

Economic Growth in Eighteenth Century France: A Review of the Evidence with Regard to Languedoc.

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Between the 1930s and 1970s, Marc Bloch, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie and Pierre Goubert worked out a convincing history of the French economy. They showed that the economy stagnated as a result of peasant agriculture. Bloch argued that peasant communities maintained common herds and crop rotations to assure the survival of each member; they did not specialize in lucrative crops, because they were under no pressure to compete. Le Roy Ladurie's research on Languedoc showed that population growth provoked cyclical crises, as the subdivision of holdings among multiple heirs diminished the holdings' viability. Peasants sowed land used for grazing, and diminished stocks of cattle. This reduction of agricultural capital caused yields to plunge. Goubert argued that seigneurial levies and the pervasiveness of exploitative labour relations, namely sharecropping, prevented producers from accumulating capital. Gains in productivity and incomes were meagre. Bloch drew a contrast between this pattern of stagnation and the agrarian relations of England, where members of the gentry obtained control of the land through their ability to raise rents. They enclosed common fields, consolidated strips into coherent farms, and engrossed their holdings. These capitalist practices reduced the peasantry to a rural proletariat, yet proved amenable to growth and the overall enrichment of society.¹

A more recent school of economic history has revised this standard view. Historians now argue that France took a different, more balanced path to economic modernization. France experienced the earliest and most sustained economic advance. The slow pace of population growth did not make rapid changes in economic practices necessary. France did not have a large urban market to sustain investment in factories. Instead, producers made piecemeal upgrades to agriculture, used conventional technology more effectively, improved the functioning of enterprises, and tailored their products to specific markets. These methods sustained a type of development that increased per capita standards of living over the long term just as effectively as did the methods adopted in Great Britain.²

Most of the evidence of this revisionist school is taken from the nineteenth century. Philip Hoffman, however, argues that even in the early modern period, the French economy's propensity for growth matched that of the English. He maintains that scholars have been wrong in focusing on subsistence agriculture. The real motor of the rural

economy, Hoffman contends, was market opportunity. Sharecropping, for instance, was not an oppressive economic regime exhausting the potential for growth, as Goubert maintained, but a rational response to markets. Sharecropping was better suited to monitoring producers than was a landlord/tenant relationship. It was therefore a logical economic choice for landowners living near their properties: when markets called for a crop such as vines, which required meticulous labour, sharecropping allowed the proprietor closely to supervise the work. Markets also explain the prevalence of small farms, as France's economic niche was in vines and wine production, which required closely supervised labour. Small farms were therefore appropriate for vineyards. By contrast, English farmers had more opportunities for gain in livestock and developed larger holdings as a result.³

Hoffman assembled data demonstrating that peasants raised agricultural productivity when they had access to markets. Prices for leases, land, labour, capital, and commodities permit a calculation of production minus the cost of its factors, or 'total factor productivity'. The data show that productivity rose 7.7% between 1650-74 and 1750-74, and another 6.5% (.3% a year) between 1750-74 and 1775-89 in the Paris basin. These rates are 'comparable or superior to those achieved across the English Channel'.⁴ Overall, productivity grew in Bretteville in Normandy in the sixteenth century, in the south-east and Paris basin in the seventeenth century, and the Albigeois, Beaujolais, and Paris basin after 1750. 'Such growth matched the performance of farmers in England, and it could approach the best that could be achieved in early modern Europe'.⁵ Overall, labour productivity rose 27% between 1500 and 1800. Peasants achieved these increases by tailoring their crop mixes to market opportunities. Periodic crises and drops in productivity were not the fault of the peasantry, but of exogenous factors, namely war, and the pulverizing taxation it occasioned.⁶

My research on eighteenth-century Languedoc validates many of Hoffman's claims. Traditions of the village community did not prevent innovations. Peasants proved ingenious in adapting to social and economic circumstances. They also became more reliant on markets for their livelihood. And, just as Hoffman argued, Languedoc experienced economic growth in manufacturing as well as agriculture. The problem with applying Hoffman's model to Languedoc is that these phenomena do not seem to have resulted from market opportunities. Evidence from Languedoc suggests that population growth provided the impetus for innovations, reliance on markets, and growth. Peasants may have increased overall output, but only by means of a massive rise in the amount of labour expended. Marginal returns per working day hardly increased. Peasants obtained more resources from the land, but did not augment their labour productivity or expand their income. Languedoc did not see much economic development in the eighteenth century.

