

Labour mediation among seasonal workers, in particular the Lippe brick makers.
1650-1900

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Abstract

How do seasonal workers find a job far away from home? Although a comprehensive theory is missing, it is clear that not only the workers themselves and their prospective employers, but also the authorities in the regions of destination played their respective role. Sometimes also the authorities in the region of departure wanted to have an active say. The German Principality of Lippe-Detmold is a case in point. Famous for its wandering brick makers, Lippe offers a fine example of state intervention on behalf of seasonal workers between the late seventeenth and the late nineteenth centuries. On top of this, for the century between c. 1775 and 1875 sufficient sources are available to study also the individual preferences of these brick makers for a specific gang. Based on the reconstruction of biographies and careers of more than 600 seasonal brick makers from Lippe we will try to explain the degree of success of an individual's career on the basis of both structural factors affecting all of them (cooperative subcontracting and the Ziegelbote system) as well as individual factors. The provisional results suggest that in the history of labour intermediation the individual worker, the collectivity of workers and structural conditions in the countries or regions of departure and destination have to be discerned as four interconnected levels of analysis.

Introduction

The Lippe brick makers have become remarkable in many ways. Originally fully in line with their fellow-Westphalians, from the start of the seventeenth century many 'Lipper' peasants started to migrate temporarily to the western parts of the Netherlands to add to their meager incomes by cutting grass, cutting and dredging peat and other mainly rural occupations. About 1650 in the Dutch maritime province of Groningen and in adjacent East Frisia some started to specialize in brick making, a rural industry which for climatic reasons was limited to the period between March/April and October/November.¹ In the eighteenth century they managed to dominate this labour market and during the following century they stretched out to other brick producing areas in Northwestern Europe, in particular Western and Northern Germany and Denmark, but a number also went to Norway, Sweden, Poland, Western Russia – including Bessarabia - and Austria-Hungary. A few got as far as the Aral Sea, German Cameroun and possibly South America, which although temporary, can no longer have been seasonal.² In Lippe itself this seasonal profession became so important as to occupy one quarter of the male occupational population around 1900. This meant that those left behind, mainly spouses and children who had to take care of the peasant cottage, or the parents of the youngsters who started this work at age 14-16 depended substantially on their earnings abroad.³

It is too easy to interpret this expansion solely as a desperate attempt to escape poverty at home. Certainly, this was not an early form of tourism, but a number of indicators point to what we tend to call the 'success' of the Lippe brick makers. The still very rural principality of Lippe had the highest savings quota of the German Empire in 1895, the number of subscriptions to daily and weekly newspapers was very high there, as well as the rate of house ownership. The

¹ P. Lourens and J. Lucassen. 1987. *Lipsker op de Groninger tichelwerken. Een geschiedenis van de Groningse steenindustrie met bijzondere nadruk op de Lipper trekarbeiders 1700-1900*, Groningen: Wolters Noordhoff/Forsten.

² P. Lourens and J. Lucassen. 1999. *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung. Die lippischen Ziegler im 18. Und 19. Jahrhundert*, Osnabrück: Rasch, 93, fn.1 and additionally the following information: W. Kamphoefner. 2007. 'Lipper in der neuen Welt', in: *Lippische Mitteilungen aus Geschichte und Landeskunde* 76., 85-86 for Lippe brickmakers who had settled in the USA; for Cameroun W. Höltke. 1998. 'Aus dem Leben eines Oerlinghauser Ziegelmeisters', *Heimatland Lippe* 91, 136-139 and W. Höltke. 1999. 'Ziegel für Kamerun. Ein Oerlinghauser Ziegelmeister leistete Entwicklungshilfe', *Der Minden Ravensberger* 71, 120-123; Friedrich Schling, Ziegelmeister from Müssen (Lippe) died October/November 1880 at Guacipati in Venezuela where he had left for at the start of that same year (StAD L 75 X Abt.11 Vol.II); In 1867 a German engineer born at Gotha and employed in Egypt enquired from Ziegelbote Pothmann for Lippe brick makers, but we do not know to what avail; E. Kittel. 1957. *Geschichte des Landes Lippe. Heimatchronik der Kreise Detmold und Lemgo* (Archiv für deutsche Heimatpflege 18), Köln, 227. mentions Lippean honorary consuls at Amsterdam, New York and Rio de Janeiro but does not distinguish between emigrants in general and brick makers.

³ Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung.*, 57-59.

handful of large land- and forest-owners and the few city dwellers cannot explain this.⁴ Apparently this heavy and dirty work – let there be no misunderstanding about its nature – enabled the brick makers to improve themselves. All this in great contrast to certain other groups of brick makers at the same time, like e.g. the non-migratory brick makers of the Dutch province of Gelderland. In other words, the occupation as such does not explain the 'success' of the Lipper, neither the fact that the industry was situated in Northwestern Europe.⁵

In our previous studies we tried to explain the success of this particular occupational specialisation of the Lippe brick makers. Partially building on the work of Fleege-Althoff (1928) and later specialists on some areas of destinations⁶ we came up initially with two decisive factors. In the first place the organization of the work. Lippe brick makers until 1900 always worked in all-male gangs, working on piece wages to be paid in one sum at the end of the season, while receiving regular advances for their communal kitchen (the 'Lipper Kommune' as it was called). This way the relation between efforts and gains was at its best. In the second place, job mediation, including in principle uniform and possibly high wage rates, as performed by the institution of the *Ziegelboten* ('brick messengers'). The *Ziegelbote* selected the gang-leaders, the *Brandmeister*, who in their turn selected the members of their gang.

These insights in the way the Lippe brick makers organized their trade were based on qualitative sources like regulations, correspondence and reports by the *Ziegelboten*, as well as quantitative ones, in particular the annual lists of brick makers, handed in to the government by the brick messengers who had mediated their places, as well as on lists of passes for brick makers, and the like. A few years ago we decided to take the step to reconstruct career histories of individual brick makers on the basis of these lists. To our surprise this enabled us to come up with a third factor which contributed to the Lippe success. Starting with a sample of career stories of about 100 brick makers engaged on brick kilns in the eastern part of Groningen province around 1850, we found out, contrary to our expectations and the existing literature, that the composition of the Lippe gangs was all but stable.⁷ Yes, boys of fourteen, fifteen, sixteen started their career in the gang of their father, an uncle or neighbour (receiving time wages during these apprentice years), but after a few years they changed gangs and they kept doing so.

⁴ Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 153 (there, the dating for the savings quota in fn. 13 is a mistake). Already in 1804 (Kittel, *Geschichte des Landes Lippe*, 387-389.) a savings banks was established in Lippe. In 1856 the Church recommended a more intensive usage by brick makers (StAD L 77 A Nr.4725, fol.74-78), which is documented already from 1847 when *Ziegelbote* Pape deposited the credit balance of his *Sterbekasse* (funeral insurance) with this savings bank (StAD L 77 A Nr.4723, fol. 124-125).

⁵ G. B. Janssen. 2008. *Twee eeuwen Gelderse bakstenen. De baksteenfabricage in Gelderland in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw*, Aalten: Fagus, 150 and passim. For similar differences within England see Lucassen 2006A.

⁶ F. Fleege-Althoff. 1928. *Die lippischen Wanderarbeiter*, Detmold; H. Linderkamp. 1992. 'Auf Ziegelei' an der *Niederelbe. Zur saisonalen Wanderarbeit lippischer Ziegler im 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert*, Stade; Stader geschichts- und Heimatverein. P. Wessels 2004. *an der Ems. Ein Beitrag zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Ostfrieslands*, Aurich: Ostfriesische Landschaft.

⁷ P. Lourens and J. Lucassen. 2007. 'Karrieren lippischer Ziegler: Das Beispiel Delfzijl 1855'. in: *Lippische Mitteilungen aus Geschichte und Landeskunde* 76, 63-80.

Every year in winter time after the Sunday church service all brick makers, temporarily at home, met at the market place and in surrounding pubs to strike a deal about the composition of the gangs that were to depart within one or two months.

We interpret this as a continuous attempt of the individual brick maker to join the best gangs, or, the other way round, as a continuous attempt of existing gangs to throw out the least productive members and to attract the most productive willing to join. After all, in this system of cooperative subcontracting, as David Schloss coined it⁸, the total sum to be divided at the end of the season, based on piece rates, depended of the weakest chain in a gang. Besides, there was an extra reason for attempting to climb the ladder within the gang as the wages were not divided equally. Apart from the time wages for the youngsters, a premium on experience and skill was built in while dividing the rest sum as the largest share went to the Brandmeister and besides him the moulder and the horse driver of the pug mill.⁹ This also explains why a brick maker upon reaching the Brandmeister position seemed to quiet down. A Brandmeister used to return to the same factory several years in row, and only changed employer if he could get a job on a bigger factory, which would enhance his earnings, all things equal, i.e. with an equally productive gang.¹⁰

This successful pilot stimulated us to build a larger sample and at the same time to pose the next and unavoidable question. It must be possible, one might think, that within the structural conditions just described (cooperative subcontracting on piece rates, the messenger system, and the internal mobility within the gangs) individual differences mattered as well. What made a man attractive for others to work with? His muscles, his endurance, his social skills – don't forget that these men lived close to each other during three quarters of the year, up to sleeping in twin beds? Apparently it was not just descent, like in the Gelderland case mentioned above, where brick makers' sons with a few exceptions became brick makers, earning the same time wages as their fathers at the same factories, and leading the same miserable life.¹¹ Nor was it the fixed relation with one Brandmeister or one factory owner and the concomitant patronage as was the situation with many factory workers at large.

