

Minutes of the First Workshop of the Global Collaboratory on the History of Labour Relations in the period 1500-2000

(Karin Hofmeester, Jan Kok, Christine Moll/Murata)

13 and 14 April, IISH Amsterdam

Session 1: 13 April, 10-12.30

Discussion on the typology of the various forms of labour relations and their applicability world wide

After a short welcome and introduction on the Collaboratory and the Friedrich Henkel Stiftung project by Karin Hofmeester and Christine Moll-Murata, Jan Lucassen elaborated on the historical background of the project. Marcel van der Linden elucidated the typology of labour relations. It is based upon the ideas of Polanyi, Weber and Marx and departs from property rights (not determined by legal systems but by power relations).

Gijs Kessler and Shireen Moosvi stress that in their 'regions' a combination of labour relations was very common. Essential point to decide is whether one type prevails, or a combination of types should be entered in the database. José Miguel Lana Berasain also stresses this point, adding that it might be better not to take the individual as central unit of measurement but the hours of work. Kessler states that this is even harder to do, also it makes the research more an economic than a sociological-cultural exercise. Van der Linden suggests the solution that if several combinations of labour relations are very common, maybe these combinations should be added as to the typology as new categories. Also, maybe individual labour relations as well as hours of work can be used as unit of measurement. Boomgaard points at the danger of double counts. Hofmeester stresses that a combination of labour relations within one individual is not a problem for the database.

Concerning the types of labour relations connected to producing for redistribution, Moosvi and Kessler also stressed the importance of the local level: the craftsmen in village communities in India (jajmani) and obščina in Russia

Connected to this several participants (Erdem Kabadayi; Moosvi; Kwamina Panford, Lex Heerma van Voss) proposed to define property relations in more detail: use rights, usufruct, ownership, property (you own the land but can't sell it). Lucassen concludes that entitlement is a more workable concept than ownership. Connected to property rights and power relations are remarks concerning the role of the State (Michel Doortmont) which functions as employer and exerts power. Also, commercial colonial enterprises were mixes of enterprises and states. This should be kept in mind when we define power relations.

Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk questions the relevance of the separate labour typology for children. Should women not also form a separate category? Is the definition of a child not culturally determined? Moll-Murata points at the original typology which was included in the Henkel Stiftung proposal. Here a row for the ownership of the means of reproduction was added. This would elucidate the separate child category. Lana Berasain suggests apprenticeship instead of child labour. Van der Linden stresses that these are two different things.

Questions of Mieke Mertens on the work of soldiers, of Moosvi on producers versus service workers (adding value and not adding-value) and of Van Nederveen Meerkerk on legal and illegal work lead to the statement of Lucassen that we will not decide which work is useful or not, legal or illegal. People produce material and immaterial products (services).

In the more general discussion on the typology some participants stress the fact that the 15 types lead to a multiple number of variables (Marco van Leeuwen). Kessler argues that if we discover that only 15 of them are relevant, then this is part of our analysis. Kabadayi proposes the smaller scheme on page 6 of the Introduction by Lucassen and Van der Linden. More participants favor a smaller table. Lucassen states that the small table from p. 6 is too simplistic if we look at the level at which redistribution takes place. The discussions have led us to the insight that this is a very important point. Willem van Schendel asks why we should start with a typology, should it not rather be the outcome of the projects, since it is already based on strong cultural assumptions. Hofmeester stresses that the leaders of the project want to stick to the original idea to set up and apply a typology from the beginning of the project.

Lucassen concludes that we should keep our objective in mind: that is not producing statistics, but to understand labour relations. We have to find categories that allow comparisons across time and space.

Session 2: 13 April, 13.30-15.30

Methodological implementations I: discussion in the available data and its shortcomings

Africa

Jan Pieter Smits points at the scarcity of data for Africa before 1900. How far do we go with classifications if we have very little data? He proposes flexible frameworks that allow for complexity and for limited information (to ensure global coverage). Doortmont points at the availability of data for certain areas, and the lack of it for other. Secondary sources could give information on the pre 1900 period, though maybe more qualitative. Specialists in the field of Arab sources who can cover Central and Eastern Africa are lacking in the project, we will have to find them. Also the sources from Franco-phone Africa should not be neglected. Panford stresses the importance of systems of landownership. For Ghana trade union and (diamond) mining companies might be useful, just as UN data and the archives of foreign companies.

Ottoman Empire

Kabadayi points at the lack of general figures before 1900. For the Ottoman Balkan there are language problems, other specialists will have to help here. He stresses that researchers on North Africa work in the Istanbul archives, he will try to find out their names. At the IISH we will check the archives of the Second International on data concerning the Ottoman Empire. Turaj Atabaki point at the British report of 1908. Moll-Murata asks if there are any sources on labour ethics? Kabadayi states there are fatwas on the proper conducts of artisans. He will send them to her.

