

**Minutes of the Ottoman Empire/Middle East workshop of the
Global Collaboratory on the History of Labour Relations 1500-2000**

IISH, 12 March 2009

Present:

Görkem Akgöz, Turaj Atabaki, Gavin Brockett, Hulya Çanbakal, Raquel Gil Montero, Ismail Hakkı Kaddı, Karin Hofmeester (minutes), Erdem Kabadayı, Gijs Kessler, Nora Lafi, Marcel van der Linden, Jan Lucassen, Christine Moll-Murata, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, Erol Özvar

After a short presentation of the IISH, **Jan Lucassen** introduces the Collaboratory project, its scope and its aim to gather data on labour relations world wide for the cross sections 1500, 1650, 1800, 1900 and 2000. Up until now, gathering data on the Ottoman Empire and Arab North Africa has proven difficult, and he expresses the hope that this workshop will bring a change.

Erol Özvar gives a presentation on several Ottoman archives that can provide us with data on labour relations for the 17th and 18th century. He stresses we should not be pessimistic about the possibilities to make quantitative analyses based on them.

For an overview of these data see

https://collab.iisg.nl/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=11332&folderId=26811&name=DLFE-2380.pdf

The avariz and cizye give us data on poll tax payers, including data on income and property, also for non-Muslims. Also they provide information on agriculture, mining and textile (end 17th century)

The accounts of the foundry, naval arsenal and imperial gunpowder factories give us data on skilled and unskilled workers, about the relation between these and other manufactories and on craftsmen guilds.

The account books of construction, road construction and fort repairs give us data on work in military and civil construction and finally there are surveys of craftsmen guilds for the period from the 16th till the 19th century, for example for Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, Aleppo and Damascus. These surveys also give the number of artisans per master.

Nora Lafi gives a presentation on Ottoman sources on cities in the Arab world with a specific focus on guilds

Nora has sent us a very detailed overview of possible sources, see:

https://collab.iisg.nl/group/labourrelations/3?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&_20_struts_action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview%2FfolderId=26811

Her power point presentation can also be found there.

She stresses that for the 1500 cross section guild records are important, including archives of the bureau of the guild itself. This bureau did not exist in a modern bureaucratic meaning but such echoes are to be found in chronicles. We should look for the records in the imperial archives in Istanbul, as well as in the local records in Aleppo, Tunis and Cairo. She also stresses the importance of including nomadic groups and their labour relations.

For 1650 Celebi remains an important source, as well as petitions from the guilds.. For 1800 there are of course guild registers, we should also look at 'illegal', i.e. non-guilded work. For 1900 we should take the industrialisation into account. As for a set of test cities, she suggests Aleppo, Tunis and Cairo

After this session we have a **discussion** on how to construct labour relations:

Erol points at surveys made of Ottoman cities, sometimes on the occasion of immigration. These surveys give an overview of all craftsmen organized in guilds. Based on these overviews we can estimate the total number of workers, including journeymen. He illustrates this with the example of bakers in Istanbul.

Nora stresses that for a city as Aleppo data can be found in the central archives in Istanbul, but also in local archives. Petitions written by the guilds can also contain data on numbers, for example the number of people who signed a petition.

Erol suggest that maybe we could make a typology of several cities, pick 5 or 6 and use them as a proxy for all cities.

Ismail: Maybe we could also agree on a sampling that is representative. We know a lot about Istanbul, but this is an exceptional city, as is Salonica.

Hulya stresses that apart from Istanbul, quantitative data for 1500 is hard to find.

Turaj points at Persian sources for early 16th century Anatolia

Raquel stresses that up until now we have only discussed cities, what about rural areas?

Erol states that there are summarized records of Tharir books that contain data on rural Anatolia and the Western part of the Ottoman Empire; there are also tax records on the country side.

Nora has seen (though not collected) lots of information in the archives about areas around cities such as Aleppo and Bagdad

Ismail Hakki Kaddi presents sources for data on the Ottoman Empire for 1500, 1650 and 1800, see his text and powerpoint presentation at

[https://collab.iisg.nl/group/labourrelations/3?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&20 struts action=%2Fdocument library%2Fview& 20 folderId=26811](https://collab.iisg.nl/group/labourrelations/3?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&20%20struts%20action=%2Fdocument%2Flibrary%2Fview%20folderId=26811)

He introduces two types of sources:

Tahrir surveys, running from 1431 to 1882, but mainly for 16th century

There are 3400 registers. Published thereof are approximately 160.

Temettuat surveys, running from 1844 to 1845.

There are 17747 registers, published approx. 90.