In making this argument, this paper begins with an analysis of the English path to economic development. It presents evidence of obstacles preventing the landowners of Languedoc from adopting the techniques that led to economic development in England. The second part is an examination of the peasants' use of the market to increase production in eighteenth-century Languedoc. I show in the third section that this growth differed from development, because it occurred through an increase in labour inputs. The growth thus had only a negligible effect on the standard of living.

Agrarian Structure and Economic Development

Historians have determined that agriculture provided the impetus for the development of the English economy. England had hardly any towns of 10,000 inhabitants, besides London, in the seventeenth century. It was more rural than France. Although the urban markets of England provided relatively little incentive for production, the labour productivity of agriculture nevertheless increased. Yields of crops and animals rose dramatically without any addition to the workforce. The annual floating of water meadows improved the quality of pasture and provided an early crop of hay. Up-and-down husbandry stands out as the crucial advance. This term denotes the periodic rotation of tillage and grassland. Turnips, pulses, sainfoin, clover and other artificial grasses yielded fodder for cattle, at the same time as they replenished the soil. They permitted farmers to do away with fallow and put their cattle in stables. Nourished and rested cattle produced more meat, dairy and manure, and were sufficiently fit to make deep furrows with the plough into fertile soil.⁷

Up-and-down husbandry transformed England. The growth of agricultural production brought down food prices and thus raised the general standard of living, even while the gap between the rich and poor widened. Historians have not documented anything remotely similar in France. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the English population grew more rapidly than did the French, because of a lower rate of mortality (rather than a higher birth rate). The slightly higher French birth rate probably resulted from relatively high rates of infant mortality leading to shorter intervals between births. The growth of the English population and the improvement of its standard of living created a consumer market for light and inexpensive clothes. Gloucestershire, Essex, Suffolk, the West Riding, Norwich and Devonshire emerged as galvanic manufacturing regions, attracting thousands of workers, and offering an enormous capacity for growth, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. By 1811, the growth of labour productivity in agriculture and the expansion of manufacturing left only 35% of the population in rural areas. By contrast, over 80% of the French still lived in rural areas.⁸

Historians acknowledge that up-and-down husbandry left no trace in eighteenth-century France. Languedocien proprietors earned income from sheep rather than cattle. The

number of sheep increased substantially throughout the region between 1810 and 1850. Proprietors nourished the flocks in woods, on hills, and especially on fallow land. Sheep provided wool, meat, milk, manure and tallow. However, they were not draft animals. Producers did not gather sheep into barns, or nourish them on fodder for their meat and manure. Sheep could not sustain an agricultural revolution.⁹

Jean Meuvret observed four obstacles precluding the shift from sheep to cattle, and the adoption of up-and-down husbandry in France. Firstly, traditional crop rotations were easier to manage. Up-and-down husbandry, with new crops necessitating diverse rhythms of cultivation, required training. Alfalfa and sainfoin, which could be substituted for fallow, required fertilizer and deep ploughing. Uninterrupted use of the soil presupposed stables for cattle. Many producers did not have the requisite knowledge of techniques or the agricultural capital to make all of these changes. Secondly, eliminating fallow would have done away with the means of nourishing sheep. Many proprietors would not part with such a sure source of income. Meuvret maintains that large grain-producing farms only appeared in the nineteenth century, when farmers of the Beauce and Brie saw greater opportunities in selling cattle to the butcher's shop than in raising sheep for wool. Thirdly, alfalfa and sainfoin are not productive in their first year. Maintaining them on the same fields several years in a row would have interrupted crop rotations and reduced the amount of land sown in grain. The rural population would not sacrifice crops destined for human nourishment to others for animal fodder.¹⁰

Lastly and most importantly, the social property relations made up-and-down husbandry impractical. Jean Merley's work on the diocese of Le Puy-en-Velay shows that peasants owned well over 50% of the land. The following table shows the percentage belonging to peasants in other parts of Languedoc at the end of the Old Regime.¹¹

Region of Languedoc	Percentage of land belonging to peasants
Toulousain	20
Montpelliérain	37.2 [57.3 in the scrubland (<i>garrigues</i>) and 27.6 in the plain]
Village of Gratens in the diocese of Rieux	25