China/Japan

Moll-Murata states that for 1500 and 1650 the census in China understated the number of inhabitants. That is why it is difficult to estimate the proportion of the working population. She wonders if 2000 should also be covered by our project, if so someone else should cover this cross section. (NB: we first have to make an inventory of all the data already digitally available for 2000 before we start entering data ourselves). ? Prof. Matthias of Bochum University is prepared to work on Japan 1800-1900. Moll-Murata wonders if we really need the database for the cross section 1500. She stresses the problems of 'border' areas like Manchuria.

India

Moosvi would like to separate pre-colonial and colonial data, because the nature of the data is very different. With respect to demographic data: urban and rural population figures are feasible. For the pre-colonial data occupational data exists only for parts of India. There are good data for prices and wages. However, the labour relations will be a problem: there is no serfdom, but caste; the village community predominates, there are large amounts of female domestic slavery. She signals ethnographic surveys which might be very useful because they describe castes that change profession en group. Van Schendel thinks India will be a strong region; already good studies are available. Of course, there are regional differences in quality of data. Moghul state has very good data, but what about the Maharaj states, Candy; Nepal? Assam? Burma? Thailand and Vietnam: we cannot miss them. Moosvi states Birma is available from 1850, before that there is little. Van Schendel states that this project can broaden up the discussions on slavery. Hofmeester will ask Tirtankar Roy about his contribution to the project.

South East Asia

Peter Boomgaard states there are only guestimations (Victor Lieberman and Anthony Reid) on South East Asia. As from 1870 there are censuses for Indonesia, though they don't cover the whole area. He thinks it is impossible to find quantitative data on slavery in Thailand and Indonesia. Maybe for Vietnam better statistics are available, the same goes for Luzon and Burma. Ulbe Bosma asks about Java in the early 19th century. Boomgaard states that for 1820 there is a complete breakdown, however there are very little slaves then. We know do know the rules about corvee labour.

Russia

Kessler illustrates the territorial expansion of 'Russia' from 1500 to 2000 offers problems; this relates to the whole problem of comparability. There is a lot of data on newly colonized areas, e.g. Caucasus in the Central Asia Institute in Petersburg. He stresses that there are lot of developments in between the census dates. Lucassen states we will work around the census years, we should not be too precise on the dates, but take the best thing. Heerma van Voss points at Kessler's 1500 map. Clearly whole areas of the world are not covered. We

have to make crude estimates for the white parts on the map, at least. What do we do when those estimates are not possible? Can we assign those grey areas to the participants? Or should we find others?

Session 3: 13 April, 15.45-18.00

Methodological implementations II: discussion on the format of the database

After the demonstration of the database by Hofmeester a discussion starts on the level of locality: nations, regions or communities. Generally agreed is that country-level data is needed, but regional and city level data can also be useful. Hofmeester stresses the rule of entering data on the occupational structure as it is found in the sources. Afterwards these will be standardized with the help of HISCO. Kessler and Van Nederveen point at the difficulties of this method, why not use HISCO straight away? The manual on data gathering and entering will settle this question. Panford asks if we can critique existing data, going back to the sources is possible, but the project as it is now has no large financial resources. Heerma van Voss states we should avoid entering data we don't need. Kessler wonders do we really need such a database? Only if it were an end product, but we mainly want to understand global changes in labour relations. This could also be one table that sums up the estimates from the individual reports. Hofmeester states then you miss a step—how to make the estimates as such. The database is an instrument to make such an assessment.

Concluding remarks

Heerma van Voss: we should find a common approach: national or regional. For China and India a city approach might also be very helpful. We should decide upon level of aggregation. For 2000 we should look at what is already there. We should develop a manual for data gathering. We should reconsider the idea of entering the occupational titles as we find the sources. This is a very precise way of working that does not really respond with the rough estimations we make in other fields.

Session 4: 14 April, 10.00 -13.00

Re-evaluation of the typology

As we did not finish the presentation of the available data for the various areas, we start with a presentation of the data.

Low Countries

Bas van Bavel explains that the 1500 and 1650 data pertains to households. Individual members are often not qualified. Only the main occupation of the head of the household is

provided and servants are not mentioned. Neither is the size of the household. No data is available on age or gender. Occasionally, there are detailed listings available for several towns (eg Leijden). : activities , ages, formal (!) occupation of all members). At the time already the nuclear family was dominant. There was no serfdom or slavery. However, and interesting aspects is that wage labour was already prevailing early in the countryside. Van Bavel stresses the large differences between regions.

