

# **Discourses versus life courses: servants' extramarital sexual activities in Flanders during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.**

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## **Abstract**

This article uses a mixed methods approach to analyze the effect of rural-urban migration on the sexual behavior of unmarried women. In particular, I investigate the case of urban domestic servants. Domestic servants' sexuality has been investigated from different perspectives. Firstly, in studies of extra-marital fertility, it was stated that they had a higher risk to experience out-of-wedlock conception. Secondly, social and gender historians have analyzed the living and working conditions as well as the social relations and marriage behavior of servants. Both streams of literature start have seldom been linked. In this article I use an integrated approach of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the case of Flanders during the nineteenth century. I analyze various discourses of contemporaries (criminological essays, catholic pedagogical literature, survey data, etc.) on servants' sexuality and the impact of urban morals on rural-born girls, as well as real individual life courses of rural-urban female migrants. I argue that a mixed methods approach is indispensable to grasp the complexity of urban servants' sexual behavior. Furthermore, it allows to go beyond a focus on mere fertility that characterizes historical demographic studies and provides a quantitative basis to the mainly qualitative analyses of social and gender historians.

## **Keywords**

domestic servants, extramarital fertility

## **Introduction**

Domestic servants usually made up a substantial part of the urban single population during the nineteenth century. In many European cities the percentage of servants in the entire population clustered around ten per cent. In Belgium a peak was reached around 1890 when 13.7 per cent of the female active population (15-65 years) were domestic servants.<sup>1</sup> This figure includes the countryside. In urban areas, the percentages were even higher. Already in 1829, 20 per cent of the female active population in Ghent, were servants and this figure increased during the following decades.<sup>2</sup> Most servants were unmarried rural immigrants, between 15 and 30 years

old. They formed a large and particular group in urban society that has received a lot of attention in the literature. In debates about extramarital fertility as well as in gendered labour history the 'sexual vulnerability' of female servants has been stressed by several researchers. Since servants were, in general, young and unmarried women who lived in their employer's household, they were isolated from their families and lived under full authority of their masters. This made them easy victims for sexual exploitation by the employer. While some authors stressed the vulnerability of servants for sexual abuse, others have argued that female domestic workers engaged voluntarily in sexual relationships with affluent men motivated by sexual emancipation or the pursuit of upward social mobility.<sup>3</sup> Research of servants' extramarital relationships was usually conducted from a very specific angle: the legal status of domestic employees, the presence of servants in birth clinic records, interviews with former servants, etcetera. As a result, there is a large amount of literature on the topic, but a combination of different approaches has not been done. Yet, a more integrated analysis, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, not only helps to determine the overrepresentation of servants among single mothers, but also to understand why these women engaged in relationships outside marriage. In this article, various narratives on urban servants' sexuality are analysed and confronted with life course data on extramarital fertility. The case study is Flanders during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The main goal of this article is to add complexity to the topic of servants' extramarital sexuality. Firstly, I intend to confront several discourses on this subject in order to discover parallels and variation in contemporary conceptions. After all, the sexual morality of domestic servants was a heavily discussed topic in many public areas during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Servants were young, single and predominantly female. These factors were all associated with a high receptivity for external influences. Furthermore, because of their particular position on the crossroads of rural (origin) and urban (destination) culture and working class and elite culture, the singles who came as servants to the city could be important actors of social change. Depending on the type of discourse, narrative analyses help to understand prejudices towards and motivations of historical actors. Secondly, I use longitudinal instead of cross-sectional data and I link extramarital fertility with nuptiality and migration trajectories to add dynamism and explanatory power to quantitative analyses of out-of-wedlock fertility. Up until recently, scholars – like contemporaries – have perceived extramarital relationships by

servants as either forced contacts or as voluntary interactions. While both extremes undoubtedly existed, I argue that in most cases the truth was somewhere in the middle. To this end, I treat urban service as a life course experience rather than a mere occupational category, I distinguish between rural and urban servants and I take additional factors, such as saving behavior (which potentially increased servants' potential on the marriage market), into account.

Before commencing the analysis, I briefly overview the scholarly debates on the sexual life of (urban) domestic servants.

### **Servants' sexuality in historical research**

It has often been argued that servants more often engaged in extramarital sexual relationships than other working class women. On the one hand, family historians have investigated the relative risks of women to have an extramarital pregnancy or birth. On the other hand, gender historians have emphasized the vulnerable position of servants in their employers household.

During the nineteenth century, a considerable number of (first) births occurred outside marriage. The frequency of illegitimacy varied over time.<sup>4</sup> In the Southern Netherlands the percentage of children conceived outside wedlock rose considerably between 1760 and 1820, after which it stabilised.<sup>5</sup> This increase occurred in both urban and rural regions, but at a different pace.<sup>6</sup> On the Flemish countryside the illegitimacy ratio – the percentage of extramarital births among the total number of births in a population – rose from around two to five per cent between 1760 and 1820, while in the cities the increase was from four to twelve per cent.<sup>7</sup> Starting from about 1880, illegitimacy levels gradually declined. The *illegitimacy boom* in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century has been linked to various modernization processes; urbanisation, increased migration and changes in the labour market (due to industrialisation or proto-industrialisation) were believed to fuel the social isolation of individuals. According to social historian Edward Shorter, these processes led to changes in morality. This was especially true for women, whose economic independence rose considerably. This *female emancipation* truly led to a *sexual revolution*, where youngsters experimented more with sex.<sup>8</sup> Tilly, Scott and Cohen, contradicted the idea that industrial labour involved female emancipation. They argued that women continued to perform their labour in the interest of the family and therefore remained under the influence of family values.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, migrant women lacked the direct protection

of family members. When women acted according to the permissive sexual courtship practices of their hometown in the anonymity of the city, they were confronted with men who were under less pressure to fulfill their nuptial vows. According to Tilly, Scott and Cohen, the most vulnerable women were domestic servants and factory workers. Many other researchers have stressed urban servants' vulnerability as well.<sup>10</sup> Mitterauer even claimed that regions with large number of servants (particularly in cattle breeding areas) coincided with high illegitimacy levels.<sup>11</sup>

Both theories on changing morals and increased vulnerability were based on the assumption that migration and urban dwelling involved a break from the family or community of origin. Recent analysis based on longitudinal individual data and studying family and peer networks in detail, challenged the idea that extramarital conception was linked to social isolation.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, some authors argued that servant's premarital sexual activity did not differ appreciably from that of other working-class women.<sup>13</sup> Even though, these longitudinal studies pay attention to rural-urban immigrants, most of them still focus on a single locality. As such, specific migration trajectories remain out of sight. This study does not depart from an urban place, identifying migrants by their birthplace only. Instead, I take on the opposite perspective: starting from the birthplace, I reconstruct the life courses of women in these two places and in the main urban destination Ghent. Only by using this approach, it can be determined if women who entered urban service had indeed more often extramarital conceptions than those who were never a servant. On top of that, the interaction between rural-urban migration and illegitimacy becomes clearer.