The nobility and bourgeoisie, then, owned much of the land of Languedoc. Yet they did not possess cohesive economic blocks. The research of Roger Brunet and Le Roy Ladurie shows that land in upper Languedoc, as elsewhere in the province, was broken into an entanglement of peasant parcels and farms turned over to sharecroppers. Alain Molinier finds that the Vivarais was a labyrinth of properties, over two-thirds of which belonged to peasants. Meuvret maintained that properties were too dispersed for landlords to imagine bringing them together into compact economic units that they could manage directly. It would have been exceedingly time-consuming and costly for proprietors to enclose

multiple parcels and protect their fodder from other inhabitants' flocks of sheep. It also would have been time-consuming and costly to break the independent attitudes of peasant micro-proprietors, and turn them into a fully commodified labour force. Sharecropping was a way to interest the peasantry in the cultivation of holdings that were too dispersed for landlords to oversee directly. For all of these reasons, Meuvret concluded, up-and-down husbandry was only viable on contiguous tracts of land to which a single tenant had easy access.¹² It was practicable in the agrarian setting bequeathed from the Middle Ages in England, but not in the agrarian setting of France.



Figure 1. Civil dioceses of Languedoc before 1789. Nicole Castan, *Justice et répression en Languedoc à l'époque des Lumières* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980) p. 193. Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (Shelfmark: 23727 e.25).

Economic Growth in Eighteenth-Century Languedoc

The failure to adopt up-and-down husbandry does not mean that the French countryside was in stasis. In Languedoc, population growth ranged from over 25% in the Vivarais to as much as 80% in some parts of the Toulousain and Lauragais during the eighteenth century. Le Roy Ladurie has shown that properties became ever less adequate for subsistence, as peasants subdivided them among multiple heirs. Peasants had to seek additional sources of income. Sharecropping and wage labour were two of the main sources. Georges Frêche and Robert Forster have found that the growing number of peasant micro-proprietors seeking land tenures and employment augmented returns to landlords, and applied downward pressure on wages.¹³

Peasants also obtained additional resources by clearing land and planting cash crops. Le Roy Ladurie found that this practice constituted the principal agricultural improvement in early modern Languedoc. Peasants planted grain on hardscrabble land in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as population growth put pressure on resources. Yields declined with each new hectare brought under cultivation. Two centuries later, facing the same type of demographic pressure, peasants planted vines rather than grains. Vines were much better suited to the region's scrublands, and yielded income with which peasants purchased more bread than they could have obtained by farming cereals.¹⁴

Peasants and artisans created vineyards near towns and on hilly and stony land common to the Montpelliérain. The sub-delegate of the region wrote that the poor quality of the soil obliged farmers of grain to leave half of the land fallow. Viticulture thus permitted peasants to farm more extensively and to obtain more income from the land. In Pignan, for example, population growth, subdivision of holdings, and the extension of vineyards onto scrubland increased the number of parcels by over 30% between 1750 and 1762, and the number of hectares of vineyards by almost 45% between 1750 and 1791. Louis Dermigny wrote that Languedocien viticulture production increased from 2 to 2.5 million hectolitres between 1774 and 1788. Peasants did not, however, become capitalist farmers specializing in vines for their market value. As late as 1855, peasants still planted wheat on the best lands of the Hérault. Nor did peasants enhance labour productivity. The sub-delegate calculated that vines required two and a half times more labour per hectare than did wheat. Viticulture permitted a burgeoning rural population to employ its extra labour power to obtain more resources.¹⁵

Gilbert Larguier has documented a similar trend in the Narbonnais. Land clearances extended the diocese's arable land by over 100% in the second half of the eighteenth century. The Narbonnais cleared more land than did other inhabitants of the province. They added an average of two-thirds of a hectare to each of their holdings. Most new parcels became vineyards. Larguier discerned, however, that little of this newly-cleared land was fertile. Peasants cleared land they knew would not go immediately into tax rolls. Population growth offset any gains in income obtained through these land clearances, as methods of cultivation on the best land, which had continuously been a part of crop rotations, hardly improved. Most new parcels were abandoned by 1800.¹⁶

Peasants of the southern Massif central obtained resources from a variety of new crops. Molinier finds that population growth combined with stagnant grain yields made life precarious in the Vivarais in the eighteenth century. Many peasants planted chestnut trees and potatoes to establish a secure source of subsistence. An even more significant development was the cultivation of mulberry trees throughout the dioceses of Viviers, Uzès, and Alès. Mulberry leaves provided nourishment for silk worms, which were vital to the booming textile industry centred in Nîmes. The trees yielded twenty times more

revenue per hectare than did wheat. They grew on almost any terrain, and permitted peasants to push the ancestral practice of terraced agriculture to its physical limits, and thereby to obtain more resources from the land.¹⁷

