

WORCK Newsletter N° 10

Aalborg/Vienna, 8 November 2021

Dear members of the COST Action WORCK,
dear colleagues interested in the study of labour and coercion,

the first half of the COST funding period for our interdisciplinary and international network on the study of labour and coercion is now over. Therefore, this newsletter is an opportunity for us to first, take stock of what we have achieved so far and to provide you with a mid-term review. Second, we would like to present the agenda and some strategic reflections for the re-organisation and further development of our network in the second half of the funding period.

It was a great pleasure to welcome so many members of the WORCK network at the hybrid **WORCK Conference 2 / ELHN Conference 4** this summer (<https://www.worck.eu/conference-2-2021-vienna/>). About 150 people have come to the conference site in Vienna while almost 250 people participated online via zoom. Five days were filled with intense discussion in the form of writers workshops, roundtable events, an exhibition vernissage, film screenings and a one-day plenary event, based on a pre-circulated reader, on the study of social inequalities in past and present and the concept of Europe in global history. The conference has shown us how active the network has been over the last two years and how many promising initiatives have already grown out of the Working Groups' activities, despite the difficult conditions of a global pandemic. At the same time, the final discussion on the last conference day has made it very clear to us that we should make some adjustments concerning to the organisational structure and the overall goals of the COST Action in order to make the most of the four years funding. These strategic reflections are what we would like to share with you today.

WORCK 2019–21: a Mid-Term Report

Since the beginning of the COST Action, WORCK has organised the following **events**:

- 1 on-site WORCK Meeting and Management Committee Meeting hosted by Claude Chevalyere in Lyon (February 2020)
- 34 online Working Group meetings and 8 Core Group meetings since the beginning of the pandemic (March 2020–October 2021)
- 1 online WORCK Conference (“Reconceptualising Wage Labour”) hosted by Susan Zimmermann and Isidora Grubacki, CEU Budapest (September 2020)
- 1 online WORCK Meeting hosted by Gonçalo Melo da Silva, Lisbon (February 2021)
- 1 online workshop (“Sites and Intersections of Labour Im/Mobility”) hosted by Claudia Bernardi and Giulia Bonazza, Venice (June 2021)

- 1 hybrid WORCK Conference (“Historicising the Concept of Europe in Global History”) hosted by Juliane Schiel, Teresa Petrik, Lukas Neissl, and Laura Šukarov, Vienna (August/September 2021)

The WORCK Working Groups have launched numerous **publication projects**:

- The Digital Infrastructure Group, under the direction of Silke Schwandt (Bielefeld) has set up the digital WORCK Publication Platform data.worck.eu, continuously publishing datasets, data stories, working papers and annotated bibliographies from WORCK members.
- Working Group 1 (“Grammars of Coercion”) is preparing a special issue on “Work Semantics” at the Austrian History Journal “Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften (OeZG)”, edited by Claude Chevalyere and Juliane Schiel.
- Working Group 2 (“Sites and Fields of Coercion”) and Working Group 3 (“Im/Mobilisations of the Workforce”) are preparing a special issue on “Sites and Intersections of Labour Im/Mobility” at the International Journal “Labour History” (Routledge), edited by Claudia Bernardi, Amal Shahid, and Müge Telci Özbek.
- Working Group 3 (“Im/Mobilisations of the Workforce”) is preparing a collected volume at De Gruyter, entitled “To Move or Not to Move? Historical Perspectives on Labor, Coercion and Im/Mobility (16th–20th c.)”, and edited by Claudia Bernardi, Viola F. Müller, Biljana Stojić, and Vilhelm Vilhelmsson.
- Working Group 4 (“Intersecting Marginalities”) is preparing a special issue at the international journal “Labour History” on “Gender, Coercion, and War Labour”, edited by Fia Sundevall, Christine De Matos, and Julia Heinemann.
- The Public Outreach Group, in cooperation with the Think Tank Group, is preparing a collected volume on “Coercion and Wage Labour. Exploring Labour Relations through History and Art”, edited by Anamarija Batista, Viola F. Müller, and Corinna Peres, and based on the exhibition presented at the WORCK Conference 2 in Vienna.
- With the collective effort of numerous WORCK members, two Blog Series have been launched on <https://www.worck.eu/blog>:
 - Blog Series 1: “Covid-19 and the Workers of the World. Invitation to a Debate”
 - Blog Series 2: “Narrowing the Horizon. The Ambivalent Effects of European Research Funding on Academic Work”
- The WORCK Core Group has launched three cross-cutting publication projects:
 - “Palgrave Handbook of Global Slavery”, edited by Damian Pargas and Juliane Schiel.
 - “Labour and Coercion. Doing Social History after the Global Turn”, Past & Present Supplement, edited by Juliane Schiel and Johan Heinsen.
 - “Labour and Coercion in the Nordic Region in the Early Modern Period. Connections, Ambiguities, Practices”, special issue at the “Scandinavian Journal of History”, edited by Vilhelm Vilhelmsson, Johan Heinsen, and Hanne Østhus.