Van Gerwen: reviews the later period. We can make use here of standardized data. He puts the issue of entrepreneurs central. The self-employed were very important, and there were different types.

Italy

Luca Mocarrelli states that for the early modern age, we can cover the towns in the territory, rural areas will be difficult. There is some data on unfree labour, eg on ships. A good reconstruction is possible for Florence. Van Bavel emphasis that this kind of data is highly valuable for the entire project. Mocarrelli doubts whether the material is useful, it is not complete or representative, e.g. there is no data on migrants. Also, he would not know how to extract the labour relations. Van Bavel offers help. Starting from 1870 and even more so from 1911 there are good data.

Spain

Lana Berasain points at the regional data, they can quite easily be followed through the cross sections. There are several good censuses. The 1900 census only looks at sector, not relations. Likewise, 2000 is not perfect. For real good data, we need to get the archives—but that would take much time. So, only rough data are available now. A problem is the small-holders-workers: how are we to solve/make out what is the most important?

Re-evaluation of the typology

Lucassen makes a resumé: We are after *mapping* of labour relations, irrespective of formal/informal/legal/illegal; useful/useless/productive/destructive. There appears to be a consensus regarding the use of an adapted version of diagram p.6: eight categories. We can discuss that now, but we have to make a decision. Proposal:

Category

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | unproductive children and elderly | |
| 2 | production for the hh | |
| 3 | production for redistribution | a.local level (e.g. jajmani3 |
| 4 | | b.national level (supra local) corvee, |
| 5 | production for the market | a.independent producers |

- 6 b.employers with personnel
- 7 free labour (casual/putting out/managers)
- 8 unfree labour (indent/serfs/slaves)

About the issue of multiple occupations/sources of income/multiple lab relations. We recognize it, but when it comes to statistics: one must choose the most important source of income; the activity that yields most income; and mention the difficulties in the footnotes. The team will elaborate how this will be done. Some kind of unification is important. We will not hide complexity, it will be accounted for in the end.

About the division of labour in the group:

The objective of the project is: to provide an overview of the whole world population in unified regions. Thus, we cannot leave countries out. We will have to solve that. Doortmont already agreed to have a separate workshop for Africa. Can we do this for other regions as well? We will contact our links in the Americas. It is the responsibility of IISH to fill the gaps.

The discussion first focuses on the typology.

Remarks from Mertens and Van Bavel point at the inconsistency of the use of the term free and unfree in the new typology. Kessler asks why free-unfree so vital. Lucassen answers that this is essential to the project. Kessler± then it should be put in the redistribution part of the scheme as well. Doortmont: supposes to go back to a matrix model. Kessler points at the differences between (relatively unfree) farmers on a collective farms in the SU and workers on a plantation. How can one separate truly on the basis of free/unfree. Van der Linden answers that production for the market or not, should not be the issue. With respect to free/unfree: the issue should be the kind of compulsion: economic or non-economic. Lucassen makes a 'final' remark on the typology. Clearly, it is not solved yet; but we need a simple one. Perhaps we should make explicit the arbitrariness, eg in unfree/free.

A question on apprenticeship follows : there are different types according to contracts; where to put them? Mostly they are put with the craftsmen. Ariadne Schmidt answers one cannot make such a distinction in practice

Bosnma states that the solution of using footnotes (e.g. changes in corvee rates over time) seems not wise. How can we track developments from remarks in footnotes?

Kessler signals theoretical/practical problems. It seems anachronistic to decide about what is the most important job? The past did not operate like this. We miss out on crucial dimensions of the past. Then we miss out the real interesting story, the fundamental changes are hidden in

the footnotes. We're going to miss vital information in this way. Hofmeester states if we miss unpaid corvee labour, we miss unfree labour. Van der Linden states we have to add new categories, e.g. of mixed occupation. Hofmeester responds indeed we can indicate in the database whether persons work in category 1/2/3. Then we can count.

Lucassen: Combinations will not make things easier, but we need to find a solution for the mixed occupations. Indeed, the solution of deciding upon the main source of income is wrong, that should be the *main labour relation*.

Session 5: 14 April, 14.00 -15.45

Planning and discussion on the ideological aspects of labour relations

Planning:

Hofmeester suggests the following steps:

- We will come up with names to fill the missing geographical parts
- We will reevaluate the database: level of details, standardisation etc.
- We will write a manual, with strict rules, of course, based on discussion (e.g. on the level of locality etc)
- This will be published on the server.

Time table.

June-Oct 2007: start data input;

November 2007 1st presentation at SSHA conference, this will be a report on the data-input experiment.