In this paper we want to discuss two aspects of job mediation among seasonal workers. First, institutions in the country of origin, and second the new topic of individual preferences. Therefore, we will discuss in detail how seasonal brick makers from Lippe found their particular jobs every year, i.e. in which gang and where they worked and in which sort of careers these

⁸ D. F. Schloss. 1898. *Methods of Industrial Remuneration*, 3rd ed. London/Edinburgh. cf. Lourens and Lucassen *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 24-26; Idem 'Karrieren lippischer Ziegler'.

⁹ Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 80, 183-186.

¹⁰ On the basis of a small sample we concluded this already in Lourens and Lucassen, *Lipsker op de Groninger tichelwerken*.

¹¹ They worked from a very young age (6-9 years) on in family gangs, always at the same factory, and rented factory owned houses, which implied an extreme determination of one's career, see Janssen, *Twee eeuwen Gelderse bakstenen*, 143-145, 148-163.

annual choices resulted. In order to do so we have to research two steps: the choice of the Brandmeister by the Ziegelboten and subsequently the selection process of the gang members. As the story of the Ziegelboten has been told already many times, we will be brief on it and rather will concentrate on the new topic of gang composition and its consequences for career building of individual workers.

The Ziegelbote-system

From the late seventeenth century a messenger travelled around and made agreements with factory owners about the size of the gang they needed for next spring. Back at home he recruited the gang leaders, called Brandmeister (fire masters), who had to pay them a fee. In their turn the Brandmeister recruited the men needed for their gang.

This system seems to originate unofficially from about 1680, one generation after our first documents on the phenomenon of seasonally migrating brick makers from Lippe.¹² At the time Johann Jost Eckensträter 'accompanied young men in search for work'. Only in 1714 his son Hartwig Eckensträter received an official monopoly as messenger (*Bote*) for East Frisia (then still an independent principality) and the adjacent Dutch province of Groningen. In 1737/1738 at least 27 gang leaders should pay recognition money for 206 brick makers (so on average 7 to 8 workers per gang) to the Bote Schlüer. This man had paid the government 170 Thaler for his privilege and should receive 412 Thaler from the gangs through their leaders. For this gross annual profit of 242 Thaler he had to visit the factories in winter in order to make agreements about the number of workers wanted for the next season, and besides to visit the gangs in summer time.

Around 1800 the sums involved had become much larger: the privilege yielded now 400-500 Thaler to the Government and was supposed to fetch 2250 Thaler to the Boten. Total gross profits had gone up considerably and so had the costs for visiting about 250 brick kilns in a region of a few thousand square kilometres at a distance of some 150 kilometres away from Lippe. It is impossible to say much about the net costs and profits. As to the costs, the Bote had to hand over to the government annually name lists since 1778¹³ and we know that he visited Groningen three times per year in 1801; as to the profits that there was a fierce competition in those years for the privilege, which indicates at least that the expected gains were nice.

¹² For the following see Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 36-37, 40-41, 60-73.

¹³ This was also actually done as most lists have survived. Unfortunately there is a big gap for the period 1818-1829.

Originally there was one brick messenger (with assistants from 1800 onwards¹⁴), but finally there were four, each with his own 'district' into which the outer-Lippe (brick factory) world had been cut up. The first split occurred in 1802 when the western half (Groningen and East Frisia) and the eastern half (Oldenburg and Hannover) were given to two different Boten. In 1842 a third district was formed by cutting out the Landdrostei Stade (say northeastern coastal Hannover) from the second one. Within a few years Denmark, Sweden and Norway were added to it as well as Prussian Saxony and Thuringia. Finally, after protracted discussions and negotiations, in 1867 a fourth district was formed out of Prussia, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the Baltic provinces of Russia and Southern Germany.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Ziegelboten received important new tasks. Since 1842 the name lists have to contain also the destinations of the workers and next to it the messengers have to write an annual report. At the end of 1847 Bote Pape of the third district founded a *Sterbekasse*, a mutual funeral fund. Most of 'his' Brandmeister accepted the initiative of a Sterbekasse but they did not agree with two separate boxes which would have implied a double premium.¹⁵ The contributions are collected by the Bote during his summer trip along the factories of his district. This fund, although voluntary, becomes a great success, possibly also because a committee elected by and from the Brandmeister decides upon the disbursements. This success and the 1848/49 unrest which also reached Lippe resulted in the 1851 Ziegelgewerbegesetz in which such mutual benefit societies were also introduced in the other districts. The Meister-committee also functioned as a mediation body in wage disputes among the group members.

The institute of the Ziegelbote was abolished because of forces outside Lippe, not because it had outlived itself from the Lippe perspective, to the contrary. The as such unavoidable affiliation of the small principality in 1866-1867 to the Northern German League implied also the adoption of the *Gewerbefreiheit* in 1869, which not only meant the abolishment of craft guilds but also of all other monopolies, including the Ziegelbote-system.¹⁶ Its viability however is clear from its unofficial continuation for decades and in certain forms even for another half century.¹⁷

On a voluntary basis the former Ziegelboten or successors continued to mediate between employers and gang. Apparently they also kept their own administration, although no longer for the Lippe government. This becomes clear when the *Landeskirchenamt* (the Lippe state church)

¹⁴ Two mounted assistant-messengers are mentioned in 1800 (StAD L 77 A Nr.4698, Akte 26; cf. Idem Nr.4713-4714), who received an official appointment in 1815 (Fleege-Althoff, *Die lippischen Wanderarbeiter*, 116).

¹⁵ L 77 A 4723, fol.76-77, 192-196.

¹⁶ Kittel, *Geschichte des Landes Lippe*, 222-224.

¹⁷ Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 71-73, 83-85.

asks for name lists in 1872 and 1874.¹⁸ More important and the basis of their continuous importance, was the continuation of the mutual insurance system. Dominant became the *Lippische Ziegler-Verein* of 1874, founded by the Bote of the former third and fourth districts (Victor Schütz as successor of his father Julius and Adolph Hanke respectively) but open to brick makers from the other former districts. For long this organization was not ready to accept the abolishment of the old Boten-system and in 1884 it still addressed a petition to the *Bundesrat* of the German Empire for the restauration of the system, based on the Lippe Ziegelgewerbegesetz of 1851 because Lipper also worked outside the Empire. All in vain of course. The *Sozialversicherungsgesetz* of 1883 made health insurance for factory labourers within the German Empire compulsory, but allowed in 1884 migratory workers to insure themselves in mutual funds at home. Consequently, many local *Krankenkassen* were founded all over Lippe.¹⁹

However, also the technical evolution of the brick industry played a role. At the end of the century also the seasonal limitations of the brick industry gradually came to an end because of technical innovations, factories grew larger, and the Lippe brick makers became ordinary factory labourers. Many changed jobs and stayed in Lippe, many emigrated permanently and stayed within the trade or moved to other jobs as well, but that is another story. That was also the moment when trade unions came into being and the classical working class repertoire of action was adopted, including strikes (which occurred before, but were extremely rare among the Lipper: obviously their alternative organizational forms sufficed to reach their goal²⁰).

The composition of the sample²¹

As we have seen, the choice of the Ziegelboten for their Brandmeister was only the first step in the mediation process. The next step was the composition of the gangs. Before the start of the season every year nearly everybody had to position himself anew. In order to understand this process of dealing and wheeling we may have a look at the result, the career of brick makers. For each brick maker these annual decisions on who was to go with whom resulted in a specific career. One could e.g. become a Brandmeister at a rather early age, one could never get a better

¹⁸ LKA Rep II Tit. 65 Nr. 4 (lists of Brandmeister in Groningen, drawn up by the Bote of the former first district for 1872, and of all Brandmeister by the the former second and the fourth districts – the fourth only for Germany - for 1874, of all workers by the third district in 1874).

¹⁹ More about this complicated history which has been summarised here only very briefly in Hooek 1999, 17; Fleege-Althoff, *Die lippischen Wanderarbeiter*, 356-359; and StAD L 77 A Nr.4730, fol.530-532, Idem L 79 Nr.2418-2419, 2423.

²⁰ Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 71-73.

²¹ A first version of this paper has been presented at the 6th Detmolder Sommergespräch (24th June 2009). We thank Geertje Lucassen MSc (Research-Master Social Sciences Utrecht University) for the SPSS-analysis and for her creative suggestions.

place than as moulder or horseman at the pug mill, or one could even stay below that level and remain an assistant-moulder. The Lippe data, and in particular quite a number of annual Ziegelbote-lists, contain data not only on which individuals formed a gang, but also on the relative place of individuals within a gang. To give an example, we know that a certain person in e.g. 1850 was number 7 in a gang of eight, five years later number 3 in a group of six and after fifteen years number 1, which is Brandmeister, in a group of seven.

On the basis of a large enough sample of men with sufficient career data of this kind we have tried to determine what is the average career, and subsequently we have divided the sample into three groups: the quick, the average, and the slow men; this in order to find out which factors might determine the tempo of a career, and thus one's individual success. This, in an attempt to link the structural and the collective with the individual.

Before describing our procedure with the men within the sample first a few words about the composition of the sample itself. At this moment²² it contains 921 brick makers from Lippe (including eighty-eight persons from villages surrounding the principality who were mediated by one of the Lippe Ziegelboten) who died at the job or in the winter thereafter in the period 1840-1875. It was crucial for us to work with a group of men which is large enough²³, and whose year or date of death is known. This seems obvious, but why stress this point? This has to do with the fact that the Ziegelbote lists in principle only mention the factory owner, the place where the factory is situated, the full name of the Brandmeister with residence in Lippe and (if complete) the full names and place of residence of the members of the gang in a hierarchical order. Never a date of birth is given and only occasionally in early pass lists an age.²⁴ Therefore, the Ziegelbote lists enables us in principle to link data per person for different years into careers, without knowing anything about the start of the end of their life, let alone other relevant demographic or socio-economic characteristics, like social status of the father or marital status. It goes without saying that the linkage procedure is a complicated one.