Since the 1990s research about servants was no longer the exclusive domain of family historians. Gender historians handled the topic from many perspectives, clustering around certain topics like female work, prostitution and cultural reproduction of femininity and domesticity.<sup>14</sup> A lot of emphasis was also put on the lack of legal protection for servants and on the perceived *bridging* position of servants. Domestic service was a form of contractual labour. The contract usually stated the date of entry and departure, the servant's wage and the rules and regulations he/she was submitted to. Although these stipulations created the impression that the relation between servant and master was legally well determined, no regulations existed concerning the conditions of the servants' employment. The lack of a legal status for servants and the daily proximity with the masters resulted in a situation where the servants were largely subjected to

the employer's goodwill. The lack of domestics' legal protection, made female servants susceptible when it came to sexual abuse. Some authors believed that urban servants also succeeded in contracting more advantageous marriages than other working class women. Teresa McBride, put forward this thesis during the 1970s on the basis of cross-sectional material for French towns.<sup>15</sup> She found that among the female servants in Versailles and Bordeaux – who mainly originated from the 'agricultural proletariat' - a majority married artisans and shopkeepers. This leads her to the conclusion that 'limited upward mobility was high'. However, domestic service did not automatically involve social promotion. Some authors have argued that servants actually more often experienced downward social mobility.<sup>16</sup> Hilde Bras recently used longitudinal analysis to reveal that maidservants only had an increased chance to marry a partner of higher social position under certain conditions, like a long career and high social status of the employer.<sup>17</sup> She also found that the acquaintance with urban culture as a result of domestic service, was a more important predictor of an advantageous wedding than the servant experience itself.

The importance of these historical gender studies is that they provide a broader attitudinal framework in which extramarital sexual behavior should be placed. Other than the family historians, gender historians do not merely focus on the possible outcomes of sex outside marriage, bridal pregnancy and illegitimate births, but on the circumstances and possible aspirations that shape such behavior as well. This is extremely important for the interpretation of the servants' conduct. A more comprehensive consideration of sexuality is indispensable in order to grasp previously used notions of 'sexual emancipation' or 'sexual vulnerability'. Yet, most of these studies are limited in scope or examine sexuality only as a secondary phenomenon of, for instance, lack of legal status. By choosing a broader approach, this article examines the variation in various contemporary discourses rather than making a detailed study of one particular discourse.

## **Data**

In the first part below, I first examine various contemporary narratives about the sexuality of servants. Whereas most other studies have focused on a particular discourse, I have opted for a broader view, searching for divergence and congruence between multiple perspectives. This

broad approach requires a vast amount of data material. Firstly, I use criminological publications. After all, a separate legal category existed in Belgium for ‘criminalité ancillaire’ (servant crimes). A large proportion of typical servant crimes (prostitution, child murder, passion crimes) were related to their ‘sexual immorality’.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, there are many catholic writings about and dedicated to servants. There were handbooks dedicated to (urban) servants in which they were instructed about good catholic conduct within the particularities of their occupation<sup>19</sup>, and there were a lot of writings in which servants were presented as an ideal type for women and labourers.<sup>20</sup> Thirdly, I had access to some information in which the servants’ own voice could be heard, in particular through published interviews about the first half of the twentieth century<sup>21</sup> and via court cases on child murder and illegal medical practices.<sup>22</sup> Fourthly and interestingly, there is not much literature on servants from women’s or labourer’s organisations. The unions mainly focused on factory workers. In liberal newspapers there was some discussion on the position of servants from the perspective of the employers.<sup>23</sup> Yet, the only periodical that had elaborate attention for the working conditions of female servants, was ‘De Vrouw’, distributed in Flanders by socialist-feminist – and a former servant herself – Emilie Claeys (1855-1943). Fifthly, there are some surveys available in which ‘local authorities’ were investigated about the working conditions of labourers.<sup>24</sup>

In the second part, I analyse the life courses of servants and non-servants, focusing on marriage behaviour and extramarital fertility. In particular, I focus on four female birth cohorts (1830, 1846, 1860, 1880) from a rural community, Assenede.<sup>25</sup> I used population registers to reconstruct the life courses of these women in their rural region of birth and when they moved to the city of Ghent. Population registers offer continuous information on the life of every individual in Belgium within the contexts of the family and the locality. Population registers are a unique source for demographic research and are available for a limited number of countries only. Their value lies in the fact that they combine frequent cross-sectional overviews of all inhabitants of a municipality with continuous interim updates on the individual level. The core group of the analysis are those women who became urban servants. Those who were never a servant or only a rural servant and remained in the birthplace function as control groups. The absolute numbers are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Size of research population

	Assenede
Non-servants	384
Rural servants	114
Urban servants	212

Source: Matthys, 2012.

Service is not used here as a simple occupational category. Rather, it reflects a previous life experience. Using a quantitative life course perspective, I examine the frequencies of former servants compared to non-servants getting pregnant outside marriage from a more dynamic viewpoint than usual. I investigate the connections between different life course events by integrating the effect of migration into the analysis. This is rather unique in historical demographic research, which still tends to focus on one single place. In particular I am interested in the effect of urban service on future life events.

With this combination of various qualitative sources and advanced quantitative sources, I intend to confront discourses on extramarital sex with actual behavioural patterns but also to frame the choices and events in the lives of servants and to add complexity to the interpretations of immorality and vulnerability.

## **Narratives**

### ***General concern about servants' sexuality***

Despite the great variety in the narratives that are analysed, all of them point to the same supposition: servants more often engaged in sexual relationships outside marriage than other working class women. Several of the discourses interacted with each other.

Great concern about the sexual behavior of servants existed for example among criminologists and catholic authors. In criminology, there was a separate category for 'servant crimes'. The main female servant crimes were related to theft and sexuality.<sup>26</sup> Raymond de Ryckere was an internationally renowned jurist, magistrate, pioneer in criminology in Belgium and specialist in female criminology in the beginning of the twentieth century. He dedicated an entire book to the criminal activities of female servants in which he claimed that servants often engaged in extramarital relationships without any prospect.<sup>27</sup> When the relationship ended

(usually when the woman found herself pregnant), this could lead to passion crimes, infanticide and/or prostitution. It is striking that De Ryckere hardly gives any numbers about the occurrence of such terrible events, he only provides several horrifying examples, which he turns into generalizations. “The servant often uses vitriol to satisfy her revenge. [...] the idea of throwing it on their lover with the entirely feminine goal not to kill but to disfigure him”.<sup>28</sup> Another particularity about De Ryckere’s discourse is that he regularly sums up several types of misconduct in one sentence, starting from something rather innocent but building up something completely immoral: “With help of the housekeeper, she leaves at night to have fun, to meet her lover, sometimes to prostitute herself”.<sup>29</sup> By structuring his sentences this way, he suggests that these delinquencies were common.

De Ryckere’s ideas about immorality were undoubtedly inspired by the catholic anxiety about the behavior of servants. According to catholic authors, patriarchal loyalty was still present in domestic service. Therefore, this type of employment was put forward in catholic writings as a traditional alternative for modern, ‘contractual’ labour relations. In addition, female servants, performing mainly domestic tasks, were put forward as an example for all women. Even though the institution of service was to be preserved, there were nevertheless a lot of worries about the conduct of actual servants. Service was in essence good, but servants were often bad. Attracted by the lure of the city and the wealth of their employers, they tended to misbehave. Catholic writings were even less founded in actual facts and figures, but were mainly aimed at preserving Catholicism among the mobile youngsters.

Despite their rather weak argumentations, discourses like these had a real impact on local policies. In Ghent, for example, women who displayed or were accused of suspicious moral behavior, were excluded of the right to work as a domestic servant.<sup>30</sup> It usually concerned women who had been registered as servants before, but were under the suspicion of being prostitutes. Public opinions were also affected by these discourses (see below).

Finally, there were narratives about sexuality in the interest of the servant – by the feminist-socialist group around Emilie Claeys – and from the servants’ own perspectives. It is striking that also in these discourses, service was associated with higher risks for sexual encounters outside marriage. Oral testimonies stated that avoiding sexual encounters and premarital pregnancies were constant concerns of early twentieth century servants; in an interview a former housemaid stated: “The seamstress had a child by the baron’s father. She was



allowed to work [with the baron] to give that child an upbringing. She continuously said: ‘Take care you don’t get pregnant by the baron’’.<sup>31</sup>

All types of narratives thus seem to agree on servants’ increased extramarital sexual activity. The way in which they perceived this as a lack of morality rather than as vulnerability differed considerably.

