

HISTORICISING COERCIVE SOCIAL PROCESSES

Book of Abstracts

WORCK Conference 3
5–7 September 2023
Prague, Czech Republic

Philosophical Faculty, Charles University
Nám. Jana Palacha 1/2
116 38 Praha 1





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Content

Introduction	8
Conceptualising Coercion I: Grammars, Semantics, Ontologies	10
› “What is in a name?” Questioning the conceptualisation of coercion and contract workers’ endurance of coercive practices	10
› The ideology of coercion: Semantics and practices of rural labour and coercion in North-eastern Italy (1200s–1400s)	11
› Epistemic colonialism in history and historiography	12
› Franz Brauner and his attitudes to robota	13
The Problem of Freedom. Status and Labour Relations in the Caribbean Age of Abolition, 19th Century	15
› Apprenticing free labour? Work, abolition, and gender between the Cuban Juntas and the Spanish Cortes	15
› Les esclaves du roi: Coercion and worksites in Martinique (first half of the 19th century)	16
› Competing theories of freedom: Coercion in post apprenticeship Jamaica	17
› Performing freedom(s). Urban slavery and abolition in the French Antilles (1831–1848)	17
› Affranchissement before abolition: Labour and the law in French Guiana, 1831–1848	18
Conceptualising Coercion II: WORKsites on Trial. Graph Modelling as a Transversal Approach to Social History	20
Coercive Fields in Empires	22
› Contract labour and indentured Indian woman migrant labourer in British colonial Natal South Africa	22
› Foreign Polish labour migrants in the German empire: Between coercion and autonomy	22
› Indigenous and African slave labour and social interactions in the 17th century Portuguese-America	24
Networks, Mobility and Migration	25
› Replacing Chinese “coolies”: Spanish racialised discourses on immigration in Cuba and in the Philippines (1847–1898)	25
› Coercive social processes in the African Atlantic trade (1435–1622)	26

Content

› The long quest for autonomy: The case of Afro-descendants in Esmeraldas, Ecuador	27
Punishment and Coercion: Carceral Assemblages in Early Modern Europe	29
› From the galleys to the Ergastolo: The convict labour in Austrian Lombardy in the second half of the eighteenth century	29
› Between coercion and autonomy: Inmate agency in the prison workhouse at Christianshavn, 1769–1800	30
› Making people work, creating productive subjects? The Vienna Zuchthaus and convict labour in early modern Austria	31
› Shackled history: Extramural convict labour across early modern Europe	32
Architectural, Diagrammatic and Artistic Practices: How Can Coercive And Interdependent Relationships be Depicted Along Different Media?	33
› Coercive consequences of the NS-regime in the work of architect Hans Scharoun	33
› Statistics and art: The possibilities of making connections through images	34
› Work and coercive mechanisms in marriage relations	35
Coercion, Labour Market and Institutions	37
› The “Socialist work discipline” and its impacts on everyday working and living in state-socialist Czechoslovakia	37
› Coercive labour relations and the Swedish welfare state (1920s–2020s)	38
› “Slaverie” before slavery: An acte for the punishment of vagabondes, 1547	39
› Help Wanted: Recruitment, coercive labour and power relations of domestic workers in Sweden 1890–1939	40
Problematising Freedom	42
› Free labour? How non-public labour market intermediaries shaped “free labour” in Sweden 1884–1942	42
› Labour coercion, pollution, and immobilisation in 19th-century Regla, Havana	43
› Labour, debt and enslavement in the late medieval northwest Caucasus	44
Coercive Spaces and Technologies	46
› Coercive technologies: Lifts, labour and affective space in Johannesburg, South Africa in the 20th century	46