One source provides the link between career and life course data: the lists of the Sterbekasse, which provide year of death. Apart from the lists of workers as usual from 1778 onwards,²⁵ in 1842 the Ziegelboten were obliged to send in an annual report of their activities, including information about the health of the brick makers in their district. Thus we have numbers and sometimes also names of the brick makers deceased during or briefly after the

²² Database at 21 January 2011.

²³ Cf. I. Maas, M. H.D. van Leeuwen and K. Mandemakers (eds). 2008. *Honderdvijftig jaar levenslopen. De Historische Steekproef Nederlandse bevolking*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

²⁴ Pass lists, available for a number of years from 1778 to 1817 and 1826, do not provide occupations. However, the date at which the pass has been handed out and the period of its duration may hint in the right direction. E.g. passes for 9 months to regions with a concentration of brick factories on more than a few occasions have provided important additions to the early careers of the elder persons in our sample.

²⁵ For a full overview of the Pass and Ziegelbote lists which have survived and their detail of information, see Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 157-160.

season for two out of the three districts from 1842 to 1852. In 1847 the third district had initiated such a successfully mutual insurance scheme, which a few years later was adopted by the other districts because of the financial advantages attached to it by the Lippe government.²⁶ That is why we have nearly complete statistics from 1853 until 1869 (the forced abolishment of the Ziegelbote system) of workers fallen ill and deceased. In total the Sterbekasse lists yield 629 names of brick makers deceased (see table 1).

Table 1 Available numbers and names of ill and deceased brick makers, registered in the lists of the Sterbekassen and Krankenkassen, sent in by the four Ziegelboten, 1842-1869 (Data set per 21 January 2011)

	<u>Only numbers</u>		<u>Of which with personal</u>		<u>Names as % of numbers</u>	
	Deceased	Ill	Deceased	<u>names</u> Ill	Deceased	Ill
1840-1852	90	337	48	34		
1853-1854	60	139	57	133		
1855-1859	226	733	189	685		
1860-1864	169	847	160	839		
1865-1869	218	1059	175	1066 (sic)		
Subtotal 1853-1869	673	2788	581	2723	87%	98%
Total 1840-1869	763	3125	629	2757	82%	88%

The first district is as always the exception. Not that the reporting of its Ziegelbote was sloppy, rather to the contrary, for the rest his information is much more detailed than that of his colleagues, but his name lists of ill and deceased men have not survived. Fortunately, his district was so small and the vital data registration by the authorities so good (mainly Groningen and East Frisia²⁷), that we have been able to recover the majority of these cases through other sources. Based on this we have collected as many other cases of brick makers deceased in the

²⁶ Cf. Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 66.

²⁷ Our search for data on Groningen has been greatly improved by information on occupations of the deceased, provided by Kees Mandemakers (IISH), whom we like to thank here. Besides, lately many *Ortssippenbücher* of East Frisia, Varel and Krautsand have been published with indexes on places of origin as well as similar digital sources for Denmark (with thanks to Birgit Caspar and Jorgen Clausager). We also have to thank here the Verein für Computergenealogie, Hermann Oltmanns, Albin von Spreckelsen, Rolf Plöger and last but not least in Detmold Bettina Joergens and Wolfgang Bechtel.

period 1840-1875. We have extended the period slightly not only to enlarge the sample but also because partial lists of brick makers in 1872 and 1874 became available from church archives (see above) and because of the very practical reason that the Lippe church registers have been published until 1875.²⁸ The end result so far is a sample consisting of 844 men.

Table 2 Composition of the data set 1869 (Data set per 21 January 2011)

Sources	District 1	District 2-4	District unknown	Total
Sterbekasse 1840-1869	2	627	0	629
Other sources 1840-1875	116	29	147	292
Brick makers from all sources combined	118	656	147	921
Of whom resident outside Lippe and unknown	3	82	3	88
Of whom born in Lippe and deceased 1840-1875	115	574	144	833

The second step was to link these data about the end of the life course to the career data we have been collecting over the years - as far as available and as far as possible in a reliable way. The third step is to find the beginning of the life course, if only to link the career changes with the specific age at which they took place. This step involved a lot of classical genealogical work, but we also could use some important serial data, one of which is worth mentioning. In Lippe from 1811 until 1866 all boys at age 20 had to be mustered for the military conscription, a system which was continued in a slightly different version when in 1867 Lippe stepped into a military alliance with its mighty neighbour Prussia. These conscription lists have been preserved to a great deal and one of its interesting features is the systematic notation of the boys' occupations, among which many *Ziegler* of course.

Up to this moment we have found birth years (and most of the time even precise birth dates) for over two thirds of the brick makers from Lippe proper, which enables us to establish which occupational title and ranking a person reached at what age, which is the basis for the comparisons to make hereafter (see table 3).

²⁸ StAD P 1 A Nr.1-211, published as EditionDetmold Vol. 1-34, hg. Vom Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen Staats- und Personenstandssarchiv Detmold (Veröffentlichungen des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen Nr.3 (Detmold 2006-2009)).

Table 3 Lippe residents, deceased 1840-1875, whose year of birth is known 1869 (Data set per 21 January 2011)

	District 1	District 2-4	District unknown	<u>Total</u>	
				Individuals	Percentages
All brick makers resident in Lippe, and deceased 1840-1875	115	574	144	833	100%
Of whom year of birth still unknown	1	207	0	208	25%
Of whom year of birth known ²⁹	114	367	144	625	75%

To sum up: our sample consists of 921 persons, of whom 833 from Lippe. At this moment 625 of them (or 75% of all Lippe-born brick makers) meet the following requirements, necessary for any further analysis of their careers: resident in Lippe at the end of their life or (a few) before settling abroad near a brick factory, deceased in the period 1840-1875 during or soon after their work at the brick kilns, and with a known year of birth.

Careers in general: their length and their end

Most striking, which to us really came as a shock, is the shortness of many careers – a notion which might have wider relevance for labour history. As table 4 shows, nearly one sixth had died before reaching the age of 21, one quarter before age 26 and well over one third (37%) before age 31. No wonder that only 13 brick makers in our sample became 65 plus. We realise that this last group is limited by the fact that our sample is restricted to men who died while still actively occupied as brick makers (or soon afterwards) and that it certainly misses a number of brick makers who were able to retire and who die many years after the end of their career without any trace of their former profession in the Lippe burial records.³⁰ Nevertheless, the risks run by the young brick makers are remarkable, to say the least.

²⁹ Besides, we also know birth dates of 17 out of 88 non-Lippe brick makers in our sample, but we leave them aside in most tables as we lack sufficient information on the socio-economic features of the regions they come from.

³⁰ However, not too many may have had the chance to retire quietly as our sample of all Lippe workers on a number of kilns in the province of Groningen in 1855 shows Lourens and Lucassen, 'Karrieren lippischer Ziegler', 7-71.

Table 4 Age at death of the brick makers in our sample 1869 (Data set per 21 January 2011)

Age group at death	Individuals	Percentages
11-15	24	4%
16-20	78	12%
21-25	62	10%
26-30	72	11%
31-35	74	12%
36-40	76	12%
41-45	65	10%
46-50	59	9%
51-55	46	7%
56-60	32	5%
60 plus	54	8%
Total of individuals of whom birth date known	642	100%
Of whom from Lippe	625	

Only a very few brick makers continued their career beyond the age cohort 60-65. Champion in our sample is Johann Hermann Adolph Wegter (1788-1868) who is registered until age seventy-five as Brandmeister. As he became the owner of the kiln where he worked in 1852 we may ask whether he really performed all the Brandmeister tasks still at that advanced age. Anyway, during the last five years of his life he had retired from his job. The silver medal goes to Wilhelm Friedrich Lenger (1783-1862) who never has become a Brandmeister, let alone a factory owner but is recorded until age seventy-three as an ordinary brick maker. The bronze one for an advanced age at death goes jointly to Adolph Buhr or Burmeier (1782-1857) and Jan Sülwold (1787-1862) but both have never become Brandmeister either. Besides, we cannot follow their career in detail beyond their 30s, so that we do not know until what age exactly they have been working as brick makers. Two other career patterns are visible among the eldest Brandmeister. Some were able to maintain their top position, like Dietrich Adolph Falcke (1785-1853) who died as Brandmeister at age sixty-eight. Others had to step down, apparently because of their advanced age, like Töns Heinrich Schlüer (1798-1869) who until age sixty is recorded as Brandmeister but died at age sixty-eight as ordinary brick maker. Others switched at an advanced age to another profession, like Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger (1790-1858), who died at the advanced age of nearly sixty-eight. He had given up his position as Brandmeister at age sixty-two when he married a second time and became shop keeper.

The Ziegelbote reports, which contain names of the brick makers in their district who died during the season, as a rule also indicate the death cause. On top of this German church registers contain similar information. Of course this may lead to discrepancies between the two sources if they pertain to one and the same individual, which sometimes are rather interesting, but if grouped into broad categories these become insignificant.³¹ Going by the taxonomies used in the sources and the frequencies of causes mentioned we distinguish between three types of death causes, leaving a rest category for all other cases: accidents, illness of the respiration organs³², illnesses of the digestive organs³³, and other illnesses³⁴. In this case we have used not only the restricted sample, but also all death causes known. As table 5 shows the differences between the two samples are not significant, except for the even higher incidents of accidents among the total sample.