### ***Vulnerability or vice?***

As stated previously, criminologists and catholic writers believed that servants’ bad behavior was due to a lack of morality. Criminologist De Ryckere believed that the main cause of servant crimes was the ‘amoral’ nature of lower class women. He was convinced that this ‘natural weakness’ was strengthened by the lack of appropriate education and by external factors, such as the development of modern leisure infrastructure like dance halls and movie theaters. Catholic authors also believed that immoral behavior of servants was triggered by all the impulses of worldly pleasure they received and by the advances of many men. Catholic writings often explicitly recognized the vulnerability of female servants: “Alas! How many young people have lost their virtue because they served in godless houses! How many young women have lost themselves in the service of immoral masters, who made traps to capture their innocence and youth”.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, most catholic authors held female servants at least partially responsible for their moral downfalls. It was their own responsibility to safeguard their chastity at all times. When they acted too loose, it was considered their fault if they were sexually attacked. “You will find many young daughters who will sigh that a mean guy has seduced them, but there are also many of them to whom one could respond that they took the initiative”.<sup>33</sup> The main reason why servants ‘voluntary’ engaged in these sexual relationships, was too find a rich husband. This was considered problematic: “Don’t be tempted by the glow of wealth. [...] A person of a higher rank who marries a servant, is doing it only out of urge, or because he can’t move on. The urge is of short duration, the contempt and regret follow her closely. When other women didn’t want him, it is because his shortages made his company unbearable or troublesome.”<sup>34</sup> A part of the responsibility was also put with the servant’s mistress. Columnist Adolphe Hardy criticised bourgeois women in Belgium for their frivolous way and life and ‘equal treatment’ of servants.<sup>35</sup>

A relationship between a mistress and her servants that was too amicable would make the latter forget her rightful position.

Several surveys carried out to get information on the local working conditions of labourers give some information on the public opinions about servants. It should be made clear however, that most respondents were men and belonged to the local elites (politicians, teachers, etc.), so obviously the public opinion is filtered through their lenses. In general, they put the blame on the servants themselves. They stressed the servants' coquetry, lack of morality and desire for a rich partner as the main causes of unwanted pregnancies: "They departed hale and hearty; they made money over there, turned into coquettes and returned after only a few months – wilted – to say the least."<sup>36</sup>

A different voice can be heard from the servants themselves and from women's organisations. They mainly stressed the vulnerability of servants. There were many accounts of former servants, who had experienced sexual harassment. Sometimes the offender was a fellow servant but most women were attacked by the employer or his sons. The socialist-feminist newspaper *De Vrouw* claimed that domestic servants were particularly vulnerable because of their living arrangements, their obligation to hold a job certificate and by the prohibition of paternity suits in Belgium. Unlike factory workers, servants who got pregnant not only lost their job, but their home as well. It was after all unlikely that a maid could stay in function after the pregnancy had been discovered.<sup>37</sup> On top of that, Belgian housemaids were required to have a certificate in order to be lawfully employed in domestic service. The loss of this document would seriously diminish their chances for employment in a reputable household. The fact that only single men could recognise their illegitimate children and be subject to prosecution, was also heavily criticised in *De Vrouw*: "Young people generally don't have enough power and authority to abuse a women. But the ones who are appropriately housed and married do, the ones who cause the wives so much distress: "Because of him, I cannot retain a single servant in this house", "And if men have abused such a girl in or out of the house, she is dismissed without a certificate, which for the poor creature often is the trigger of a sad career that usually ends in hospital or prison". "The smart ones will try to stay out of reach. And this will be more than easy, because most victims, the servant and working girls, are all ignorant of the law and of how it operates."<sup>38</sup>

It is clear there was a rather sharp divide between contemporaries who blamed servants (perceived) high extramarital sexual activity to immorality and those who attributed it to their particularly vulnerable position. This is a remarkable parallel with the dichotomy between ‘sexual emancipation’ and ‘sexual vulnerability’ that has long dominated the debate of the evolution of extramarital fertility. Only in the catholic writings, there was a hint at the thin line between sexual abuse and voluntary sexual encounters: in cases where the sexual offender was a member of the employer’s family, it was easy to threaten the victim with punishment or dismissal if she did not assent to intercourse.<sup>39</sup> In addition, several contemporary narratives paid attention to the bad influence of the urban environment on rural born, unmarried immigrants.

### *Urban immorality*

While employers usually preferred rural over urban born servants – because the first were believed to be more docile and diligent –, for Catholics and those who represented the public opinion, urban culture was the main threat to the dignity of rural born young women. It has been made clear that in the catholic church there was great concern about the growing numbers urban domestic servants. Servants were young and unmarried and thus particularly susceptible to urban temptations: “In the cities, vanity, which is so dangerous for young women, is constantly fuelled”.<sup>40</sup> Female servants were perceived as particularly open to the influence by - dangerous - bourgeois values: “it is the freemasons of the large cities that launch diabolic dressing styles”.<sup>41</sup> Fashion became a symbol of immorality. When mistresses gave some of their garments to their female servants, they stimulated the desire of these servant girls to climb the social ladder and pass on their bourgeois attitude. Not only would young girls lose themselves in ostentation, they would abandon their morality and start relationships with men of a higher social rank.

Local spokesmen shared this opinion. They linked this demoralisation with migration and urban culture, claiming that among farm servants morality was much better: “The morality of the countryside is much better than in the cities, in that sense that they dispose of special rooms.”<sup>42</sup> This was however a false perception since separate sleeping places for men and women had become established in the city long before they were in the countryside.<sup>43</sup> The periodical *De Vrouw* was therefore more accurate when it condemned that some farmers did not provide separate sleeping places for young girls and men: “... so that it is easy to understand that

consequences of such living and sleeping together in one space sometimes are bound to happen.”<sup>44</sup>

Interestingly, De Ryckere claimed that it was exactly the rural origin of servants that made them more inclined towards extramarital sex: “A large number of servants originate from the countryside where sexual relationships are started more easily”.<sup>45</sup> Because of social control the results of such encounters are usually not dramatic. When these girls continue this kind of behaviour in the city however, they become easy victims for malicious men: “Thrown into the urban environment, they bring along this absence of restraint and this naive cynicism to which they are used”.<sup>46</sup> In former servants’ own accounts there were very few references to the contrast between rural and urban habits regarding sexuality.

The qualitative data have shown that among contemporaries contrasting views existed between those who believed in sexual emancipation/immorality among servants and those who believed in sexual vulnerability of servants. The role of the city as trigger of extramarital sexual activity was also stressed. This analysis is now supplemented with a quantitative analysis of life course trajectories.

### **Longitudinal analysis**

Looking at various historical figures for Flanders, it appears that urban servants were indeed at a high risk of becoming pregnant outside marriage. Statistician Xavier Heuschling claimed that during the 1840s in Brussels, about 82 per cent of all births among servants happened to unmarried women.<sup>47</sup> His colleague Ducpétiaux found that in Brussels (1840-1842) servants and day labourers had the highest illegitimacy ratio: 36 per cent.<sup>48</sup> In 1890, 20 per cent of the women in the Maternity clinic in Ghent were servants.<sup>49</sup> They were the second largest group after day labourers (28 per cent) and before factory workers (18 per cent). Servants were also an important group among child murderers and prostitutes. Several statisticians, legal authors as well as feminist activists, such as the Catholic Louise Van den Plas, noted that about half of the prostitutes in Belgium were former servants.<sup>50</sup> Between 1841 and 1860 38 to 41 per cent of the annually convicted child murderers were domestic servants.<sup>51</sup> All these figures are based on some type of cross-sectional data. In recent decades historical demography has been dominated by life course analysis. In this methodological framework individual longitudinal data are used to

reconstruct the life course of individuals within their familial and historical contexts. In other words, personal life histories are taken into account. This type of analysis has seriously challenged the above-mentioned ideas of Shorter (sexual emancipation) and his opponents (sexual vulnerability). Up until today however there is very little consensus on the effect of domestic service on the extramarital sexuality of women.