Peasants of the region never made mulberry trees the basis of their livelihood. A study of Sardan, a village north of Montpellier in the department of the Gard, shows that land clearances increased arable land by 35% between 1666 and 1791, as the population of the area grew in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Grain was cultivated on about 80% of arable land in 1666, and barely over 50% in 1791. Yet the area under grain cultivation actually increased, and occupied parcels throughout the village. Much of the land cleared in Sardan went to mulberry trees. These appeared after 1666, and claimed more hectares than did any crop except wheat in 1791. They permitted the inhabitants of Sardan to obtain more income within a traditional system of poly-culture and subsistence farming. The departmental archives of the Gard contain hundreds of *cahiers de doléances* written in rural parishes in the spring of 1789. These cahiers listed the products of the soil. They read like a monotonous list of peasant poly-culture: variety of crops within each parish, yet uniformity between parishes. Villages contained mulberry trees, wheat, fodder, vines, woods, pasture, and often olive trees.¹⁸

Peasants of upper Languedoc introduced maize to alleviate demographic pressure. Maize yielded three to five times more food per hectare than did other grains. It covered between 12% and 20% of arable in the Toulousain and Lauragais in the 1780s. Maize provided a critical supplement to the peasants' subsistence, and allowed them to market higher-quality crops such as wheat, oats and carrots in Narbonne, Béziers, Montpellier, Lunel, and Aigues-Mortes, via the Canal du Midi. Peasants thus obtained more income from the land. Yet it is likely that labour productivity stagnated. Maize required intensive weeding and hoeing, far more labour than was needed for wheat. Maize provided for a growing population in need of food and work.¹⁹

Manufacturing provided another source of income. Cottage industry was particularly common around Carcassonne, Montpellier, and Nîmes. Claude Marquié shows that manufacturers put cloth out to peasants and artisans in villages of the Black Mountain and the environs of Carcassonne. The sub-delegate of Carcassonne reported in 1787 that of the 30,000 workers in the local drapes industry, 3,000 put down their tools for three months of the year to work in the harvest, and another 12,000 divided the year equally between agriculture and manufacturing. Merchants of Montpellier put the task of spinning handkerchiefs and cotton cloths out to about 10,000 rural artisans. Merchants set up workshops for weaving and dyeing on the outskirts of Montpellier, where hundreds of semi-rural workers could supplement their wages by cultivating vines and gardens.²⁰

Nîmes was Languedoc's largest industrial centre. Its businessmen controlled the manufacture of wool and silk stockings in a vast region extending into the Cévennes. Production increased substantially without displacing the rural population. The syndic of the stocking manufacturers reported that the number of looms situated in the countryside around Nîmes increased almost six-fold between 1713 and 1754. Urban merchants provided mulberry leaves, premises, tools, and half the silk eggs and fuel, and later divided the spun silk with rural artisans. Inhabitants actually used the same term (*métayage*) for these relations of production as they did for sharecropping. The syndic reported in 1786 that within Nîmes, manufacturers rarely had more than twelve looms under one roof. Line Teisseyre-Sallmann argues that Nîmois manufacturers increased the efficiency of the weaving in their shops year by year through piecemeal improvements. They did not envision capital investments that would fructify over the long term.²¹

Even non-industrial regions contained thousands of part-time textile producers. The sub-delegate of the upper Vivarais reported that half of the active population of the region divided its time between wool production and farming. Women and children of rural areas of the diocese of Le Puy produced lace all year round, and were joined by men during the six or seven months of the agricultural off-season. The sub-delegate of the Albigeois reported in 1786, 'Almost all the women and girls of the countryside busy themselves spinning hemp and flax when they are not engaged in agriculture'.²² The mass of micro-proprietors eager to supplement their incomes, no matter how poorly paid the work, induced merchants to put manufacturing out to rural households.