Table 5 Death causes 1869 (Data set per 21 January 2011)

	Accidents	Illnesses of respiration organs	Illnesses of digestion organs	Other illnesses	Total causes known	Total causes unknown	Total sample
Year of birth known	83	184	85	163	515	127	642
Year of birth unknown	33	45	26	59	163	116	279
All persons	116	229	111	222	678	243	921
Percentages	17%	34%	16%	33%	100%		

Here we will not make – as such interesting – comparisons with the health situation in Lippe, nor in Germany as a whole, but we wish to concentrate on one particular group of death causes, the accidents, as these are most directly linked to the work circumstances.

To start with another surprise, more than half of those killed by accidents were drowned.³⁵ Some while underway between Lippe and the factory, some while loading a ship,

³¹ In the few cases where we had to choose we have preferred the causes, given by the Ziegelbote as we believe these are based on hearsay by the comrades of the deceased.

³² Mainly Brustkrankheit and Schwindsucht (TBC), but also Auszehrung/Abzehrung which is regularly combined with Schwindsucht.

³³ Illnesses related to Magen, Darm, Leber, Gallen, as well as Kolik/Cholik, Ruhr and Cholera.

³⁴ Especially Nervenfieber, but also epidemical small pox and typhus, and very rarely old age (Alter).

³⁵ Sixty persons, not counting who committed suicide by drowning themselves.

some while taking a bath in a river, canal or lake. The fact that brick factories as a rule are situated along waterways (other ways of transporting massively the cheap and bulky, but also brittle bricks is too expensive) may offer some explanation, but we also have to suppose that the art of swimming was not taught in land-locked Lippe in those days. A deep impression was made by nine Lippe brick workers who drowned together in the river Oder on 17 November 1859. On their way back home their rowing boat was caught by the side wheels of a steamboat in the neighbourhood of Kreuzwick (not far from Stettin).³⁶

Other accidents occurred by dropping down from a roof, the top of a kiln or the edge of a clay pit or by falling bricks. One man was burnt alive in a kiln near Fürth in Bavaria. Occasionally the introduction of machines caused lethal harm. Four brick makers were murdered on or near the work place. Friedrich August Diestelmeier from Salzuflen was hardly fifteen when he died because of mistreatment by his gang mates, equally from Salzuflen – probably an initiation rite as we know them from later periods, but which went out of hand on this occasion.³⁷ This happened in 1855 at Nienburg on the river Weser and three of the perpetrators were convicted to long imprisonment by the Court at Hannover (two got three years “Zuchthaus” and one eight weeks “Gefängnisstrafe”). Then there was the Brandmeister called Friedrich Meijer from Pivitsheide at work at the factory at Aicha (Bohemia), who was slain in the clay pit in 1867. Given his position this may have had to do with a labour conflict, but so far we do not know. This was certainly the case, however, with Hermann Hofmann from Entrup (1824-1859; since 1858 Brandmeister). On 12th August 1859 he died at Malmö Hospital because of wounds received in a fight with Swedish construction workers in the village of Kokum. Two attackers received death sentences. Finally a case of manslaughter which probably had nothing to do with labour relations: the tragical death of 23 years old Heinrich Wilhelm Köhne. On 23rd September 1866 he went out for a dance in Termunterzijl with some Lippe girls who lived there. Maybe he was not an experienced dancer as by accident he stepped on the toes of a Groningen boy, who felt terribly offended. He seemed to be acquiesced for the moment, but on Heinrich’s way home with his two comrades he was beaten to death with an iron rod. The main culprit received a sentence of ten years of imprisonment.

Not directly related to the work were cases like the two men frozen to death while drunk, or the three men struck by lightning. Finally, it is hard to say to what extent the cases of suicide were work-related. The consequences could be however as it was far from clear whether their relatives were entitled to the habitual disbursement from the mutual insurance box.³⁸

³⁶ See the article “Ein Unglücksfahrt lippischer Ziegler aus Heiden und Umgebung vor 73 Jahren (1859) auf der Oder bei Stettin” in *[Mode?] Heim und Welt* 1932, 55 which we only know from a summary, kindly provided to us by Wolfgang Bechtel (Detmold).

³⁷ Cf. Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 75-76, 79.

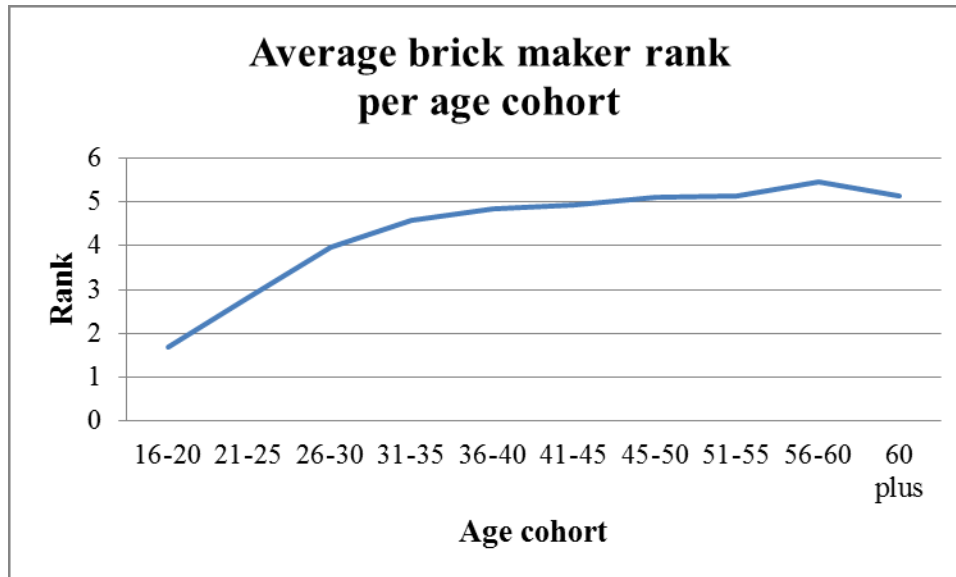
³⁸ After an awkward discussion by the Sterbekasse administration STK 1851 we find that in reality disbursements took place to the relations of brick makers who had committed suicide in 1856 (2 times) and 1864 (two times).

What determines differences in career speed?

For the persons in our sample we have tried to collect as many occupational titles as possible, and within the brick making profession as many details on the ranking within a gang. For the ranking we have devised six categories of scores: six points are given to the rank of Brandmeister, five points to the rank of moulder, while the other four categories express the ratio of rank number within a gang and the size of that gang. To give one example: a score of four points go to those workers who rank between 0 and 0.24, which is worker no. 3 in a gang of thirteen or more members (with a maximum of fifty), no. 4 in a gang of seventeen and more, no. 5 in a gang of twenty-one and more, etc., while three points go to workers who according to this method rank between 0.25 and 0.49 and so on. The logic is clear: the larger the gang, the more efforts it costs to reach a high ranking, and at the same time the higher the responsibilities attached to such a position. As far as the sources allow us, we may attribute to every individual brick maker between one and six points for every five-year age bracket (here we have chosen the same as we used before: 11-15, 16-20 etc.; if more data are available within such a five-year period we take the highest score). This procedure enables us to reconstruct the 'average' career of a brick maker, defined as the average rank of all workers per age bracket³⁹. For the result see Figure 1.

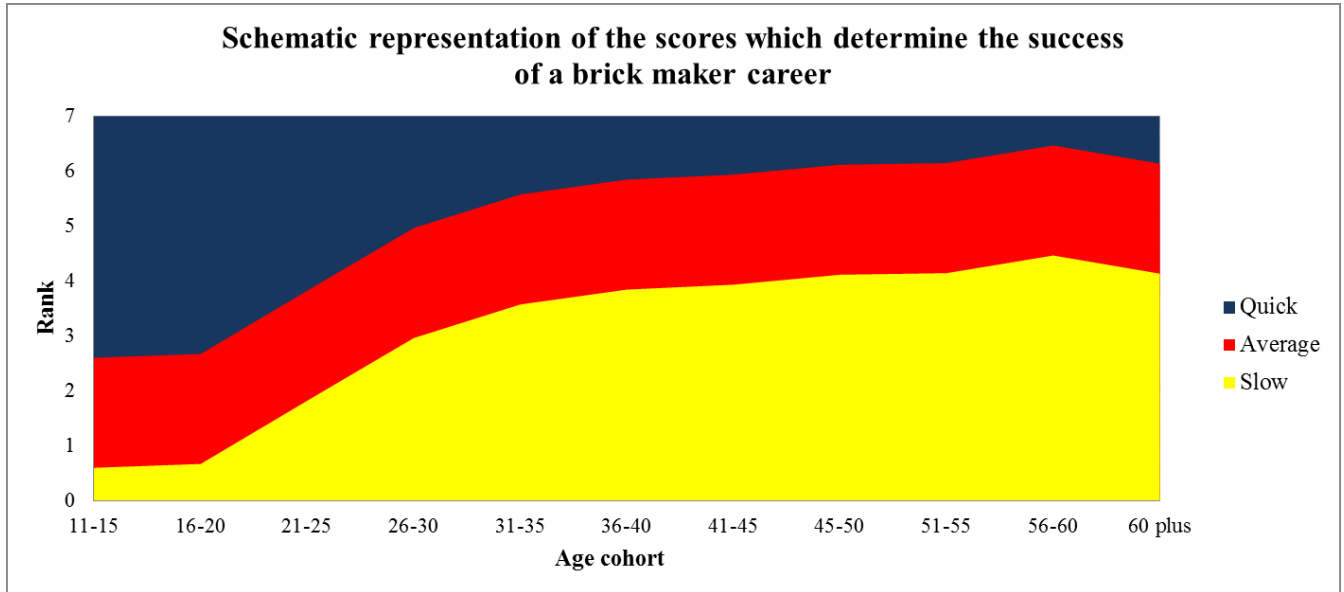
³⁹ In fact up until now we have sufficiently good career data (rank and size of group) for 297 persons or nearly 60% of the subsample of 516 persons with minimum life course data (year of birth and death).