***“Don’t marry too young”.<sup>52</sup> Service and singlehood.***

Even though this article focuses on single women in an urban environment, it is important to consider the marriage patterns of servants. After all, the aspirations of servants to climb the social ladder were used by contemporaries as an explanation for their sexual behavior outside marriage. The above quote from a catholic conduct manual for servants advises servants to postpone marriage until “time has matured their knowledge of persons and things”. In reality, urban servants indeed married rather late. In Ghent between 1810 and 1880 servants married on average at the age of 30.93, while the total average was 28.87.<sup>53</sup> Only the marriage age of small traders was higher than that of servants. The results of Vermeulen’s analyses of marriage certificates are summarised in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Female age at marriage in Ghent, different occupational groups. Source: Vermeulen, 1981.

Yet, studies on occupational differences in marriage age are based on the analysis of marriage certificates within one locality. This involves at least two problems. Firstly, earlier life histories of women are invisible. For the study of domestic service, this is problematic since this was in essence a transitional occupation that ended with marriage. As a consequence, not all brides who were servants were still registered under this occupational title in the marriage certificates. A second problem is that servants marrying in the city were usually migrants.<sup>54</sup> In Ghent the percentage of immigrant brides was between 27 and 47 per cent in all occupational groups other than servants during the period 1805-1880.<sup>55</sup> For servants it was on average 83 per cent. It is generally known that immigrants tended to marry later than autochthonous populations.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the effect of service on marriage age can only be determined by contrasting servants and non-servants with the same geographical origins. This is done for the research population in Table 2.

Table 2 Age at first marriage of research population

	Average age	N
Non-servants	25.14	301
Rural servants	26.32	63
Urban servants	26.38	96

The table confirms that those women who became servants married later than women who were never a servant. This was true for both rural and urban servants and is regardless of whether they married in the city or in the countryside. It appears that service had a delaying effect on marriage in general and that it was not just the impact of living in a city.

In other words: servants spent a longer time being single than their non-servant counterparts. As mentioned earlier, authors like McBride, have related these high ages at marriage to the search for a partner of higher social status. After all, since servants were provided with food and shelter and received an additional wage, it would be possible for them to save some money, which would lead to a better position on the marriage market. Because of their

particular position, some historians also considered domestic servants as cultural intermediaries, taking over the language and clothing habits of their employers. Bank savings are the best studied element of cultural and economic influence of service in the literature. For example, on the basis of account books Lambrecht demonstrated that servants in eighteenth century Flemish husbandry saved a substantial amount of their wages or invested them in durable goods, as Hajnal assumed.<sup>57</sup> Figure 2 below shows that Belgian servants were indeed one of the strongest groups of working class bank savers. The figure is based on data for female savers only. It shows the percentage of newly opened deposit books in 1900 in Belgium at the *Algemene Spaar- en Lijfrentekas* (ASLK), which was a national savings institution. Further distinction is made based on the sum of money on the deposit books in Belgian Francs.

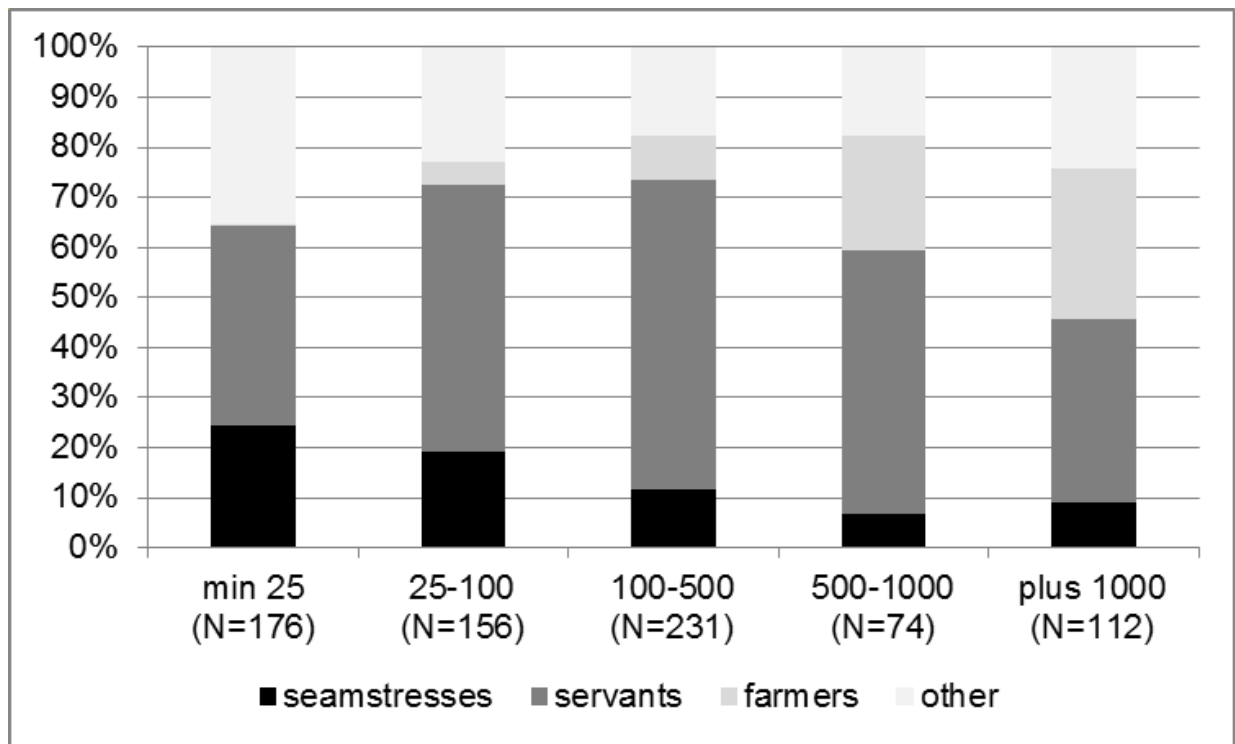


Figure 2 ASLK bank savings per occupational group<sup>58</sup>.

The graph shows that female servants accounted for at least a quarter of all savers. Their share was particularly evident in medium-sized deposit books, which suggests that they could indeed accumulate a decent amount of money during their career. There is also some individual-level evidence of masters who helped their servants to save money: doctor Hulin from Ghent

registered debenture on the name of his long-term maidservant Monica Bos during several years in the 1850s.<sup>59</sup> The above findings on the saving behaviour of servants seem to suggest that they were indeed striving for upward social mobility. Figure 3 displays whether servants actually managed to find a partner of a higher social position.

In Figure 3, social position was determined by the father's and husband's occupational title at the time of marriage.<sup>60</sup> I composed three broad categories: working, middle and upper class. The working classes contain unskilled, agricultural and industrial workers as well as weavers. The second group exists of farmers, artisans and small traders and local upper classes consist of highly skilled professionals. Consequently, a daughter of a shopkeeper (small trader) who marries a labourer is classified under 'downward mobility'.

