

Minutes Latin America Workshop of the Global Collaboratory on the History of Labour Relations

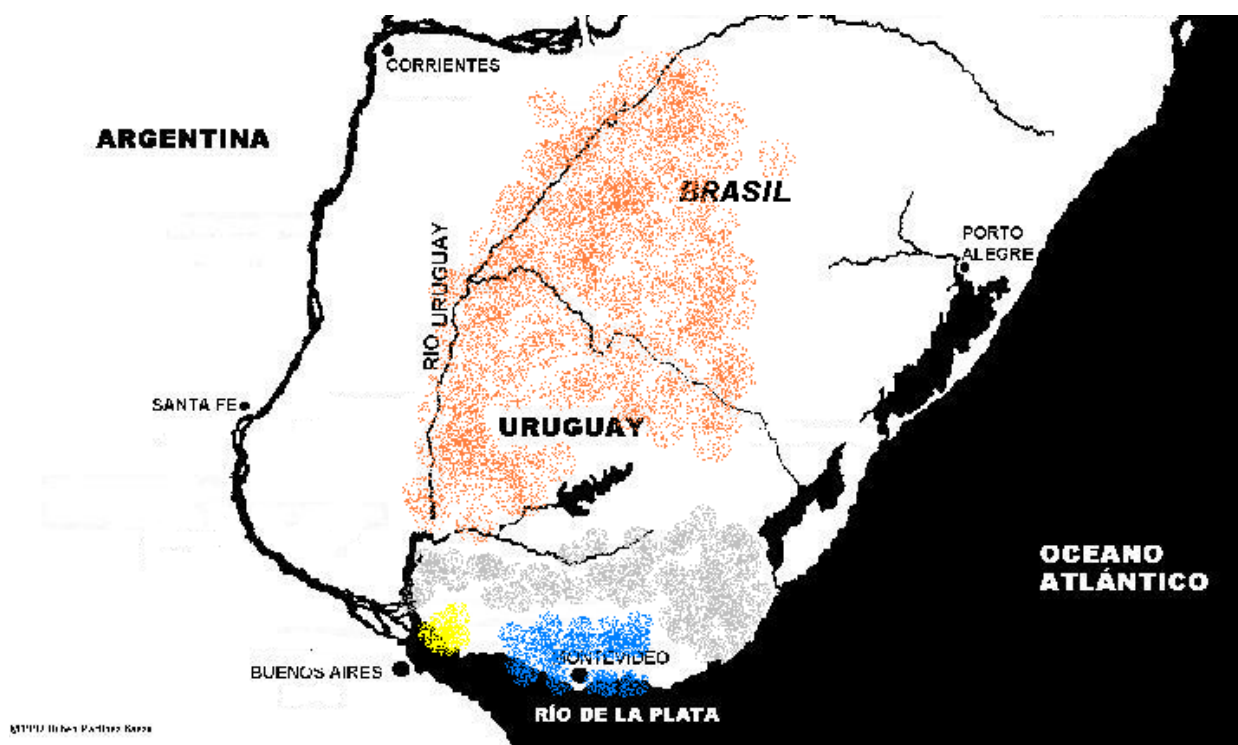
27 November 2008, IISH Amsterdam

Present: Óscar Bascañán, Tarcisio Botelho, Karin Hofmeester (minutes) Reza Jafari, José Miguel Lana Berasain, Marcel van der Linden, Jan Lucassen, Christine Moll-Murata, María Inés Moraes, Shireen Moosvi, Michael Zeuske

After a guided tour of the IISH and a lunch we start at 1p.m. with an introduction to the Collaboratory and its background by Jan Lucassen. After an initial focus on wage labour, we now look at all types of labour relations, free and unfree, world wide from 1500 to 2000, to identify major shifts in it. The project is not restricted to figures; it is also about the ideas behind it, i.e. the mind set of people working in it.

María Inés Moraes starts with a presentation on Uruguay, stressing new insight on its early colonisation. Europeans started to control the area at the end of the 17th century, coming from the North and going to the South. They did not find the alleged ‘democratic emptiness’, instead a period of interaction between the native population and Europeans and their descendants started.

She stresses that ‘Uruguay as a nation’ is a 19th century idea. The historic regions that we have data on are *districts*, each of one born by a specific process of settlement, ruled by different law and furthermore with specific sources, to start with. These are the district of Jesuits towns (orange in the map), the Montevideo district (blue), and the *Colonia do Sacramento* district (yellow). Later on, according to the history of settlement, we need to introduce a fourth district that encompasses a set of towns located in the North shore of Rio de la Plata that were under Buenos Aires local authority (grey in the map).



