium, 1866*, pp. LXVI-LXVII. Midvalues of classes have been used for 11 classes; a value of 75 hectares is assumed for the class above 50 hectares.

<sup>8</sup> The projection equation was of the form  

$$\log W = a - b \log N_w - c (\log N_w)^2.$$

### Demographic Characteristics of the Rich

It is of strategic value to understand the characteristics of the 1,818 rich men since they may have had more than 40, or even 50, percent of the total wealth of Belgium. This is particularly true from the standpoint of inheritances and their impact on the inequality of wealth in future generations. We are indeed fortunate to have the ages of the rich and the number of children each had (but not the age of the children). Finally, we are given the occupations of the rich and these reveal the types of property held and the overwhelming dominance of land values. Statistics are not available for all cases of each variable but, fortunately, data can be presented for more than 1,700 of the 1,818 cases.

#### Age

The age composition of Belgium's rich in 1814-1815 might not follow a typical pattern. Would there have been a sizable element of young, and would these young have the average wealth of the old? Such a speculation leads one to ask whether a traditional economy would restrict the young in terms of numbers and in terms of their average wealth even if they were part of the rich list. These young might be a key element in understanding the dynamics of economic growth. A traditional society might be expected to produce a pattern of ages for the wealthy which would largely reflect mortality tables. A rich man dying at age 70 could leave his wealth to his oldest son of age 40 or 50, or to his middle son of age 30. The distribution of the wealthy could include a small number of young who would have inherited wealth from fathers dying early, but their numbers would be smaller than in a society where a young man might become rich by his own efforts. At least this could be our hypothesis and we can test whether an economy of rapid change reflects a greater proportion of young, of the *nouveaux riches* who accumulate their wealth in their own lifetimes.

A statistical test of the hypothesis of age composition can be made with the data of Table 6. A comparison is arranged between the relative numbers of young and old among the rich in Belgium and the rich in the United States 45 years later. A sample of 688 men owning more than \$ 100,000 was drawn from the 1860 census of wealth in the United States which represents the top 0.13 percent of the labour force 26 and older. The data demonstrate the remarkable fact that the relative numbers of old and young among the rich were exactly the same in the two countries. These figures certainly refute the hypothesis as far as relative numbers are concerned.

A more complex issue is to hypothesise whether or not the average wealth of the young and old should differ among those selected for the lists. Should there be a wealth-age gradient in our lists and should it differ from that in an economy more divorced in time and region from a traditional society? An inheritance model might dictate that the old would have owned more, on the average, and that they would continue to do so until death. Certainly, our sta-

TABLE 6

THE DISTRIBUTION OF AGES OF THE RICHEST 1,818  
MEN IN BELGIUM IN 1814-1815 AND THE TOP .13 PERCENT OF MEN  
IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1860

Age	Belgium 1814-1815			United States 1860	
	Number of Men	Mean annual wealth	Inequality G	Number of men	Mean wealth, (000)
20-29	81 ( .04)	8,106 F	.53	32 ( .05)	\$ 207
30-39	287 ( .16)	9,518	.45	93 ( .14)	172
40-49	517 ( .29)	11,700	.52	205 ( .30)	177
50-59	545 ( .30)	12,925	.50	201 ( .29)	196
60-69	292 ( .16)	16,486	.54	105 ( .15)	202
70-79	70 ( .04)	18,437	.52	45 ( .06)	197
80-89	17 ( .01)	12,047	.59	7 ( .01)	166
	1,809 (1.00)			688 (1.00)	

Source: See Table 1; ages were not reported for nine men. LEE SOLTOW, *Men and Wealth in the United States, 1850-1870*, pp. 111-115 and unpublished data.

tistics in Table 6 for Belgium substantiate this hypotheses; the older groups clearly had average higher wealth for our élite. What is perhaps surprising in the table is that the young who qualified for the United States list were as wealthy as the old. An early speculation or investment might pay handsome returns in a society where luck or business acumen played its part.

### *Children and Inheritance*

A certain proportion in each each age group died in 1816, 1817, and later years, among our affluent group, thus reinforcing inequality in the following generation. One can apply probabilities of death to frequencies in each age interval in estimating a theoretical distribution of estate amount for the year 1816. This may then be divided equally among the children of the deceased or perhaps be distributed so that one of the children received a double or triple share. The resulting distribution may then be studied with respect to its relative inequality.

Whether or not inequality decreases or increases, depends on whether the very rich have a larger or smaller number of children compared to those at lower levels. The data of Table 7 distinguish those 50 and older as the heads of families that would have largely completed child bearing. The statistics of the table show little or no relationship between the number of children and mean

TABLE 7

THE AVERAGE WEALTH OF THE PLUS IMPOSÉS,  
CLASSIFIED BY AGE AND BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Number of children	Frequency	Age 50 and older	
		Frequency	Mean wealth
1	141	75	18,200 F
2	184	95	16,000
3	177	89	15,600
4	123	66	12,000
5	86	53	24,900
6	57	40	16,500
7	31	21	14,800
8	14	12	7,900
9	7	5	4,800
10	9	8	8,100
11	1	1	20,000
15	1	1	12,000
	831	466	16,281

Source: The list of 1,818. There were 831 reporting children. The remainder had no children or no information was given.