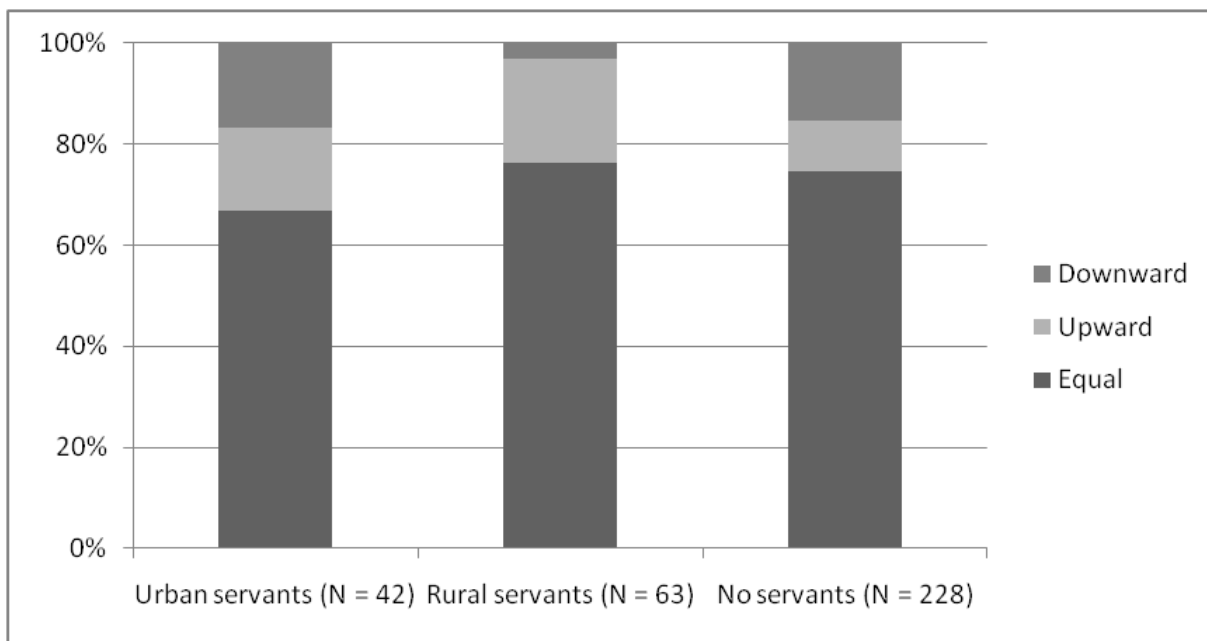


Figure 3 Marriage mobility of research population. Source: Matthys, 2012.

The results are generally in line with those of Hilde Bras' research, who claimed that service was only a conditional channel for upward mobility.<sup>61</sup> In the case of Assenede, urban servants experienced more social mobility than women who were never a servant or only a rural servant. Downward mobility was also slightly higher among former urban servants than among women who had never been a servant. It is important to note that even among urban servants, the majority (about two thirds) married within their own social class. Rural servants who married



outside their social group usually gained, but this is only because this group consisted nearly entirely of women from the lowest social class. The results suggest that urban service provided women to a certain extent with opportunities. But at the same time, it made them more vulnerable. Depending on a complex interaction of their own decision making and external influences urban service could be either a beneficial or disadvantageous channel of social mobility. Service might have increased risk-taking, for example when it comes to engaging in extramarital sexual relationships. In the next paragraph I compare the extramarital sexuality of servants and non-servants.

### *Servants' extramarital fertility*

As I mentioned before, research on extramarital fertility, has in most cases been limited to the evaluation of a single (urban) case-study. As such, extramarital conceptions of servants were compared to those of other occupational groups in the city. There are several problems involved in this approach. Firstly, the urban servant population usually consisted mainly of rural immigrants, whereas other large occupational groups, such as factory workers were normally made up largely by urban-born women. A simple comparison between the illegitimate fertility of servants and factory workers is therefore biased by the migration status. By comparing the behavior of rural born women who did or did not enter urban service, the impact of service on extramarital fertility becomes clearer. To this end, it is necessary to incorporate a migrant trajectory into the analysis, in this case migration from Assenede to Ghent.

A second problem is that service cannot be treated simply as an occupational category because of the particularities described above: servants could save some money and came in touch with men of a higher social rank, which offered opportunities to engage in potentially advantageous relationships. French *déclarations de grossesse* (pregnancy declarations) (written statements by hospital officials about the circumstances of conception and the basic characteristics of pregnant women and the alleged fathers) have been used in studies of single motherhood.<sup>62</sup> In these analyses, service was considered a type of relationship rather than merely an occupational category; The underlying rationale was that: “the unmarried mothers themselves showed a striking similarity of background [...] But the types of illicit relationships they were involved in and the reasons they entered into them varied widely”.<sup>63</sup>

Hence, in this analysis we use a categorisation based on women's previous life experiences. Figure 4 compares the frequency of bridal pregnancies and illegitimate births per category of women. All women who gave birth less than eight months after marriage, were considered pregnant at the time of marriage.

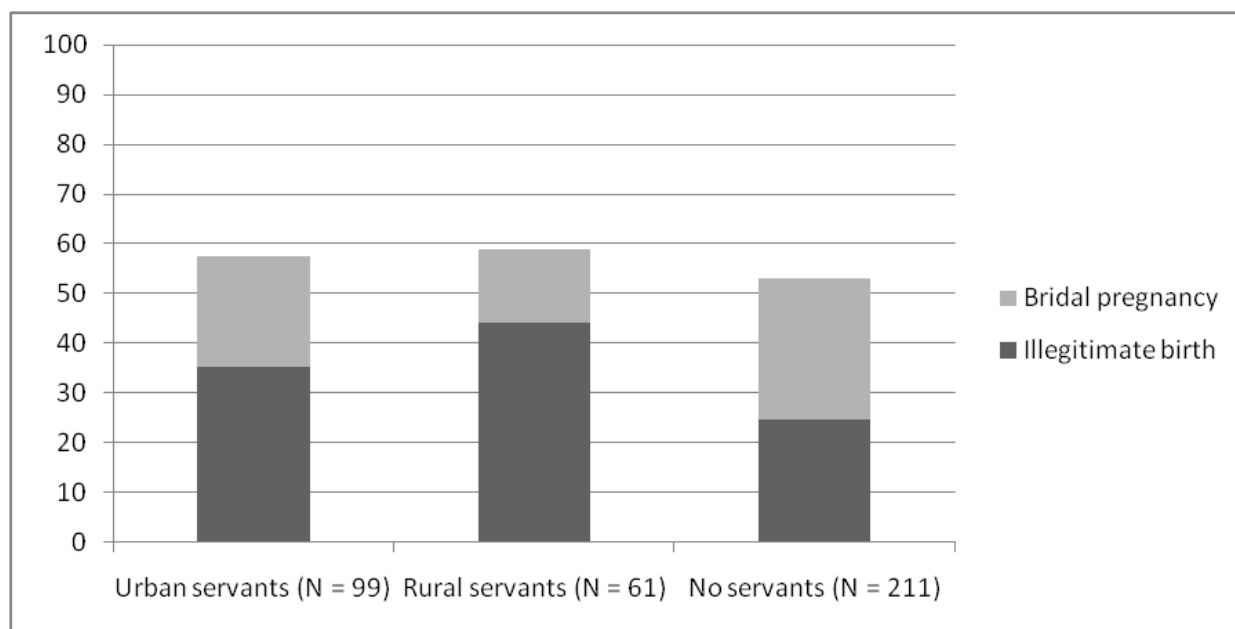


Figure 4 Extramarital births and conceptions (as percentage of all first births). Source: Matthys, 2012

In general, the extramarital fertility of both urban and rural servants was higher than that of non-servants. This overall difference is however rather limited. Looking only at illegitimate births, the variation is greater: about one fifth of the non-servants had a child out-of-wedlock compared to a third among urban servants and over 40 per cent of rural servants. This indicates that non-servants who got pregnant outside marriage, had more opportunities to get married once the pregnancy was discovered. Either their pregnancy was more often the result of a long-lasting relationship or their social network in the birthplace was more effective in putting pressure on the suspected father. Rural servants had the least opportunity to get married before the child was born, suggesting a precarious position of this social group.