Furthermore, the COST Action WORCK has enabled

- 1 exhibition “Stories of Work and Coercion. Scientific Contributions Depicted in Illustrations”,
- 6 Virtual Mobility Grants for the coherent development of a strategy of virtual networking,
- 3 Short Term Scientific Missions supporting the mobility and collaboration among members of the WORCK network.

WORCK 2021–23: Agenda and Strategic Reflections

As we turn towards the second half of our COST funding period, we can see that the numerous online meetings have created a growing scientific community of historians, anthropologists and sociologists concerned with the study of labour and coercion in a long-term and transregional perspective. However, the various publication projects that have emerged from these series of shorter online meetings over the last one and a half years of pandemic now call for a more focused form of collaboration. At the same time, the WORCK network as a whole should continue to act as a useful framework for innovative research and creative ideas cutting across the specific methodological focuses of the Working Groups, and slowly paving the way for the time after the COST funding. Also, from the perspective of sustainability, we aim to develop the existing WORCK publication platform into a relational database and an archive of coercion, with open access for scholars from outside WORCK and beyond the COST funding period.

The WORCK Management Committee as well as the Core Group have therefore decided to dedicate the budget of the next grant period primarily to:

- one 2-days writers workshop (preferably on-site or hybrid) for each of the ongoing publication projects,
- one STSM of 5-10 days for the co-editors of each of the ongoing publication projects to work on feedbacks for the contributors, as well as a joint introduction and conclusion,
- professional proofreading for all WORCK publications before submission,
- two 2-days Core Group Meetings (preferably on-site or hybrid) for the development of cross-cutting workshop topics and a general strategy for the post-WORCK phase,
- one preparatory meeting and a workshop for the development of a relational database and an archive of coercion,
- one training school and two workshops on cross-cutting topics overarching questions for the study of labour and coercion.

These are the events that have already been fixed for the new grant period:

- 16 November 2021: writers workshop for the special issue at the Scandinavian Journal of History on “Labour and Coercion in the Nordic Region in the Early Modern Period” (online)

- 6–7 December 2021: preparatory meeting for the development of a relational database and the preparation of a digital training in network analysis (local host: Silke Schwandt, Bielefeld)
- 1–2 February 2022: writers workshop for the P&P Supplement on “Labour and Coercion” (local host: Juliane Schiel, Vienna)
- 2–3 February 2022: Core Group Meeting (local host: Juliane Schiel, Vienna)
- 1–3 March 2022: writers workshop for the special issue on “Work Semantics” in the “Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften” (local host: Hayri Özkoray, Aix-en-Provence)
- 11–12 March 2022: writers workshop for the special issue on “Gender, Coercion, and War Labour” in the Journal “Labour History” (local host: Julia Heinemann, Vienna)
- 23–27 May 2022: WORCK Training School 1 & Core Group Meeting (local host: Natalia Jarska, Warsaw)
- 14–15 June 2022: workshop on “Coercion, Worksites and Historical Change. An Archival Approach” (local host: Christian De Vito, Bonn)

The planning of upcoming events is continuously updated and published on our website: <https://www.worck.eu/worck-agenda/>

To conclude, we would like to draw your attention to the following points:

- Peter-Paul Bänziger (MC Member for Switzerland) has just started a new blog series entitled “Narrowing the Horizon. The Ambivalent Effects of European Research Funding on Academic Work”. The post series aims to provide a space for sharing experiences with and critical reflections on European research funding. In the context of the COST Action WORCK, it also wants to contribute to a discussion of the constraints to which academic work itself is subject. New posts to this ongoing discussion are very welcome (contact details: p.baenziger@unibas.ch).
- We are happy to welcome Niall Ó Súilleabháin from Trinity College Dublin as new Management Committee Member for Ireland. He is a medievalist working on slavery and unfreedom and organizes a conference on “Unfreedom in the Premodern World”, on 23–24 June 2023. The call for papers can be found here: <https://www.worck.eu/2021/11/05/cfp-unfreedom-in-the-premodern-world-comparative-perspectives-on-slavery-servitude-captivity/>.
- Applications for a Short Term Scientific Mission or ITC Conference Grants are always welcome. For the time being, applications can be accepted any time.

Last but not least, please note that COST has revised its funding rules for the new contract within Horizon Europe. The old COST Vademecum is now replaced by the **COST Annotated Rules**: <https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2021/10/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-2021-11-01-1.pdf>.

All best,

Johan Heinsen and Juliane Schiel