wealth.<sup>9</sup> It can also be demonstrated that the number of children follows an almost exact lognormal distribution, with  $G = .32$ .<sup>10</sup> These two important facts can be coupled with a mathematical theorem which states, in effect, that if wealth and children are each lognormal distributions and the two variables are unrelated, then the equal distribution of the family estates among the children will also produce a lognormal distribution. Furthermore, the resulting distri-

\* The squared correlation coefficient of these two variables for the 466 cases is but 0.0017, a value which demonstrates that there was no slope. Dr. Beterams points out that there was a strong tradition in the past century to marry only at age 30, or a little later, in order to avoid having too many children, and the sons depended entirely on their parents because most of the time they had no assets in commercial or industrial enterprises. The tradition led to sizable numbers who were unwed or were married but had no children (perhaps "gold uncles" or "gold aunts"). The net effect was similar to that of primogeniture.

<sup>10</sup> For the distribution of number of children, worked from highest to lowest: The top proportion of men, N children .10 .20 .30 .40 .50 .60 1.00  
The share of all children,

Actual	.22	.38	.52	.63	.72	.81	1.00
Lognormal (with $G = .32$ )	.24	.40	.52	.63	.72	.81	1.00

bution of inheritances will have greater inequality than that of the original wealth distribution.<sup>11</sup>

These ideas can be demonstrated with a scheme where the inheritance of each child ( $I$ ) is obtained by dividing the wealth of the parent by the number of children in the family ( $W/C$ ). An example is a wealthy individual, with 100,000 F and 5 children; in this case I assume each child will have 20,000 F. One of the individuals with the lowest wealth of 400 F had 5 children, and these five appear with 80 F each in column (3) of the table. Inequality does increase by our procedure applied to this limited group. It should be remembered that some children in small families not in the 0.3 percent group would rise to the elite 0.3 percent in the children's generation. Whether the results of Table 8 would appear if we had the entire distribution for Belgium, is difficult to establish. An essential factor would be whether or not the poor with no wealth had fewer children than did the very rich.

TABLE 8

THE PROCESS OF DIVIDING THE INHERITANCES OF THE RICH AMONG THEIR CHILDREN FOR 466 OF THE WEALTHIEST MEN 50 AND OLDER REPORTING CHILDREN AND WEALTH IN BELGIUM IN 1814-1815 CONSIDERING WEALTH ( $W$ ), CHILDREN ( $C$ ), AND INHERITANCE ( $I = W/C$ )

	Initial Distribution of Wealth, $W$ (1)	Distribution of inheritance, $I = W/C$ unweighted for children (2)	Distribution of inheritance, $I = W/C$ weighted for children (3)
Highest value	400,000 F	80,000 F	80,000 F
Median value	10,000	3,500	2,000
Lowest value	400	80	80
Number of cases	466	466	1,695
Mean	16,300	6,943	4,476
Inequality, $G$	.510	.612	.616

Source: 466 of the 1,818 cases described in Table 1.

### Occupations

The importance of land distribution is a key factor in the determination of wealth inequality in a traditional society. It would be convenient to know

<sup>11</sup> J. AITCHISON and J.A.C. BROWN, *The Lognormal Distribution with Special Reference to its Uses in Economics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), Theorems 2.1 and 2.2 on page 11.

just how much of each individual's wealth could be attributed to this factor. I can only attempt to understand its significance indirectly by studying the occupations of the élite group.<sup>12</sup> This in itself is a difficult task since a significant minority gave more than one descriptive title. Using the first-listed title leads to the results of Table 9.

It is clear that proprietors were the dominant group from the stand-point of wealth. Only the few bankers had higher averages, while those in commerce or industry had not as yet achieved prominence. The categories of proprietors and rentiers constitute 42 percent of the 1,818 and 57 percent of its wealth. Perhaps two-thirds of the wealth was in the form of land and buildings since some of the other categories, particularly that of officials, also stated that they were rentiers. Surprisingly, age was invariant between occupational categories.

From the list, there appears to be little evidence of rapid economic change. One might hazard the guess that the situation would have been little different a century earlier. In any case, landed property dominated the wealth of the rich in Belgium at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and this wealth was very unequally distributed.

TABLE 9

THE OCCUPATION AND WEALTH OF THE 1,818  
RICHEST MEN IN BELGIUM IN 1814-1815

Category Number	Category name	Frequency	Mean wealth	Inequality G	Average age
1	Proprietor	498	19,700 F	.45	49
2	Rentier	266	12,300	.43	51
3	Commerce or industry	307	9,300	.43	48
4	Officials	310	11,100	.56	49
5	Lawyer	33	5,600	.33	46
6	Banker	6	26,000	.27	54
7	Farmer, cultivator	76	4,200	.37	50
8	Notary	31	4,300	.38	50
9	Doctor Pharmacist	39	4,500	.36	51
10	Other	52	6,300	.41	52
		1,818	12,582	.517	49.4
1-2	Proprietor, Rentier	764	17,100	.46	49
3-10	Remainder	1,054	9,300	.52	50

Source: See Table 1.

<sup>12</sup> A study of landed properties could be made by observing the protocols of the the notaries. This introduces problems of different qualities of land. Beterams' work is unique in establishing aggregate values of wealth which was overwhelmingly landed wealth.