It is hard to determine whether urban servants actually married the father of their child. Information from Flemish court cases on child murder shows that most of the accused servants

had indeed engaged in relationships with men of a higher rank.<sup>64</sup> This could be someone from the employer's family, but more often it was someone from outside the family who they met through their job, for example: "On the basis of information from mister A. (entrepreneur), it appears that it has been noted during the time that P.C. had stayed there, that she was close with his office clerk".<sup>65</sup> It is unlikely that these men were interested in marrying the servant they had a relationship with. It is however possible that urban servants had a better position (higher wage, more skills) compared to rural servants to find another marriage partner after all. This may even become clearer when we compare the number of women who got married after a child was born outside marriage (Figure 5).

Legitimation in Belgium increased from about 1830.<sup>66</sup> In various areas in Flanders during the first half of the nineteenth century the percentage of unwed mothers who got married was between 37.9 and 60 per cent, whereas the maximum in the 18th century was 33 per cent.<sup>67</sup>

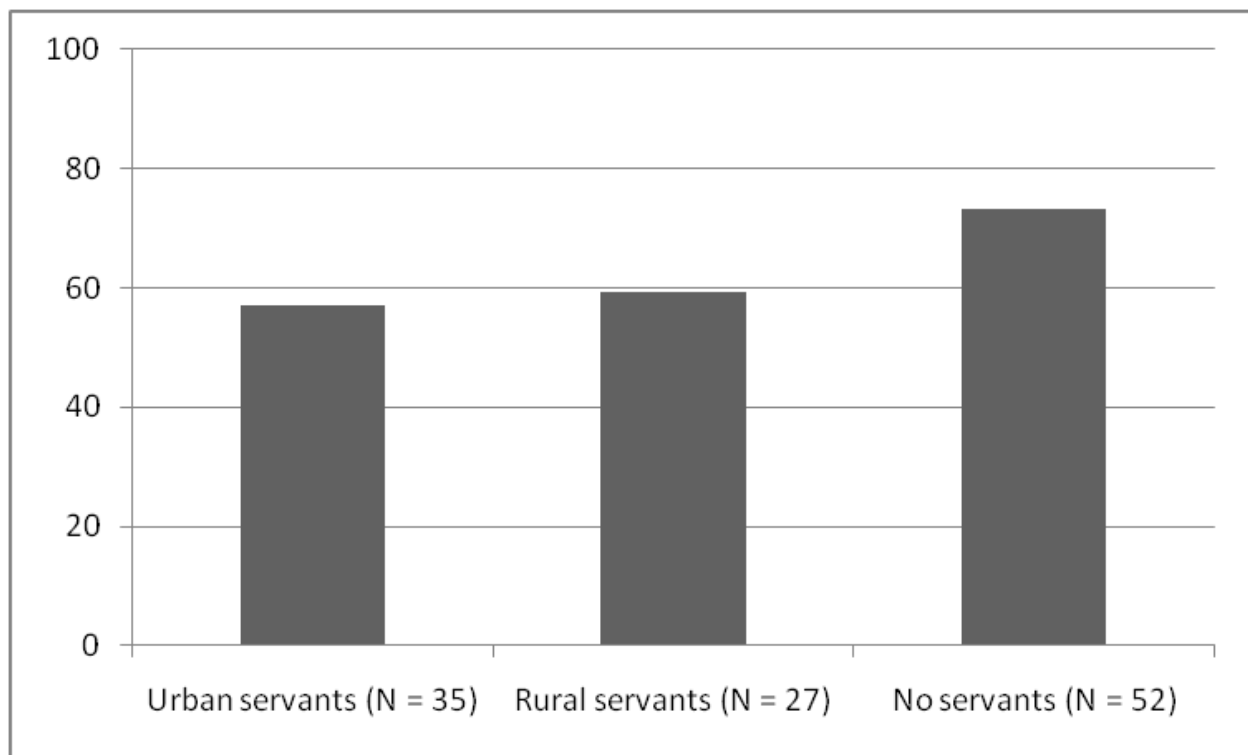


Figure 5 Percentage of unwed mothers who got married afterwards.

Once again, women who had not been servants had the best changes on the marriage market. Over 75 per cent of the unwed mothers married after their extramarital child was born. For both urban and rural servants, the figures were somewhat lower, but still almost 60 per cent of them found a husband afterwards.

The quantitative analysis suggests that some women in urban service possibly voluntarily engaged in extramarital relationships with men of a higher social status, hoping for a prosperous marriage. Marriage mobility for servants was higher, which may point to higher risk-taking. This does not exclude the likelihood that many servants were also the victim of unwanted sexual encounters. All in all, servants (both rural and urban) also had a slightly higher chance to become pregnant outside marriage and a lower chance to ‘correct’ this via marriage than women who were never servants. The differences are however too small, to distinguish a clear pattern. It should be noted that I have only compared three contrasting groups: women in the birthplace who were never a servant or only a rural servant and those who moved (either temporarily or permanent) to Ghent as a servant. Of course, reality was more complex and different migrant trajectories existed. One should therefore be aware of potential bias. If servants were more geographically mobile than non-servants, they may for instance have been more likely to move to another place in case of an extramarital pregnancy. An example from an interview with a former servant in the early twentieth century illustrates this. After the woman was raped by her master, she left for another town: “At home, I could not tell such a story, and I went to my sister in Charleroi. I told her everything. For a whole month I lived in fear of a pregnancy. I was lucky this time”.<sup>68</sup>

Even dynamic analyses like these suffer from problems when analysing the behaviour of migrants. For this reason and in order to get additional information on behavioural patterns, a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis as demonstrated here is extremely useful.

## **Conclusion**

This article used qualitative and quantitative material to investigate extramarital sexual behavior of female servants. It was shown that in all types of discourses under investigation servants were considered at a higher risk of engaging in a sexual relationship outside marriage. The quantitative analysis of extramarital fertility however showed only a slightly higher percentage

of servants experiencing a conception outside marriage than non-servants. This was true for both rural and urban servants, which was opposite to most of the contemporary views, who believed ‘immorality’ and vulnerability were more widespread in the cities. The supposed reasons behind the perceived higher risk for extramarital sex, differed however between different narratives, varying from lack of morality to vulnerability. The lack of morality was believed to be caused by the aspirations of servants to find a husband of higher social status. In the figures it was shown that marriage mobility was somewhat higher among servants than among non-servants. This was the case for both upward and downward mobility, which suggests that servants were indeed more inclined to take risks regarding relationships outside marriage. However, the difference between servants and non-servants was once again not enormous.

This paper combined a historical demographic approach with a historical narrative analysis rooted in social and gender history. This allows to view demographic processes in a broader framework, which is indispensable to profoundly understand these processes. Extramarital fertility cannot be understood without investigating sexual norms.