Figure 1 Average ranking per age bracket, showing the average brick maker's career (Data set per 21 January 2011)



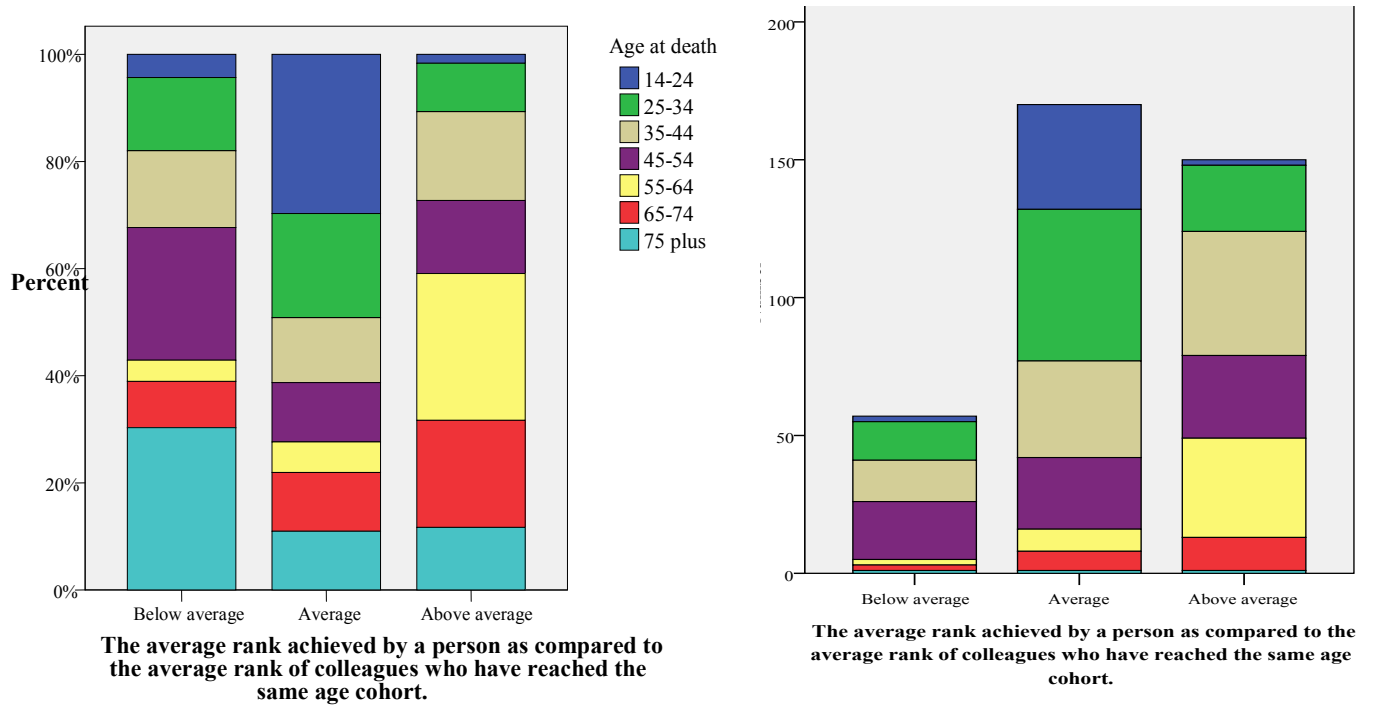
As such the shape of this curve is not surprising. After some years of apprenticeship, workers start to move upward between age twenty and age thirty-five at which the more successful ones have acquired sufficient experience to become Brandmeister, which entails the leadership of a gang. We may split the persons in our sample into three groups by defining those with a score of one above and below the total mean as the average career makers and all those below as the slow and those above as the quick ones. For the result see Figure 2.

Figure 2 Schematic representation of the scores by age class which determine the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)



The key question is which circumstances determine whether a person falls in the slow, the average or the quick group. Before elaborating upon the different sets of causes which have to do with social background, individual abilities etc. we have to realize that the length of the career plays a decisive role: the shorter the career, the less chance to become successful (or unsuccessful!) because climbing the ladder takes a substantial number of years as we have shown. The relation between the age at death and the success of a career becomes clear when we compare the second and the third bar: those who died young are underrepresented among those with a successful career and vice versa (see Figure 3)

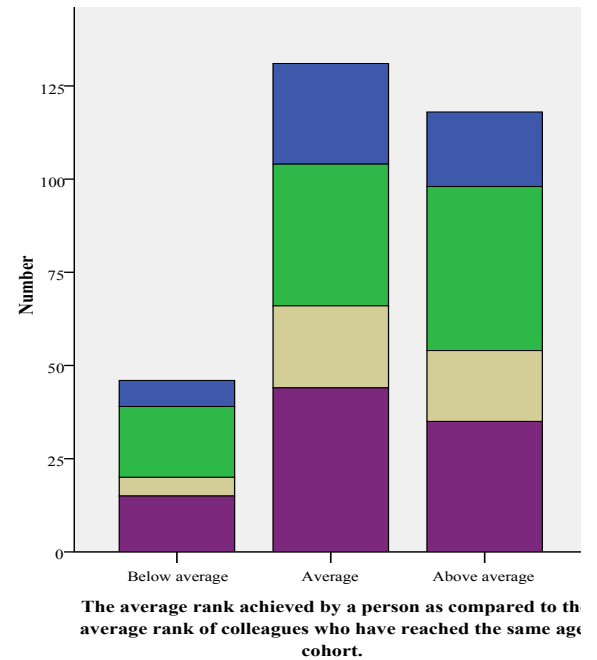
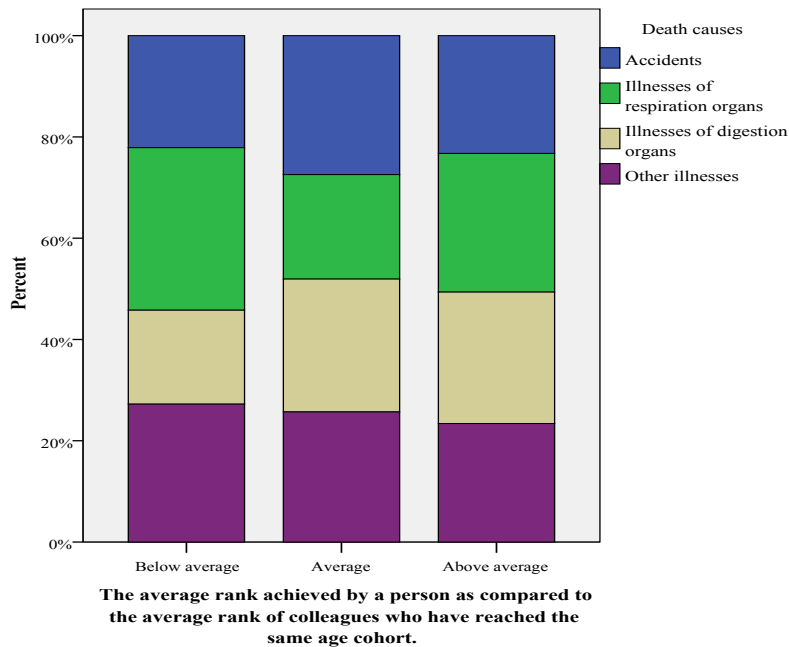
Figure 3 The relation between the age at death and the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)



Note: Below average N=57, Average N=170, Above average N=150.

Unfortunately when we jump from age at death to death causes there seems to be no relation between the latter and career success (see Figure 4). In fact, the three groups seem not to differ substantially: whether quick or slow, all workers seem to be exposed to the same physical risks.

Figure 4 The relation between death causes and the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)



Note: Below average N=46, Average N=131, Above average n=118.

Apart from the age effect we distinguish between four groups of factors which in theory might determine career speed, in no specific order:

a. *Social capital*, also expressed as the role of the father (or the parents, or even the parents in law) as 'occupational broker'.⁴⁰ In principle the sources offer the following possibilities to research this factor:

*first of course the status of the father or the father in law. Virtually all registrations in Lippe distinguish between high status which means different grades of ownership of houses and land on the one hand (Meyer, Colonus, Kötter etc.⁴¹) and average status for the propertyless (Einlieger, Heuerling etc.⁴²). This distinction is so crucial because of the indivisibility of property in the principality, which means that only one single child could inherit real estate if available, while the others had to become Einlieger if they stayed in the countryside, i.e. had to rent a

⁴⁰ I, Maas and M. H. D. van Leeuwen. 2008. 'Van een dubbeltje naar een kwartje? Beroepsloopbanen van mannen en vrouwen in Nederland tussen 1865 en 1940'. in: I. Maas, Ineke, M. H.D. van Leeuwen and K. Mandemakers (eds). *Honderdvijftig jaar levenslopen. De Historische Steekproef Nederlandse bevolking*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 179.

⁴¹ We are well aware of the fact that these properties range from very small to very large. At this moment we cannot differentiate between them for lack of sources. We may safely suppose that most persons in our sample which fall in this group were small property owners.