He suggests making a sample of the published Tahrirs and Temettuats. They give data on tax paying households but no other demographic data. He strongly advises to use the work of Bruce McGowan who wrote his PhD on the Tahrir. Metin Cosgel should be invited to join the project as he has used the tahrirs for similar purposes. He wonders how do other participants 'reconstruct' total population, gender and age? If you know the number of craftsmen how do you estimate the number of journeymen? Janissaries can also be craftsmen.

Professions of the taxpayers are given, based on that we can indicate labour relations. However, not included in these surveys are: slaves for domestic labour; women and child labour; self-sufficient households. If the people in the survey provided services for the community (building bridges, roads etc), then their 'proper' profession is also recorded.

Hulya Çanbakal presents her project on probate inventories of Anatolia and the Ottoman Balkans. See her power point presentation at https://collab.iisg.nl/group/labourrelations/3?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&_20_struts_action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview&_20_folde_rId=26811

Hulya and her team are collecting probate inventories of 13 cities. These sources contain data on gender, occupation, religion, residence and total wealth of the deceased, as well as data on urban real estate (such as shops); rural real estate (land), means of production (such as looms), commercial goods and slaves. They do not give the age of the deceased but they do give heirs. All these data are being entered in a database. On average 5% of all deceased had slaves, however in Bursa 25% had slaves because it was a silk weaving area. Also the number of slaves per owner can be deducted. We should keep in mind that maybe the number of slaves was higher: owners often gave manumission to their slaves before they died.

The probate inventories give all kinds of clues on professions and also on labour relations: titles (religious, administrative); ownership of shops, capital, commercial goods, land. Also poor people had probate inventories, they did not own houses or shops but they did own looms.

Questions:

How to classify effendis (clerical title) who also owned land and credit relations; How to aggregate to national level, since the data is on city level? How representative are the probate inventories (bias on wealthy, urban, elder people, muslim). As for the gender bias, the source is quite good: 34% of the probates are of women.

During the **discussion** after this session Jan Lucassen tries to bring the data from the different sources together: the slaves Ismail misses in 'his' sources can be found in Hulya's sources. What about data on mining, the military, work in the harbor and the maritime workforce? The Central Archives in Istanbul do give a lot of information on the military. Are numbers already published?

For mining we need farm tax registers, mines are not part of the land tax. What do we know about the size of households? Hulya's probate inventories give information on the size of the household and of the nuclear family, but not about the extended family. The size of households differs per region. What to do with nomads?

Erdem Kabadayı presents data on the Late Ottoman Empire and Turkey 1900, see his power point presentation at https://collab.iisg.nl/group/labourrelations/3?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&_20_struts_action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview&_20_folde_rId=26811

He presents the possibilities of the 1845 survey ; the 1913-1915 data of the industrial census, containing data on

- Istanbul
- Izmir
- Manisa
- Bursa
- Izmit
- Karamursel
- Bandirma
- Usak

And finally the data from the 1927 survey. He suggests to add to these cities other areas and some Balkan cities to focus on:

BALKANS

- Salonica
- Bitola
- Sarajevo
- Sofia
- Plovdiv

ANATOLIA

- Izmir
- Bursa
- Izmit
- Kayseri
- Manisa

Gavin Brockett gives a presentation of the data available for Turkey 1927-2000, see his short overview text and powerpoint presentation at

https://collab.iisg.nl/group/labourrelations/3?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&_struts.action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview&_folderId=26811

He points at recent research and new insights in Turkish socio-economic history and gives an overview of the data available in 1927 census and the 1935 census.

Turaj Atabaki gives an overview of the geographical development of Iran 1800-1900, see his powerpoint presentation at

https://collab.iisg.nl/group/labourrelations/3?p_p_id=20&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&_struts.action=%2Fdocument_library%2Fview&_folderId=26811. He points at the interchangeability of its capitals in the period 1500-2000 and gives an overview of the demographic development of Iran 1800-1900 (urban, rural, nomad) and its social structure, the prevailing labour relations, and the size of the urban workforce in 1900. He elaborates on the workforce of the oil industry in Baku and gives an overview of labour migration.

During the discussion after this session, Erik-Jan Zürcher points at German sources on the Ottoman Empire, long seen as future area of expansion, at the archives of the Chambre de Commerce in Istanbul and Salonica.

A discussion develops on the nomad/tribal parts of the populations. Are they recognizable as such in our data and does their representation as ‘tribe’ in the sources

say anything about their labour relations? We should look at the relationship between individual and state and group and state. If they as a group produce for the market and sell their products, should we call it reciprocal labour or commodified?