Further research is undeniably necessary to come to firmer conclusions. However, it is important to study the demographic behavior of servants not only because of their numeric importance but also because of their position between rural and urban, working and upper class cultures. The concern from contemporaries about the behavior of servants reflects, among other things, the fear for servants’ front-runners-position in social transformations. Service was a traditional institution, but servants were mobile elements of society and therefore regarded with suspicion.<sup>69</sup> Life course analysis shows that there were indeed some notable differences in the behavior of servants and non-servants, but they did not have absolutely distinct patterns. Exactly this combination of tradition and modernity inherent to the servant status, could mean that servants were indeed actors of social change. However, unlike contemporary discourses, I believe this change did not occur during the life span of one individual but was a slower and more latent process. The continuous influx of new recruited servants made sure that new demographic ideas and behaviors slowly spread through social and geographical layers of the population. Sexual norms are only one example of this.

**Bio**

toevoegen

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<sup>1</sup> Piette, *Domestiques*, 53.

<sup>2</sup> Vermeulen, A. (1981) *Sociografische Doorsnede van de Stad Gent in de 19de eeuw. Bijdrage tot de Sociaal-Stratificatorische Problematieken de integratie van mekanografie in de geschiedenis*, Unpublished MA Thesis: Ghent

University, Department of History, supervisor: Prof. Dr. J. Hannes) 122.

<sup>3</sup> TOEVOEGEN, VRIJWILLIG SEXUELE RELATIES: mout 1980, 195-196; Lee 1977

<sup>4</sup> A bulk of literature has been dedicated to this phenomenon since the 1970s. For example: Peter Laslett "Introduction: Comparing Illegitimacy over Time and between Cultures," in *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, ed. Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (London: Arnold, 1980), 1–65; Peter Laslett and Karla Oosterveen, "Long-Term Trends in Bastardy in England," *Population Studies* 27 (1973): 255-286; William R. Lee, "Bastardy and the Socio-Economic Structure of South-Germany," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 7, 3 (1977): 404; Edward Shorter, "Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution, and Social Change in Modern Europe," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (1971): 237–272; June Sklar, "Marriage and Non-Marital Fertility. A Comparison of Ireland and Sweden," *Population and Development Review* 3, 4 (1977): 361.

<sup>5</sup> Chris Vandenbroeke, *Vrijen en Trouwen van de Middeleeuwen tot Heden* (Brussel/Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1986) 202-204.

<sup>6</sup> Sofie De Langhe, Maja Mechant, and Isabelle Devos, "Regionale Verschillen in het Leven van Ongehuwde Moeders op het Platteland in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1730-1846," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 8, 1 (2011): 2-28.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Shorter, John Knodel and Etienne Van de Walle, "The Decline of Non-Marital Fertility in Europe, 1880-1940," *Population Studies* 35, 3 (1971): 375-393.

<sup>8</sup> Shorter, "Illegitimacy".

<sup>9</sup> Louise A. Tilly, Joan W. Scott and Miriam Cohen, "Women's Work and European Fertility Patterns," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6, 3 (1976): 465.

<sup>10</sup> For example: Guy Brunet and Jean-Luc Pinol, "Vulnerable and Unsteady: Life Histories and Changes of Residence of Unwed Mothers in Lyon at the End of the 19th Century," *Continuity and Change* 25, 2 (2010): 267; Rachel Fuchs and Leslie P. Moch, "Invisible Cultures: Poor Women's Networks and Reproductive Strategies in 19th Century Paris," in *Situating Fertility: Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry*, ed. Susan Greenhalgh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 1020; Jan Kok and Jilles Koster, J. "“In Onegt Geteeld”. Ontwikkeling en Regionale Verscheidenheid van Onwettige Geboorten op het Platteland en in de kleine Steden van Noord-Holland, 1812-1850," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 13 (1987): 277; Shurlee Swain, "Maids and Mothers. Domestic Servants and Illegitimacy in 19th century Australia," *The History of the Family*, 10 (2005): 463; John R. Gillis, "Servants, Sexual Relations and Risks of Illegitimacy in London, 1801-1900," *Feminist Studies*, 5, 1 (1979): 144.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Mitterauer, *Ledige Mutter. Zur Geschichte Unehelicher Geburten in Europa* (Munich: Beck, 1983) 26.

<sup>12</sup> Reto Shumacher, Grazyna Ryckowska and Olivier Perroux, "Unwed Mothers in the City. Illegitimate Fertility in 19th-century Geneva," *The History of the Family* 22 (2007): 192; Jan Van Bavel, "Family Control, Bridal Pregnancy

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and Illegitimacy. An Event History Analysis in Leuven, Belgium, 1846-1856,” *Social Science History* 25, 3 (2001): 449-479.

<sup>13</sup> De Langhe, Mechant and Devos, “Regionale Verschillen,” 12; Piette, *Domestiques*, 238-239.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview, see: Rafaella Sarti, “Conclusion. Domestic Service and European Identity,” in *Proceedings of the Servant Project Volume 5*, ed. Suzy Pasleau, Isabelle Schopp and Rafaella Sarti (Liege: Éditions de l’Université de Liège, 2006): 195-284.

<sup>15</sup> Teresa McBride, “Social Mobility for the Lower Classes: Domestic Servants in France,” *Journal of Social History* 7 (1974): 67-70.

<sup>16</sup> For instance: Penelope Wilcox, “Marriage, Mobility and Domestic Service in Victorian Cambridge,” *Local Population Studies* 29 (1982): 19-34.

<sup>17</sup> Hilde Bras, *Zeeuwse meiden. Dienen in de levensloop van vrouwen, 1850-1950* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2002): 139-140.

<sup>18</sup> The most famous of these works is Raymond De Ryckere, *La servante criminelle; étude de criminologie professionnelle* (Paris: A. Maloine, 1908).

<sup>19</sup> For example: Jacques Claes, *De boere theologie, oft: den godtvrugtigen kluyzenaer, onderwyzende de pagters, domestieken, d'ambagtslieden, handwerkers, de arme, en alle soort van volk van het plat land, kleyn en groot* (Gent: Snoeck-Ducaju, 1827); Maternus Goyens, *De deugdzame dienstmeid in hare plichten onderwezen* (Mechelen: S. Franciscus Drukkerij, 1901); Judocus Hillegeer, *De deugd der dienstboden* (Gent: Vander Schelden, 1857); Judocus Hillegeer, *Iets voor de dienstboden* (Gent: Vander Schelden, 1876); Charles-Alphonse Ozanam, *Handboek der godvruchtige dienstmeiden* (Brussels: Goemaere, 1868); S.n., *De deugdzame dienstboden of levens van de goede Maria, meyd en Jacobus Cochois, lakey* (Mechelen: Hanicq, 1827); S.n., *De kunst om zich gelukkig te maken voor dienstboden van beide geslacht en voor de werklieden of regels om de werklieden en dienstboden in hunne staet tot het eeuwig en tydelijk geluk te brengen* (Mechelen: Hanicq, 1844); Pieter Jozef Visschers, *Godsdienstig handboekskken, ten gebruike van landlieden, ambachtslieden, daglooners en dienstboden* (Antwerp: J.A. Van Aarsen).

<sup>20</sup> For a general overview of this type of literature in Europe: Raffaella Sarti, “Telling Zita’s Tale: Holy Servants’ Stories and Servants’ History,” in *Narratives of the Servant*, ed. Regina Schulte and P. Hantzaroula (Florence: European University Institute, 2001), 1-30.

<sup>21</sup> For instance: Diane De Keyzer, *Madame est servie’. Leven in dienst van de adel en de burgerij 1900-1995* (Leuven: Van Halewyck, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> See for example: Soetkin Gryson, “De vroedvrouw en de achterwaarster. Concurrentie of samenwerking inzake geboortepraktijken in Oost- en West-Vlaanderen in de 19de eeuw” (MA diss., Ghent University, 2009); Julie Carlier, “Discoursanalytische en mentaliteitshistorische benadering van seksualiteitsbeleving in het Interbellum: Fragmentarische geschiedenissen op basis van straf dossiers van zedenzaken in het archief van de Correctionele Rechtbank van Antwerpen (1920-1940)” (MA diss., Ghent University, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Several of these articles can be found in the collection “Vliegende Blaadjes” of the University Library in Ghent.