⁴² In our classification we have added all craftsmen.

cottage on somebody else's property (further differentiation is in principle possible on the basis of land registers and probate inventories; this lies beyond the scope of this article however). Finally we distinguish the not insignificant group of parents with a low status, i.e. day labourers and parents of brick makers born out of wedlock,⁴³

*second, possibly change of residence before starting to become a brick maker which might add to social experience;

*third, place of birth, e.g. where average income, school facilities or the presence of enough other brick makers might make a difference.⁴⁴

b. The *opportunity structure* in the place or region of destination.⁴⁵ In principle the sources offer the following possibilities to research this factor:

*First the Ziegelbote-district where one starts to work or where one works most years;

*second, the same might apply to the specific region or place within a Ziegelbote-district

*third, idem the factory (level of mechanization, etc.).

c. *Physical natural ability*, as apparent from health. The sources offer the following possibilities to research this factor:

*first the cause of death (see already Figure 4);

*second the age at death (see already Figure 3);

*third a combination of the two.⁴⁶

d. *Talent, skill, initiative or other psychological qualities*. In principle the sources offer the following possibilities to research this factor⁴⁷;

⁴³ This low status can hardly be attributed to the brick makers of our sample because only one or two are classified as day labourers and because we have no data about any illegitimate children. This consequence is clearly visible in Figure 5.

⁴⁴ Cf. administrative units in Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 161-168.

⁴⁵ For a classification see Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*, 161-168.

⁴⁶ It is possible to study this relationship for those persons in our sample which drew money from the Krankenkasse. This still has to be elaborated.

⁴⁷ In the future special attention should also go to the (limited number of) siblings or father-son pairs in our sample.

*first, success at the marriage market: at what age, with which partner, remarriage after which period of widowerhood;

*second, e.g. change of occupation or job, at what age, in which direction, e.g. between brick maker and non-brickmaker (including skilled crafts);

*third, change of residence from about age twenty (before the initiative will have been more likely in the hands of the parents), including settlement in the region of destination as was the case among a number of Lippe Brandmeister in the province of Groningen;

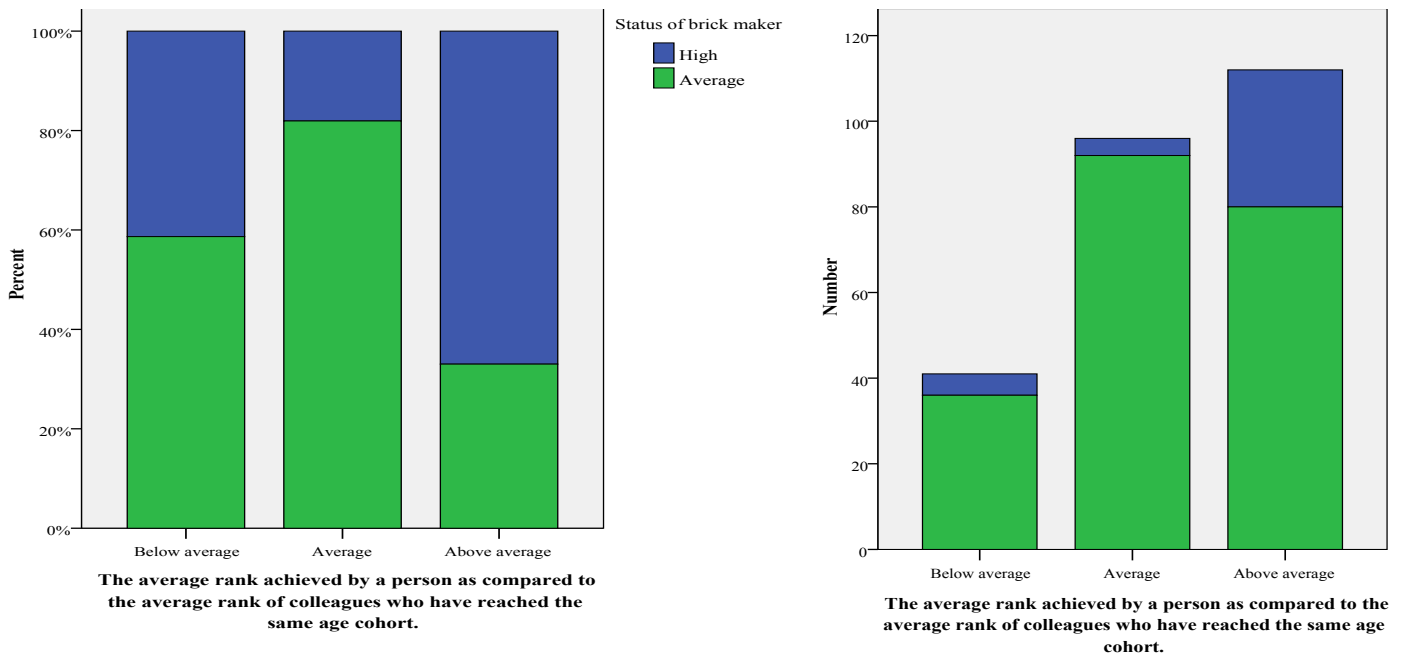
*fourth, change of status, either when a propertyless man marries the heiress of a property (in which case in Lippe the man automatically has to adopt the family name of his spouse, which in fact is the name of the property) or when he buys such a property as there is a limited real estate market in the principality.

Only a limited number of factors from this long list have been investigated in this paper, partially because of a lack of sources, partially because this research is still in its experimental phase. The same applies to the statistical methods used: simple graphs (as already shown above in Figures 3 and 4) and no regressions or correlation coefficients yet. If the reader accepts all these limitations, he or she might be interested in the following observations on the factors which possibly contribute to the degree of success in making a career as seasonal brick maker in nineteenth-century Lippe.

To begin with social capital as status really seems to matter (See Figure 5). Those brick makers who once in their life have reached the position of real estate owners in Lippe are clearly better represented among the quick division than among the average and low achievers.⁴⁸ The question is, however, what is cause and what is consequence?

⁴⁸ In contrast to their fathers and fathers-in-law there are no brickmakers with a low status (parents of illegal children or

Figure 5 The relation between status of brick makers and the success of their careers (Data set per 21 January 2011)



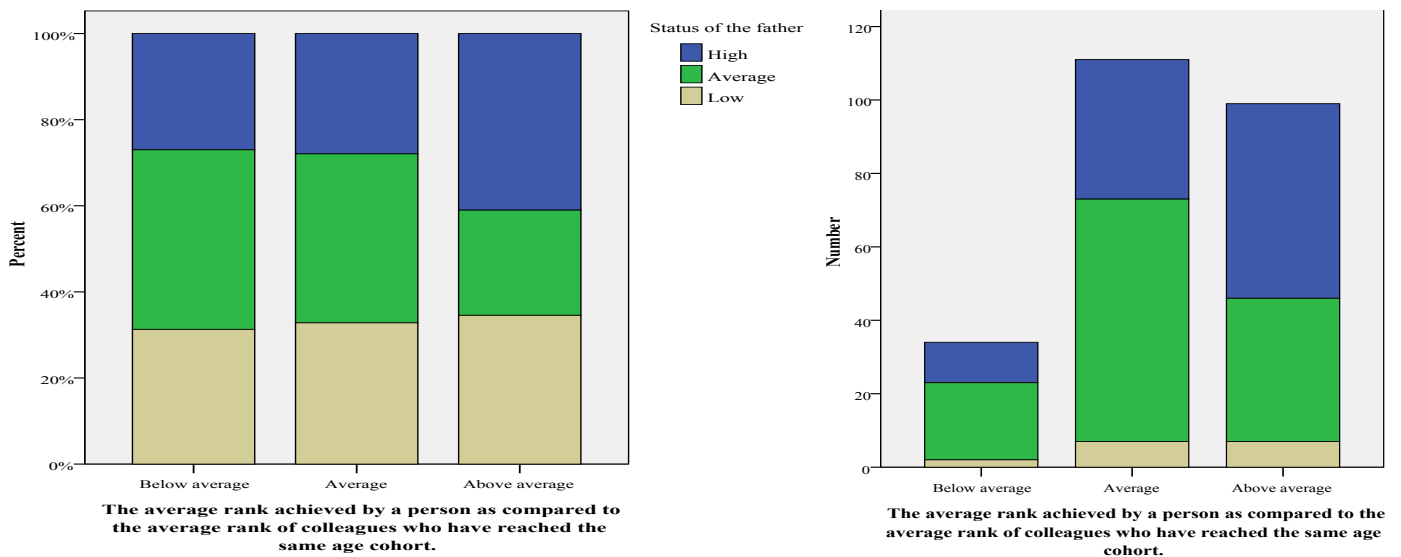
Note: Below average N=41, Average n=96, Above average n=112.

Are persons with a high status when young (derived from that of their father) more self-confident which makes them into 'natural leaders' and therefore quick career makers as Brandmeister at an early age? Or is the creditworthiness of their father an advantage? Or are disinherited sons of farmers (remember: in Lippe real estate was legally 'unteilbar' or impartible, so only one child could inherit it) extra motivated to earn enough money and to regain the status once lost? Or is a high status rather consequence than cause and does a quick career, and as a consequence the possibility to make savings enable somebody to acquire real estate and the higher status which in the Lippe context is attached to it?