All of these economic trends bear out Hoffman's claim that peasants relied too heavily on markets to be treated by historians as subsistence farmers. His study of village tax rolls shows that many rural inhabitants were tenants, workers, and specialized growers of vines. Peasants of Languedoc became more dependent on the market as hired labourers, sharecroppers, farmers of cash crops, and textile workers. I have classified the occupations of inhabitants of five villages in diverse parts of Languedoc. Sharecroppers, tenants, and workers constituted between 35% and 50% of these villages, and artisans between 10% and 40%.²³

Growth without Development

It would be a mistake, however, to see market dependence and economic growth as signs of capitalist development. Peasants augmented output through a massive increase in the amount of labour expended. Maize and vines both required more labour per hectare than did wheat. Land clearances for vines and mulberry trees, and the expansion of rural manufacturing, are also evidence of increasing labour inputs. These innovations allowed peasants to obtain more resources from the land, but did not augment labour productivity

or expand incomes.²⁴ Three sources of evidence suggest that market dependence did not increase standards of living.

To begin with, the best-informed opinions are that incomes increased infinitesimally or else declined. Frêche finds that population growth ground to a halt in 1770 in the region of Toulouse and the Midi-Pyrénées. Thereafter, disease and bad harvests brought on demographic crisis, which culminated between 1788 and 1792. These years were comparable to the calamitous years of Louis XIV's reign. Molinier finds that the introduction of chestnut trees and potatoes brought subsistence crises to an end in the Vivarais in the last decade and a half of the Old Regime. Yet the average consumption of calories hardly changed between the end of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Malnutrition remained endemic. Larguier's research shows that dowries of small proprietors, workers, and artisans of the Narbonnais grew between 1705 and 1770, and especially after 1750, on the back of land clearances for vineyards. Yet the value of dowries buckled between 1770 and 1777, and scarcely recovered over the next fifteen years. The one area that seems to have seen development was the future department of the Aude, especially the Lauragais region. J. L. Bonnet and C. Marquié argue that maize produced enough food to permit inhabitants to sell grain in the markets made accessible by the Canal du Midi. Income levels increased, and the possibility of dearth receded.²⁵

Secondly, crises in once vibrant industries revealed a structural barrier to growth. The population of Languedoc did not have the standard of living necessary to sustain a consumer market. The spread of vineyards saturated the market for wine and drove down prices in 1778. A profound crisis in wool manufacturing reduced thousands of workers to beggary in Carcassonne in the 1780s. The Montpelliérain textile industry began to wane around 1770. 58% of looms were inactive and 11,000 people unemployed in Nîmes in the 1780s. None of the three manufacturing centres ever recovered. The sub-delegates of Nîmes and Carcassonne ascribed the crises to the contraction of export markets due to competition from English manufacturers, political and social turmoil in the Levant, and the closing of Spanish frontiers to imports in 1778. With hindsight, it is evident that the underlying weakness was the lack of an interior market. The intendant Ballainvilliers stated that local wines were strictly for export. The provincial inspector of drapes noted in 1781 that the manufacturers of Carcassonne sent all of their drapes through Marseille. Languedoc had little two-way exchange between town and country. Merchants obtained textiles, silk and wine from the peasants, but sold them little in return. The loss of export markets was fatal, for merchants had no clients to fall back on inside France.²⁶

Thirdly, an upsurge of subsistence revolts suggests that reliance on markets brought about insecurity rather than enrichment. The depression of wine prices and the collapse of manufacturing caused an acute social crisis, because they coincided with a rise in the price of grain of about 40% between 1752-61 and 1779-88 in the markets of Montpellier,

Béziers and Toulouse. Thousands of peasants throughout the southern Massif central and Mediterranean Languedoc had become dependent on income earned from the markets for mulberry leaves, wine, and cottage industries. Because their numbers grew, they subdivided their holdings, and because the grain grown on these holdings was ever less sufficient to cover their needs, they had to purchase more grain on the market. The peasants of upper Languedoc were the only ones who may have benefited from the conjuncture, for they marketed wheat and saw to their subsistence with maize. Yet many of these peasants also faced difficulties. Population growth had augmented the number of rural workers and artisans to about 70% of the population. These peasants undoubtedly purchased subsistence on the market. Guy Lemarchand has analyzed data on popular disturbances throughout France in the last century of the Old Regime. He argues that the sharp rise in grain riots, the salient feature of the data, was a result of the peasants' growing reliance on markets for their subsistence. In Languedoc, peasants with little land joined suburban inhabitants in grain riots around Narbonne in 1766 and in the Vivarais in 1783. The same groups rioted in Carcassonne, the area of the Garonne, and the Albigeois after a bad harvest in 1773 and 1774.²⁷