Content

- › Mines, migration and close compound system in 19th-20th Century South Africa..... 46
- › Displaced, not “lazy”: Contradictions of im/mobilisation on a Papuan frontier of “empowerment” and “protection”..... 47
- Linking Coercion to Historical Change..... 49
 - › Personal dependence, exploitation and class relations on the estates of the bishopric of Passau in what is today Austria, ca. 1250–1367 49
 - › Racialising the will to work. Coercing transformation in and between Jamaica and North Wales 50
 - › The coercion of labour in Hungary before, during and after communism in a Central European comparison 51
 - › Seeing, knowing, and doing coercion: Mobile state administrations and changing work practices in the early modern European metal trades 51
- Religious Difference at Work: Exclusion Coercion, and Opportunity in the Medieval Mediterranean 53
 - › Trade privileges and limitations for Muslim neighbours of Castilian cities 53
 - › *Li fromuages vostres ne sont pas vendus*: Inquisitorial persecution, social disruption and alternative networks 53
 - › Restrictions and choice in work for Muslims under the rule of military orders 54
- Coercion, Work, and Punishment in the U.S. 55
 - › Freedom, work, and compulsion: Toward a new political-historical synthesis .. 55
 - › Policing surplus population 56
 - › “Voluntary slaves”: Contract, competition, coercion, and the meaning of “Free Labor” in the Illinois coal fields 57
- Violence, Retribution, Chastisement..... 58
 - › Afro-descendant women at war in Cuba (1868–1878). Interpreting colonial violence and black women’s agency in the military archives 58
 - › Violence and labour discipline in English agricultural work, c. 1600 – 1800 59
 - › Life on the margins: Structural violence and coercion in Viking-age Scandinavia 60

Content

Inside the Household.....	62
› The benevolent patriarch? How early-modern households' labour organisation reveals the reach of patriarchal care across the Baltic Sea, 1723–1809	62
› Manumitted enslaved people in Jewish households in Bridgetown, Barbados	63
› “A slave woman ... is beholden to us for the next eight years”. Slavery and debt-credit relations in late medieval Tuscany	64
› Historicizing social coercive processes through the lens of paid domestic work	65
Coercive Archives: Labour Coercion in the Courtroom and Its Afterlives	68
Paternalism in the Household and on the Shop Floor	69
› Households and Haushalten in eighteenth century Swedish iron making	69
› Paternalism, indirect compensation and resistance in Franco-era Spain.....	70
› Paternalism as “benign” coercion	71

Introduction

From 5 to 7 September 2023, the final conference of the COST Action „Worlds of Related Coercions in Work“ (WORCK) takes place at the Charles University in Prague. Over a period of four years, an international group of labour and social historians, anthropologists and sociologists has discussed conditions, settings and dynamics of labour coercion in worksites of all kind, and has studied and compared patterns and shifts of asymmetrical power relations over time and space.

More than half of the COST funding time was marked by the planning uncertainties of a pandemic. The unpredictability of waves of Covid-19, national lockdown regulations and international travel restrictions constituted an extreme challenge to a mobility programme that was meant to connect people and ideas across borders through the funding of physical meetings, conferences and research stays. While the first WORCK conference, planned for September 2020 in Budapest, needed to be moved entirely to zoom, the second WORCK conference took place in Vienna in summer 2021 in a hybrid mode, requiring a huge technical team. That this third and final conference of the network can be carried out as an onsite event only, feels like a great relief – not only for the organising host, the conference team and the administrative staff, but also for all those who have learned to discuss and develop concepts and methods of labour and social history in a remote mode, who have started to collectively experience with digital analysis tools, to collaborate on joint data bases and to realise book publications together without hardly knowing each other.

The programme of the Prague conference expresses where these discussions and collective efforts have led us. In 2019, the COST Action has started with the wish to challenge binary concepts of classical labour history such as free/unfree labour relations, paid/unpaid work, modern/premodern or capitalist/pre-capitalist modes of production, and colonial/postcolonial labour regimes by bringing together empirical cases reaching from worksites in Old Babylonia to transnational care and sex workers in a globalised world. Today, the question of how to disentangle power relations and how to explain historical change have come to the fore. Discussions have moved from classical topics of global labour history to the more general question on how to do and write social history after the postcolonial critique of the global turn.

If the free/unfree dichotomy of global labour history is to be replaced by comparative explorations of coercive practices and processes, how do we conceptualise coercion and which place does freedom have in all this? If a broader empirical basis of worksites and work experiences in different time periods and world regions is available, how can we link those findings to

spaces and technologies and to historical change? Which role does the power of empires, institutions and archives play in our attempt to historicise categories and concepts and to contextualize and situate the workers' experiences?