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- <sup>24</sup> All quotes in the text are my own translation and were originally in Dutch or French.
- <sup>25</sup> For more detailed information on data collection and on the local context, see Christa Matthys, “Sex and the City. Servants and the Diffusion of Fertility Control in Flanders, 1830-1930” (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2012).
- <sup>26</sup> Elena Verdonck, “Lange vingers in het spanningsveld tussen meester en dienstbode: dienstbodediefstal voor het Hof van Assisen te Antwerpen, 1811-1867” (MA diss., Ghent University, 2003).
- <sup>27</sup> De Ryckere, *Servante Criminelle*.
- <sup>28</sup> De Ryckere, *Servante Criminelle*, 234.
- <sup>29</sup> De Ryckere, *Servante Criminelle*, 282.
- <sup>30</sup> Communal Archive Ghent, nr. 761, Prostitution, List of Women who Cannot be Registered as a Servant.
- <sup>31</sup> De Keyzer, *Madame*, 152.
- <sup>32</sup> Hillegeer, *Iets*, 6-7.
- <sup>33</sup> S.n., *Kunst*, 87.
- <sup>34</sup> Goyens, *Deugdzame dienstmeid*.
- <sup>35</sup> Cécile Vanderpelen, “‘C’était mieux avant’. Service, servantes et domestiques chez les écrivains catholiques belges de langue française (1918-1939),” *Sextant. Revue du groupe interdisciplinaire d’études sur les Femmes* 15-16 (2001): 64.
- <sup>36</sup> Ministère de l’Agriculture, *Enquête sur le travail agricole* (Brussels : Vromant, 1920), 416.
- <sup>37</sup> Gryson, “De vroedvrouw”.
- <sup>38</sup> *De Vrouw*, 9th December 1894.
- <sup>39</sup> Christopher Smout, “Aspects of Sexual Behaviour in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Scotland,” in *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, ed. Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (London: Arnold, 1980), 195-196; Lee, “Bastardy”.
- <sup>40</sup> Ozanam, *Handboek*, 111.
- <sup>41</sup> Christian De Borchgrave, *God of genot? Vlaanderen 1918-1940: een kerk in strijd met de moderne zinnelijkheid* (Leuven: Van Halewyck, 1998), 134.
- <sup>42</sup> Ministère de l’Agriculture, *Enquête*, 352.
- <sup>43</sup> Luc Verpoest, “Upstairs downstairs: woon- en werkplaatsen van het dienstpersoneel in de negentiende-eeuwse burgerwoning. De opvattingen van Louis Cloquet en Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc,” in *Upstairs downstairs. Dienstpersoneel in Vlaanderen 1750-1995*, ed. Jan De Maeyer and Lies van Rompaey (Gent: Provinciebestuur Oost-Vlaanderen, 1996), 215-222.
- <sup>44</sup> *De Vrouw*, 4th January 1894.
- <sup>45</sup> De Ryckere, *Servante criminelle*, 277.
- <sup>46</sup> De Ryckere, *Servante criminelle*, 277.
- <sup>47</sup> Valérie Piette, *Domestiques et servantes. Des vies sous condition. Essai sur le travail domestique en Belgique au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Bruxelles: Académie Royale de Belgique, 2000), 307-309.
- <sup>48</sup> Eduard Ducpétiaux, *La condition physique et morale des jeunes ouvriers et des moyens de l’améliorer* (Bruxelles: Meline, 1843), 345.



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- <sup>49</sup> Alfred Van Heddeghem, *De Oude Bijlokematerniteit 1828-1978: Anderhalve Eeuw Patiënten, Vroedvrouwen, Dokters* (Gent: Verbeke, 1983), 184.
- <sup>50</sup> Carine Steverlynck, *Als de ooievaar komt. Vrijen, trouwen en moeder worden in de twintigste eeuw* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2000), 158.
- <sup>51</sup> Steverlynck, *Ooievaar*, 155.
- <sup>52</sup> Goyens, *Deugdzame dienstmeid*, 149.
- <sup>53</sup> Anne-Marie Vermeulen, "Sociografische doorsnede van de stad Gent in de 19de eeuw. Bijdrage tot de sociaal-stratificatorische problematiek en de integratie van mekanografie in de geschiedenis" (MA diss., Ghent University, 1981), 568.
- <sup>54</sup> Bras, *Zeeuwse meiden*, 119.
- <sup>55</sup> Vermeulen, "Sociografische doorsnede," 497-505.
- <sup>56</sup> George Alter, *Family and the Female Life Course: the Women of Verviers, Belgium, 1849-1880* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 156-157; A. Perrenoud, "Mobilité et reproduction à l'échelle d'une communauté rurale," in *Mesurer et Comprendre*, ed. Jean-Pierre Bardet, François Lebrun and Robert Le Mée (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993), 455.
- <sup>57</sup> Thijs Lambrecht, "Slave to the wage? Het dienstpersoneel op het platteland in Vlaanderen (16<sup>de</sup>-18<sup>de</sup> eeuw)," *Oost-Vlaamse Zanten. Tijdschrift voor Volkscultuur in Vlaanderen* 76 (2001): 32-48.
- <sup>58</sup> Frédéric Burny, and Louis Hamande, *Les caisses d'épargne en Belgique* (Brussels: Hayez, 1896), 348-349, 356.
- <sup>59</sup> E. Schacht (1839-1861) *Lijst van haar dienstboden, en aan haar uitgekeerde vergoedingen* [manuscript] *Vliegende Bladen*, II D 8, Domestiques, Ghent University Library.
- <sup>60</sup> Matthys, *Sex*, 79-80.
- <sup>61</sup> Bras, *Zeeuwse meiden*, 119.
- <sup>62</sup> Cissie Fairchilds, "Female Sexual Attitudes and the Rise of Illegitimacy: a Case Study," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3, 4 (1978): 627-667; Marie-Christine Phan, "Typologie des aventures amoureuses d'après les déclarations de grossesse et les procédures criminelles enregistrées à Carcassonne de 1676 à 1786," in *Aimer en France 1760-1860*, ed. Paul Viallaneix and Jean Ehrard (Clermont-Ferrand: Université de Clermont, 1980), 503-512.
- <sup>63</sup> Fairchilds, "Female Sexual Attitudes," 634.
- <sup>64</sup> Katlijn Willekens, "Abortus, te vondeling leggen en kindermoord: onderzoek voor Gent (1890-1914)" (MA diss., Ghent University, 1982); Gryson, "Vroedvrouwen", 113.
- <sup>65</sup> Willekens, "Abortus," 140.
- <sup>66</sup> Michel Oris, "Fécondité légitime et illégitime: les indigents de Huy (Belgique) de 1815 à 1876," *Annales de Démographie Historique* 24 (1988): 151-152; Chris Vandenbroeke, "Het seksueel gedrag der jongeren in Vlaanderen sinds de late 16de eeuw," *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 62, 3-4 (1989): 205
- <sup>67</sup> De Langhe, Mechant and Devos, "Regionale verschillen," 22; Ron Lesthaeghe, *The Decline of Belgian Fertility 1800-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 128.

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<sup>68</sup> De Keyzer, *Madame*, 157.

<sup>69</sup> Isidro Dubert, “Modernity without Modernisation: The Evolution of Domestic Service in North-West Spain, 1752–1900,” *Gender and History* 18, 2 (2006): 199-219.