Prices on the fourteen principal markets of Languedoc soared between about 40% and 70% following a bad harvest in 1788. The area of Languedoc saw eighty-eight separate subsistence revolts in town and country between 1789 and 1793. Hubert Johnson argues that outbreaks of popular violence in southern France were independent of agitation and counter-revolutionary activity. Periods of acute violence and spiralling prices coincided. He argues that many uprisings occurred for ostensibly religious or political reasons, but were ultimately caused by fear of famine and economic collapse. This argument, though undeniably valid, overlooks the crux of the matter: peasants had become more dependent on markets as a result of demographic growth during the eighteenth century. Market dependence eventually led to economic development. Yet in the short run, it made possible a crisis of unprecedented fear, panic, and anger.²⁸

Conclusion

Many historians argue that nineteenth-century France followed a path to economic development that was different from the one followed by Britain, but not necessarily inferior. The French economy grew slowly, while the population grew even more slowly. Per caput income thus increased. Hoffman's work stands out as having revised historians' appreciation of the early modern period. He shows that village traditions did not prevent innovations. Peasants increased agricultural production by planting crops that obtained value in markets, and by making gradual and piecemeal improvements in the manner of cultivating these crops.²⁹

Did such minor improvements really enhance labour productivity, raise standards of living, and modernize the economy? To answer the question, this paper has examined agricultural improvements aimed at gaining value from the market. The evidence only concerns one province and may not be representative of France as a whole. But Languedoc was the second largest province of the realm and had attributes of a market economy such as an extensive coastline, vast manufacturing networks, and a relatively high level of urbanization. Peasants certainly took advantage of market opportunities by farming vines and mulberry trees, and by producing wool, cotton and silk textiles. The introduction of maize allowed peasants to cover their subsistence needs and to earn revenue selling wheat on the market. Yet all these ingredients of economic growth required more labour, and the stimulus seems to have been demographic pressure on resources. Peasants cleared less fertile land for the cultivation of crops such as chestnut trees, maize, and potatoes in order to avoid dearth. Progress resulted from drudgery and misery.³⁰

France and England undoubtedly followed different economic paths. The crucial point is that these paths had very different potentials for development. Tom Kemp has pointed out key aspects of the English economy that were absent from France. English merchants and tenant farmers sought to control the productive process, rather than to put work out to peasants in sharecropping agreements and cottage industry. They regarded land as a mere factor in production. The mass of the population worked for wages, not subsistence, and purchased life's necessities, such as food and clothing, on the market. Landowners had to compete with one another for tenants. Tenants and merchants had to compete with one another for commodity markets. Members of the lower classes had to compete with one another for jobs. All had to increase productivity to avoid ruin. The English economy was therefore conducive to capital accumulation.³¹

Robert Brenner offers a theory to explain this capitalist dynamic. English lords gained control of the land as the Middle Ages drew to a close through their ability to raise feudal dues. Their right to levy variable fines on inheritances and other transfers of holdings altered the economic system. Fines came to substitute for commercial rent. English peasants had to pay the going rate of rent to acquire and maintain leases, and to not sink into the growing mass of labourers. Tenants had to produce for exchange and compete for markets. They had to systematically maximize their price/cost ratio by means of cost-cutting through ever deeper specialization, constant reinvestment, and automatic adoption of the latest techniques. The lords' pursuit of higher rents, and tenants' competition for markets, inevitably led them to enclose villages, sort out all the strips of land into coherent economic units, and adopt up-and-down husbandry. These innovations fuelled economic development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In France, peasants secured rights to the land at the end of the feudal period. They did not have to relentlessly reinvest, cut costs, search for profitable venues, and take up the latest techniques.³² Such pressure to raise productivity only took hold after peasants specialized their farms and produced solely for the market. Hoffman recognizes that the producers' need to devote land to grain was the key impediment to specialization and the full flowering of productivity. Michel Morineau's interrogation encapsulates the reason peasants continued to grow grain: 'How could a peasant, free from any suicidal tendencies, take on the responsibility of wasting a harvest to experiment with an innovation when he had to nourish his family?'³³ Peasants could not tailor their farms to obtain value from trade, until transport networks integrated rural areas into wider markets, and made food prices reliable. The building of roads under the July Monarchy and railways under the Freycinet plan of the Third Republic were key moments in the economic history of France. The farmers' reliance on markets in the twentieth century was no longer forced upon them by demographic pressure and dearth. It was an opportunity to increase their produce relative to the amount they worked, and thus to raise their standards of living.³⁴

APPENDIX

Classification of professions for five Languedocien villages.