Early 2008, a workshop (possibly in Vienna) will also be devoted to evaluate our proceedings.

February 2008 presentation at ESSHC Lisbon

End 2008: final meeting, result of data gathering activities.

There, we will signal lacunae in the data and formulate a research plan/proposal

After a short discussion on the borders of certain regions, it is decided that all participants who have areas that overlap, will publish an overview of their boundaries on the website of the server. We can then compare and divide areas. If the participants cannot solve the problem, the project leaders will decide.

On the definition of a city it is decided to stick to 5000 inhabitants or more unless other relevant data available. Panford asks if we have to worry about the validity of the data. It is

always subject to manipulation by states. The answer to this question is that this has to be put in the footnotes. Other information in the questionnaire: e.g. on social position, religion, social group, nationality: only apply this when applicable.

Labour relations: the final typology will be developed soon.

Kessler states: this project aims both at a database and at explanations of changing labour relations simultaneously. What is the priority? Hofmeester: the main thought is that the database will help us with the second goal. Lucassen: but it is also an aim in itself, in the sense that we need it for a larger grant application. But, we have to remain realistic. This is just the first step in a very large project in which we try to chart broad changes. Once we succeed with that, we can start developing hypotheses and the 'real work' will begin. Kessler: So the database will have to be ready by the end of 2008.

Ideological aspects of labour relations

(Minutes by Christine Moll/Murata)

In „Traditional Chinese Concepts of Labour“, Christine introduced three patterns of elite thought regarding labour and labour hierarchy: The division of labour between the mind workers who rule the others, and the physical labourers who are ruled by the mind workers (Mencius, 4th c. BCE); the concept of the four classes of commoners (scholar-officials, farmers, artisans, and merchants; 4th-3rd c. BCE) and its permutations in the course of the centuries until the end of the Imperial Era (1911); and finally, the concept of division of labour among the genders, „men plow, women weave“ that eroded the period of rising commercialization in the 15th century. This last process deeply concerned the ruling elite, which saw the moral and social order endangered by weaving men performing women's work and „idle“ women engaged in other, more profitable economic pursuits such as cotton processing, cash cropping, or other artisanal occupations.

Sarah R. Ferris (University La Sapienza, Rome) presented her paper „Labour Ideologies: Max Weber's Contribution“, which introduces Max Weber's theoretical concept of the *Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen* and discussed its applicability to the project. Despite obvious errors and ethnocentrism, Sarah assumes that elements of Weber's approach could serve as inspiration for our group.

In the discussion, opinions were divided whether this was a valid approach since Weber was not adequately informed on some world regions and left out others completely, for example most of Africa. Moreover, it was stressed that Weber and Marx should be considered in conjunction.

In a brainstorming how to integrate the inquiry in labour ideologies or mentalities into the entire project, the following ideas and suggestions were formulated:

1) Integration of database and formulations of labour mentalities by way of text collection.

2) Like Max Weber, we can look at “Holy Texts” for relevant information. Other texts that may contain information on labour mentalities are:

- Judicial records and other cases of conflict resolution
- Fictive narratives and traditions

Apart from texts, labour mentalities may also be expressed in rituals such as workers’ or guild festivals, patron saints, and objects of material culture, such as artefacts and places of devotion.

Finally, family relations, inheritance systems may harbour rich information on labour relations and gendered distribution of work.

3) Religious systems of modernity should also include socialism, social Darwinism, and nationalism.

4) Although this part of the project is linked to the “Henkel project” which concentrates on the early phase, 1500 to 1650, consideration of labour relations should not be restricted to that relatively short time period.

5) This part of the exercise should not get lost in the effort of supplying the database with quantitative data.

Conclusion/Roundtable:

Important points that come up:

We need to know what is the final end product by the end of the project. The degree of completion of the database is crucial. We have to distinguish realistic short term goals vs overall long-term goals. Freedom in terms of data interpretation and collection seems dangerous. We need rather strict guidelines.

We have to finalise the typology with the help of e mail and discussion lists. The project leaders will publish a new typology. Then the participants should take a few of their most complicated cases: if that does not fit the typology you must propose a concrete amendment to the typology!

Information on wages and prizes should not be entered in the database, they could give us information on the ideology of labour relations, so please signal them.

If real important changes take place between cross sections, we should mention them.

If research in raw census data is very useful we should try to find extra funding.

We also should consider buying datasets.

Gender is an aspect not only of the typology of labour relations, but also of the ideology of labour. Include it in the whole project.

An effort should be made somehow to include hours of work in the database.

Everyone is asked to send advices on material in general, and on the ideology of labour to the Discussion list that will be set up.