Cattle-ranching was the main source of income, the ranches had different sizes and different types of labour relations prevailed. The ranches served internal markets, connecting rural labour and urban labour.

In general:

- free labour did not form a large share of the labour relations in rural areas
- slave labour prevailed until the 19th century
- share cropping was often a frequent phenomenon
- cattle ranching on communal farms existed. This was a legacy of the Jesuit system of capitalist labour relations with strong communal roots

Jan Lucassen states that the success of this communal system was linked to earlier systems of reciprocal labour, Maria points at one big novelty of the Jesuits: the reducciones where people up until then not fixed to the land (nomads) were put in one single town. These reducciones produced for the internal, colonial market, the former nomads served as travelling tradesmen, as sailors, but also as map makers.

Cattle ranches were connected to farm work. Michael Zeuske stresses the existence of these combined economic activities in Venezuela, where farm work, often controlled by few slaves, was done under surveillance of the cattle-ranches; he said also that Jesuits and other orders were, as in the plains region of the Banda Oriental (Uruguay), also present in the plains regions of Venezuela and New Granada (Colombia).

Christine Moll Murata asks where the surplus of the reducciones went: Maria answers: partly to the mission itself. In 1767 the Jesuits had to leave 'the country'.

In answer to a question by Christine on the labour of city wall builders, Maria stated that this work was done by workmen who were forced to do this work ('service to the crown', done by Indians), but were paid for it; by prisoners, as a form of paid convict labour, and by free men, the smallest group, who were doubly paid but not fed.

For a complete overview of the available data see her text on the collaboratory website in the folder Data for the workshop 27-29 November

Tarcisio Botelho gives a presentation on the available demographic data for Brazil 1500, 1650, 1800. For the pre-colonial period estimations have been made, including a division between free men and slaves. A good source for the colonial period is the census of 1776.

Several questions lead to the conclusion that it would be a good idea to divide the big (in size) country Brazil in economic-cultural regions:

- Cattle-ranching areas
- Mining areas
- Plantation areas
- Jesuits communities

And then give an overview of labour relations per region.

For the Sao Paulo region Tarcisio already has detailed information for 1800, consisting of lists of names of heads of households and their occupations. The region had sugar plantations, mining as well as cattle areas and data on labour relations are available. Jan asks if it is possible to make an age division of the population, determine the age at which one was supposed to start working and then determine the total working population. Tarcisio conforms

that this is possible and it is also possible to see which part of this total working population worked as slaves.

Since the large census was started in 1776, Tarcisio's project can be linked up with the project of Michael, since in the Spanish Empire also a census was started in 1776.

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Michael Zeuske presents the data of the 1776 census that can be found in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI), at Sevilla (Spain). This census given information on the number of heads of households and their family members in certain 'gubernaciones'; their estate, their class, their raza (ethnic make-up, often mixed), and the number of family members. Data on class are specifically well provided for the greatest cities, Mexico and Lima. For a complete overview see his text on the collaboratory website in the folder Data for the workshop 27-29 November.

Appointments made:

- Michael and Tarcisio will work with the 1776 census and compare, combine the data, in combination with Maria and her data on Uruguay for 1650 and 1800, and maybe also 1900?
- Michael will start making simple maps of economic-cultural regions of Spanish America for the various cross sections
- Jose Miguel Lana and Michael will work together on a glossary of Spanish occupational titles and their English translation
- Michael will try to expand the data on Mexico city and Lima and their hinterlands backwards to 1500 and 1650
- Jan, Marcel, Christine and Karin will provide a list of data from the Dutch archives that might be useful for Portuguese America (especially lists of names, data on people working on the sugar plantations)
- Data from the 1776 census in Spanish America on Louisiana will be added by us (project leaders) to our data for the USA, we will first check if people in the USA have already used this source
- We will look for a specialist who could help with the analysis of the data on the Philippines, maybe Willem Wolters or Josep-Maria Fradera or Josep M. Delgado, the latter two are both working at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona
- We will investigate if we could interest the Thyssen Stiftung for a research into the visualisation of labour relations: i.e.: images, paintings etc.
- Apart from 1500, 1650 and 1800 Tarcisio will also provide data on 1900.
- It would be good if data on Argentina and Chile would be provided by Ewout Frankema, if they could not be provided, it would not mean we lack countries with specific variations of labour relations we would otherwise miss.