Sérignan (Hérault) 1777 (percentages based on 308 households)

Agricultural workers	Fishermen	Artisans/ Shopkeepers	Small landowners	Liberal professionals	Bourgeois rentiers	Civil servants
50.3	10.4	12.7	14	3.9	7.1	1.6

JOUHS, 2 (Michaelmas 2004)

Saint-Eulalie 'aux Bois' (Aude) 1793-1797 (61 households)

Agricultural workers	Fishermen	Artisans Shopkeepers	Small landowners	Liberal professionals	Bourgeois rentiers	Civil servants
34.4	4.9	41	8.2	4.9	0	6.6

Belpech (Aude) 1790 (385 households)

Agricultural workers	Tenant farmers and sharecroppers	Peasant landowners	Innkeepers, merchants and surgeons	Artisans	Lawyers and doctors	Bourgeois rentiers
39.7	13.5	23.6	1.8	18.4	1.6	1.3

Belpech (Aude) 1791 (455 households)

Agricultural workers	Tenant farmers and sharecroppers	Peasant landowners	Innkeepers, merchants and surgeons	Artisans	Lawyers and doctors	Bourgeois rentiers
35.2	1.3	45.3	2.6	13.6	1.3	.7

Bram (Aude) 1806 (227 households)

Agricultural workers	Peasant landowners	Artisans	Merchants and shopkeepers	Liberal professionals and civil servants	Bourgeois rentiers
46.7	23.3	23	3.1	2.6	1.3

Vébron (Lozère) beginning of eighteenth century (232 households)

Peasant proprietors	Agricultural workers and sharecroppers	Artisans	Shopkeepers
36.6	29.7	28.4	5.2

Vébron (Lozère) 1841 (300)

Peasant proprietors	Agricultural workers and sharecroppers	Artisans	Shopkeepers
26.7	45.3	23.3	4.7

Sources : A. Molinier, *Une paroisse du bas Languedoc: Sérignan 1650-1792* (Montpellier: Déhan, 1968), p. 51; A. Nègre, *Histoire de Mon Village: Sainte-Eulalie « aux Bois »* (Caen: Ozanne 1970), pp. 249-51; J. Cazanave, *La transition révolutionnaire à Belpech*, (Toulouse: Editions de la Municipalité de Belpech 1989), p. 193; C. Jacquemay, *Bram en Lauragais sous la Révolution et l'empire* (Bram: C. Jacquemay, 1986), pp. 339-40; R. Pujol, *Histoire d'un village Cévenol: Vébron* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1981), p. 43.

NOTES

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¹⁶ G. Larguier, *Le drap et le grain en Languedoc: Narbonne et Narbonnais 1300-1789* (Perpignan: Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 1996), iii. 1099-101, 1103-5.

¹⁷ Molinier, *Stagnations et Croissance*, pp. 202, 204-7, 267, 417; id., 'Économie et société des temps modernes', pp. 139-40, 146, 148; L. Teisseyre-Sallmann, *L'industrie de la soie en Bas-Languedoc XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 1995), pp. 222, 224.

¹⁸ Archives Départementales du Gard (ADG) C1193-C1201; S. Savey, 'Essai de reconstitution de la structure agraire des villages de Sardan et d'Aspères (Gard) sous l'Ancien Régime à l'aide des compoix', *Annales du Midi*, 81 (1969), pp. 49-51.

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²⁰ ADH C2599; C. Marquié, *L'Industrie textile Carcassonnaise au XVIIIe siècle* (Carcassonne: Société d'études scientifiques de l'Aude, 1993), p. 171; R. Cazals, 'Économie, espace et culture sous l'Ancien Régime (17e-18e siècle): Le grand siècle industriel', in J. Guilaine and D. Fabre (eds.), *Histoire de Carcassonne* (2nd ed., Toulouse: Privat, 2001), pp. 134-5; G. Gavignaud and R. Laurent, *La Révolution française dans le Languedoc Méditerranéen 1789-1799* (Toulouse: Privat, 1987), pp. 13-15.

²¹ ADG IV E 22, IV E 31; Teisseyre-Sallmann, pp. 320, 344.

²² ADH C47; M.-H. Reynaud, 'La Haute-Vivarais à la veille de la Révolution', *Revue de Vivarais*, 58 (1979), p. 139; Merley, i. 124-5; Dutil, pp. 289, 291.

²³ Hoffman, pp. 39-41, 94. The socio-professional classification of these villages is in the appendix.