In principle all this is possible, but on the basis of Figure 5 it is hard to say something for sure. However, a possible answer is to be found by looking into the status of the father (Figure 6) and the father in law (Figure 7). Both seem to have an impact on the success of a brick maker's

career. Interesting is the stronger effect in the case of fathers-in-law.⁴⁹ Why does the father's status seem to have a less significant effect than the status of the spouse's father? Because of the rather late age at which these brick makers married – nearer to age 30 than to age 25 - we would like to suggest that career success enabled many a young man not only to convince the girl he liked, but also her parents to consent into a marriage. The other possibility, 'natural self-confidence', creditworthiness of one's father, or the will to regain the lost status of one's youth - all connected to the status of the father of the brick maker – may have played a less important role. This conclusion is confirmed by the high proportion of low-status fathers-in-law among the slow career makers – this in contrast to the status of their own fathers which does not have any impact. Apparently those with a slow career could only marry daughters of day labourers or girls born out of wedlock (compare bar 1 and bar 3 in Figure 7).

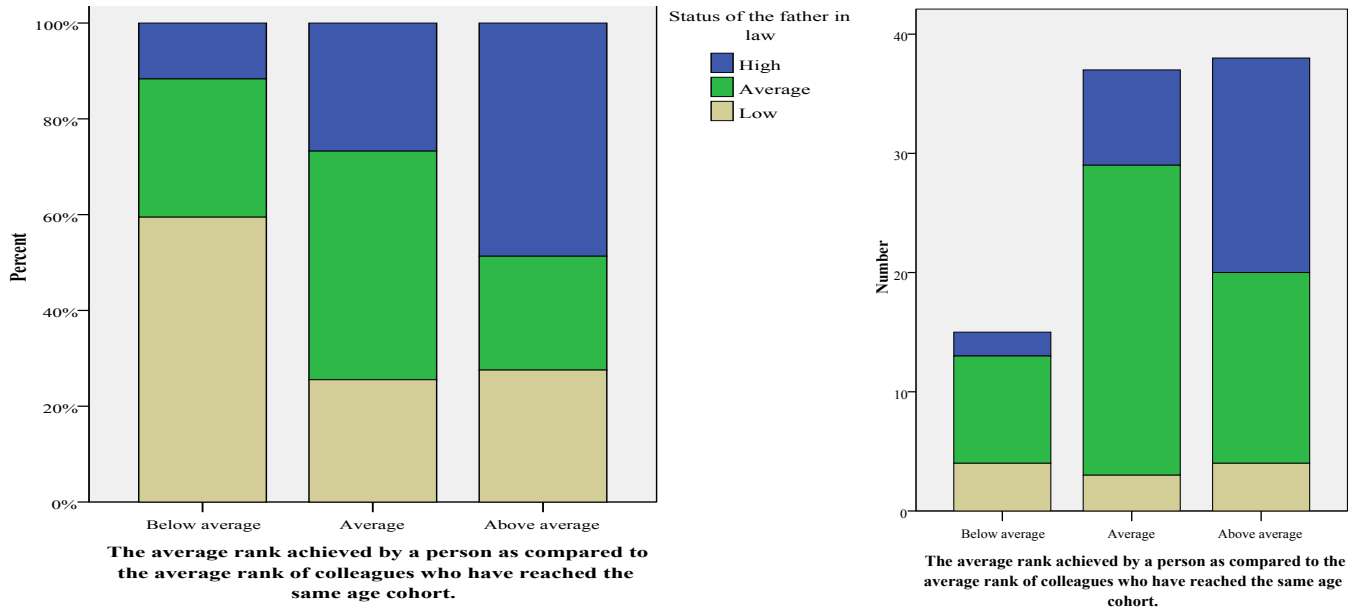
Figure 6 The relation between status of the father and the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)



Note: Below average N=34, Average N=111, Above average N=99.

⁴⁹ Even if we take into account the smaller number of the fathers in law whose status is known to us up until now.

Figure 7 The relation between status of one's father in law and the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)

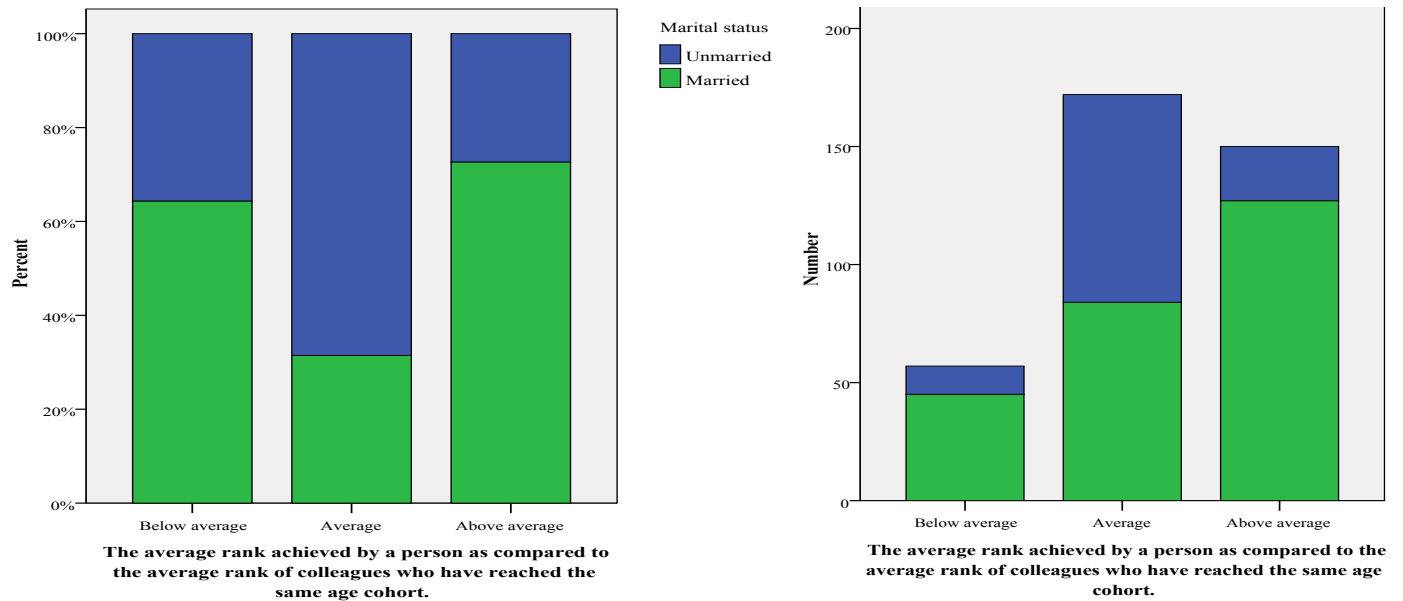


Note: Below average N=15, Average N=37, Above average N=38.

This insight asks for the relation more in general between success at the labour market and success at the marriage market. Out of 625 Lippe brick makers of whom we know the birth date, in total 382 managed to marry⁵⁰ as far as we know now. This is not only the majority (60%), but even the far majority if we consider only those who reached at least the age of 25 (nearly 75%; see table 4). As Figure 8 shows there is such a relation – at least when we compare the second and the third bar. At the same time also the majority of the slow career makers did find a spouse, albeit of a lower status as we have seen in Figure 7. Besides, if we compare Figure 7 with Figure 3, we also see why the average career makers seem to be less successful in the marriage market: they simply are much younger than the two other groups.

Figure 8 The relation between marital status and the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)

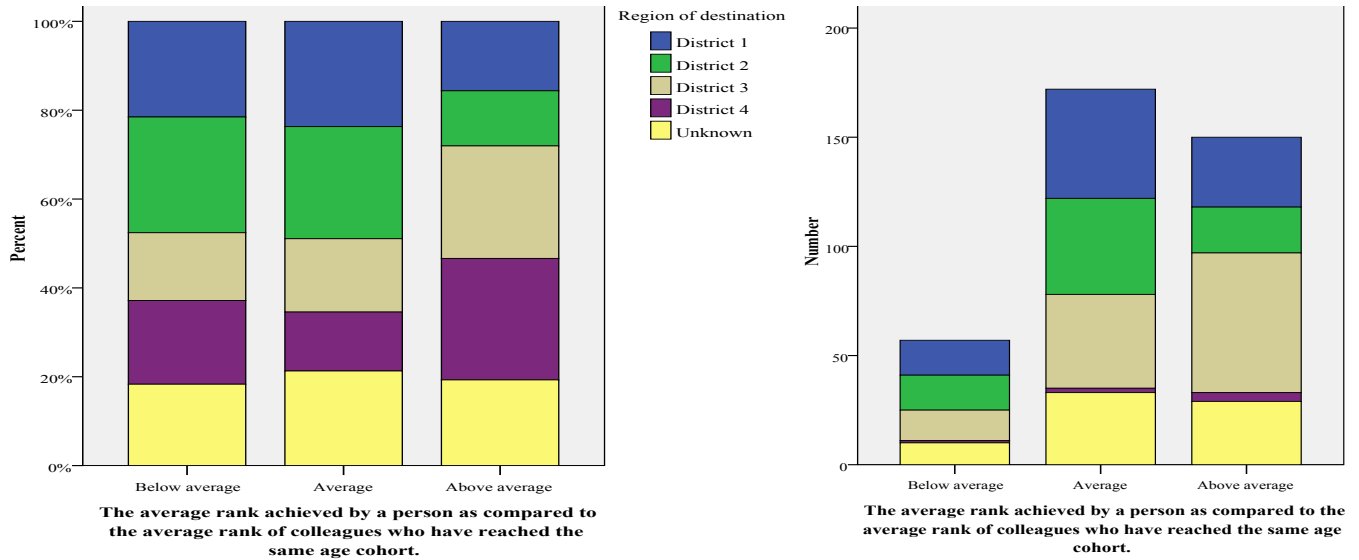
⁵⁰ At least once, out of whom 50 married a second time and a handful even a third time.



Note: Below average N=57, Average N=172, Above average N=150.

Finally, for this paper we have looked at the opportunity structure in the place or region of destination as well as in the place of origin. In principle brick makers were free to choose the district of destination, in reality we see a certain tendency to remain for years on row in one and the same district, while at the same time changing gangs within. We may ask ourselves whether it was wise to stick to one district. This might seem to be a silly question because the organization of all four districts was equal under the law of the principality. Nevertheless, the figure seems to suggest that it was more advantageous to work in the third district and less so in the first and second districts (the figures for the fourth district are not significant as they are too small) as Figure 9 suggests. The reason is not easy to give, except for the fact that the third district was much larger than the second and certainly than the first districts. In theory the size of a district offers more possibilities to improve one's position because of the larger number of candidate-gangs.

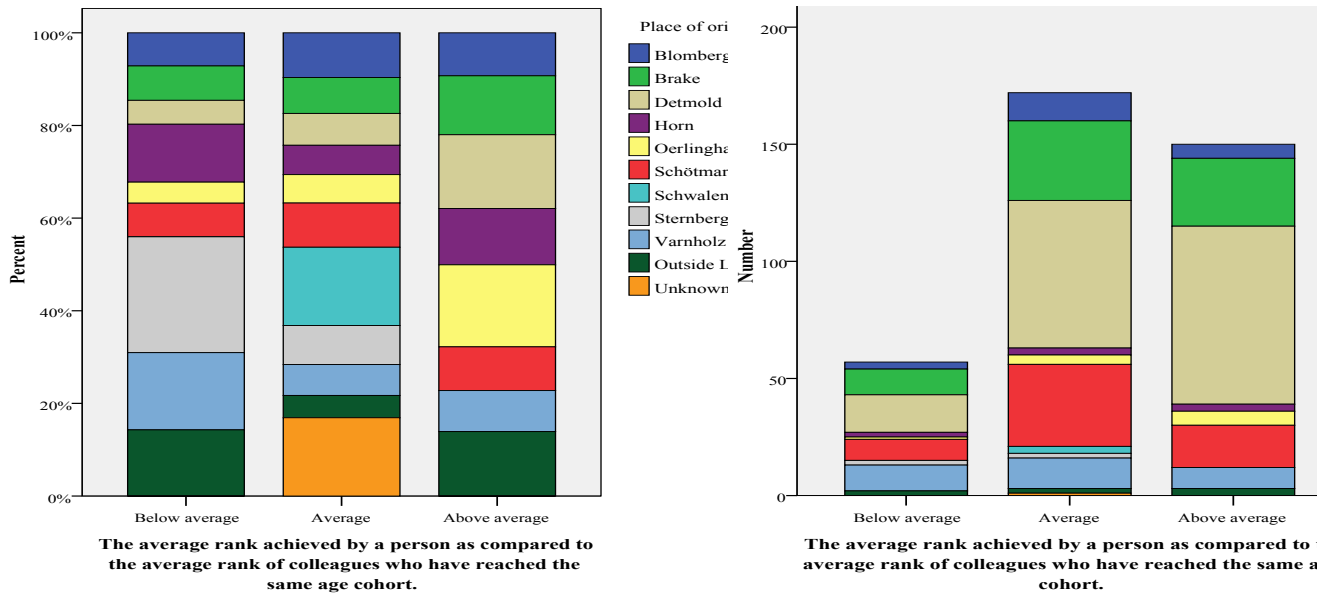
Figure 9 The relation between region of destination and the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)



Note: Below average N=57, average N=172, above average N=150.

If we turn to the region of departure, Lippe itself, a similar mechanism seems to be in place, which leans credibility to this line of thought. In Figure 10 we have listed the quick, the average, and the slow career makers according to the 'Amt' of residence or origin (an 'Amt' is the main administrative unit of Lippe; it contains a number of parishes; we have included the as such independent towns). A number of differences appear which ask for an explanation. Amt Detmold (including Lage) is clearly better represented among the quick career makers than among the two other groups. At the same time they provide substantial numbers of brick makers. This cannot be a coincidence according to us. Let us go back to the most concrete labour market, i.e. the market place and the surrounding pubs on a winter's Sunday morning. This must have been much more crowded in Lage than in most other places. Both here at home and in the district of destination more choice seems to have been important to improve one's position. And choice was at the very centre of the mechanism!

Figure 10 The relation between the place of origin and the success of a career (Data set per 21 January 2011)



Note: Below average N=57, average N=172, above average N=150.

6. Conclusions

In our first studies we analysed the phenomenon of the seasonal migrant labour of Lippe brick makers between the late seventeenth and the early twentieth century at the level of the principality of origin, its socio-economic characteristics, but certainly also its institutions (more in particular the Ziegelbote-system), and at the same time at the level of the regions of destination, especially the Dutch province of Groningen.⁵¹ In terms of material welfare we concluded that the organization of this heavy and dirty work during nine months from home might be called relatively successful within the world of pre-industrial and rural wage labour. Collective action in the form of strikes or court cases certainly was part of the repertoire of

⁵¹ P. Lourens and J. Lucassen. 1984. 'Mechanisering en arbeidsmarkt in de Groningse steenbakkerijen gedurende de negentiende eeuw', *Jaarboek voor de Geschiedenis van Bedrijf en Techniek* 1, 188-215, idem, *Lipsker op de Groninger tichelwerken.*, and idem, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*; See also A. Gladen et al. (eds). 2007. *Hollandgang im Spiegel der Reiseberichte evangelischer Geistlicher. Quellen zur saisonalen Arbeitswanderung in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Münster: Aschendorf.

action, but was used extremely sparsely.⁵² Comparison with other groups of migratory brick makers in Western Europe and North India yielded important similarities, but also differences especially with less fortunate sedentary brick makers which enabled us to formulate conditions of success and failure more precisely.⁵³ These results have to be ploughed back into more general ideas about piece vs. time wages and sedentary vs. migratory work.

An explorative study of 123 individual Lippe brickmakers active around 1850 opened our eyes for the fact that these men every year at the start of the season tried to improve their own position and the composition of their gangs. It also suggested that the Lippe recruitment and career system was a meritocratic one: experience seemed to be decisive for upward career mobility. This small sample strongly asked for more research on the individual level.⁵⁴

In this paper we present the first results of our research on a much larger sample of 921 brick makers who died during or immediately after the season within the period 1840-1875. Through several steps of unfortunately necessary elimination⁵⁵ we ended up with a group of nearly 400 respondents for which a number of comparisons could be made between success in career making and potentially explanatory factors.

For the question of job mediation the well-studied topic of the Ziegelbote system remains an important issue. Some more examples of such messengers are known, like Gras- or Torfboten, but the Lippe Ziegelbote system seems to be quite unique, also in an international context.⁵⁶ However, this paper has shown that the role of the individual in the formation of gangs may have been even more important in order to understand the job mediation mechanism. Very provisionally some conclusions may be drawn about this mechanism.

Maybe the most important conclusion is the devouring character of the system. Where we speak of the success of the system, from now on we have to qualify this statement by adding that this may only apply for those who lived long enough to taste it (see Table 4). A second, much

⁵² This has not been elaborated upon, but see Lourens and Lucassen, *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung* and also J. Lucassen. 2006. 'Brickmakers in Western Europe (1700-1900), and Northern India (1800-2000): Some Comparisons', in: Idem, *Global Labour History. A State of the Art*, Bern: Peter Lang, 513-571.

⁵³ Lucassen, Brickmakers in Western Europe and Northern India and J. Lucassen. 2006. 'The Brickmakers' Strikes on the Ganges Canal in 1848-1849', *International Review of Social History* 51, Supplement 14, 47-84.; cf also the forthcoming comparison between Western Europe, India and Russia in G. Kessler and Jan Lucassen, 'Labour Relations, Efficiency and the Great divergence. Comparing pre-industrial brickmaking across Eurasia, 1500-2000', chapter for volume from S.R. Epstein Memorial Conference *Technology and Human Capital Formation in the East and West*, London School of Economics, 18-21 June 2008, to be edited by Patrick O'Brien, Maarten Prak, and Jan Luiten van Zanden (2011).

⁵⁴ Lourens and Lucassen, 'Karrieren lippischer Ziegler'.

⁵⁵ Not included are brick makers (1) who were resident outside the principality; (2) who were resident inside Lippe, but whose year of birth is still unknown to us; (3) for whom we have only a very basic, though complete life course but with only limited career data.

⁵⁶ Jan Lucassen, *Migrant Labour in Europe 1600-1900. The Drift to the North Sea* (London etc. 1987); Lucassen, 'Brickmakers in Western Europe and Northern India'; Gladen et al., *Hollandgang im Spiegel der Reiseberichte evangelischer Geistlicher*.

more tentative conclusion confirms the rather meritocratic nature of a brick makers' career. Not so much one's social background determined career success, but rather the other way around: success in career making seemed to enable a brick maker to have success in the life course at large.

The complementarity of explanations at the different levels of analysis in this particular case has much wider implications for Global Labour History. It shows how also pre-industrial and rural labourers are an integral part of this field. It shows as well that only a multi-level approach enables us to enrich our insights and to rejuvenate this important study. Important indeed, even if not all workers in the world spent so many hours on the job (some 16 hours per day or more than 90 per week) and with their comrades (nine full months per year) as the Lippe brick makers did.

Part of labour history is the history of job mediation. This paper shows how important it is to study institutions also at the level of the individual job seekers – but not in isolation. Workers work together and their mutual relation may be as important or even more important than the relation between the worker and his boss.

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