²⁴ P. Huang provides an illuminating discussion of the difference between economic growth and development: *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350-1988* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 11-13.

²⁵ Frêche, pp. 54, 57-8, 110-1; Molinier, *Stagnations et croissance*, pp. 156, 239, 266, 277, 300, 417; Larguier, *Le drap et le grain en Languedoc*, iii. 1099-101, 1103-6; Bonnet and Marquié, pp. 64-5, 69. In Fabrègues in the Montpelliérain, life expectancy increased from nineteen years and eleven months between 1769 and 1778 to twenty-two years and three months between 1779 and 1788. G. Saumade, *Fabrègues 1650-1792* (Montpellier: 'L'Abeille', Impr. coopérative ouvrière, 1908), p. 617n.

²⁶ Archives Départementales de l'Aude 9 C 20, 34 C 2599; ADH C5481; M. Péronnet (ed.), *Mémoires sur le Languedoc; suivis du Traité sur le commerce en Languedoc de l'intendant Ballainvilliers (1788)* (Montpellier: L'Entente bibliophile, 1989), pp. 278-9; A. Berger and F. Maurel, *La viticulture et l'économie du Languedoc du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours* (Montpellier: Éditions du Faubourg, 1980), pp. 14-15; Bonnet and Marquié, p. 71; Cazals, 'Économie, espace

et culture sous l'Ancien Régime', pp. 138, 140, 143-4; M. Gouron, *Les étapes de l'histoire de Nîmes* (Nîmes: [s.n.], 1939), p. 113; P. Canonge, *Montpellier à la fin de l'Ancien Régime* (Nîmes: C. Lacour, 1990), p. 14; X. Gutherz and R. Huard, *Histoire de Nîmes* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1982), p. 215; R. Cazals and J. Valentin, *Carcassonne ville industrielle au 18ème siècle* (Carcassonne: Service éducatif des Archives de l'Aude, 1984), pp. 97, 106. J. K. F. Thomson has shown that the textile industry of Clermont-de-Lodève declined after the 1750s and could no longer offer steady employment. Workers became part-time farmers, like their counterparts elsewhere in the province, during the rest of the century. Thomson, *Clermont-de-Lodève 1633-1789: Fluctuations in the Prosperity of a Languedocien Cloth-Making Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 432-5.

²⁷ G. Geraud-Parracha, 'Le commerce des vins et des eaux-de-vie en Languedoc sous l'Ancien Régime', Dissertation thesis (Montpellier, 1957), p. 339; G. Lemarchand, 'Troubles populaires au XVIIIe siècle et conscience de classe: Une préface à la Révolution française', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 279 (1990), pp. 32-48; H. Bourderon, 'La lutte contre la vie chère dans la généralité du Languedoc au XVIIIe Siècle', *Annales du Midi*, 25-26 (1954), pp. 155-70.

²⁸ ADH C2927, C2942-5; H. Johnson, *The Midi in Revolution: a Study in Regional Political Diversity, 1789-1793* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 38, 40, 55. These revolts are detailed in an unpublished paper by Stephen Miller, 'Popular Revolts and Political Power in France: Languedoc 1789-1794', presented at the American Historical Association, Chicago, January 5, 2003.

²⁹ Crouzet, pp. 234, 237-8; Heywood, pp. 359-76; Keyder; Hoffman, pp. 145-6, 149-50, 155, 158-9.

³⁰ Morineau, pp. 70, 86.

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³² R. Brenner, 'The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism', in T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin (eds.), *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 213-327; id., 'Property Relations and the Growth of Agricultural Productivity in late Medieval and Early Modern Europe', in A. Bhadur and R. Skarstein (eds.), *Economic Development and Agricultural Productivity* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Pub., 1997), pp. 9, 39.

³³ Morineau, p. 69; Hoffman, pp. 119, 180, 192.

³⁴ R. Price, *The Modernization of Rural France: Communications Networks and Agricultural Market Structures in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1983), pp. 302-3, 329, 334, 347, 375; E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 209-10, 218, 220; C. Johnson, 'The Revolution of 1830 in French Economic History', in J. Merriman (ed.), *1830 in France* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), pp. 139-89; A. Corbin, *Archaisme et modernité en Limousin au XIXe siècle, 1845-1880*, i: *La rigidité des structures économiques, sociales et mentales* (Paris: M. Rivière, 1975), pp. 121-2.