In almost 20 panels and 50 papers, colleagues from all parts of Europe and beyond will discuss those and related questions. Colleagues who have been closely working together over the last four years but rarely met will come together with colleagues who have joined the network only recently or have remained observers of those discussions. The programme reflects the open character of COST Action networks: having no clear research plan to fulfill, it allows to adopt new ideas and to invent other forms of exchange at any stage. And it permits sharing tasks and responsibilities among those who would like to shape and design the upcoming field of a new social history after the global turn. This conference owes much to the incredible commitment of Hanne Østhus (Norway), Müge Telci Özbek (Turkey), Nico Pizzolato (United Kingdom), Jakub Štofanič (Czech Republic), Laura Šukarov-Eischer (Austria) and Fia Sundevall (Sweden) who have worked on this event for almost two years, who have issued the call, selected the papers, put together the programme and took care of all organizational and logistical detail as well as the correspondence with speakers and conference participants.

After four years of journey full of intellectual discoveries and surprises, I am curious to see where the Prague discussions will lead us.

Juliane Schiel (COST Action Chair)

Conceptualising Coercion I: Grammars, Semantics, Ontologies

Contributors: Claudia Bernardi (University of Perugia), Tommaso Vidal (University of Parma), Claudio Costa Pinheiro (Rio de Janeiro Federal University), Miroslav Vašík (Charles University)

“What is in a name?” Questioning the conceptualisation of coercion and contract workers’ endurance of coercive practices

Claudia Bernardi (University of Perugia)

This contribution starts from a basic question whose answer is not so obvious: Who do define a specific labor relation as coercive? This is a question worth to be answered, in first place, by asking whether is the historian providing an interpretation, or the historical actors speaking of their own condition. On one hand, this presentation aims to expand the conceptualization of coercion and, on the other, to analyze the perspective of workers about their subjective understanding of work and the ways in which they embedded coercive practices into their experience. In brief, this contribution questions the use of the term ‘coercion’, and tries to answer to the question ‘what is in a name?’ Far from adopting a dichotomist understanding of coercion in opposition to agency, the contribution considers how workers’ autonomy is practiced also in the acceptance of coercion. For doing so, the presentation will analyze the perspective of so-called *braceros*, the Mexican temporary mobile workers recruited under a state-managed labor program – known as *Bracero Program* – which is exemplary of the acceptance of coercion as planned strategy. In the oral sources collected in the Bracero History Archive, workers recall their willing acceptance of forms of what we can understand as top-down coercion for the potential betterment of their life. The same term ‘bracero’ had been questioned for understanding the logics of coercion or autonomy that Mexican contract workers experienced over more than two decades in the XX century. Sources from the Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City) provides “a picture” of the Mexican worker portrayed by growers, institutions and individuals and the ways in which Mexican institutions wondered ‘what is in a name?’ for grasping the logics that moved Mexicans towards USA. These sources also show through the understanding of the term *bracero* as a label for identifying coercive relations imposed to peasants and unemployed workers. Then, the Bracero Archive collects hundreds of oral histories of *braceros* related to the labor mobility program. Among them there is a set of interviews which explicitly address a key question: “what does the term ‘bracero’ mean to you?”, in the original “¿Qué significa el término bracero para usted?”.

This contribution asks these very questions – what is in a name?/what does the term ‘bracero’ mean? – both for testing and broadening the concept of coercion, and for analyzing workers’ acceptance and tactical use of an asymmetry that imbricated them in the maze of coercion which was, in the end, both material and immaterial since the outset of *braceros’* journey.

The ideology of coercion: Semantics and practices of rural labour and coercion in North-eastern Italy (1200s–1400s)

Tommaso Vidal (University of Parma)

In spite of a long scholarly tradition, rural labour in late-medieval Italy is still somewhat of an unknown object. The skewed perspective derived from focus on sharecropping and Central Italy, while other areas like North-eastern Italy have been somewhat neglected. Yet, such scholarly ‘dark’ areas seem to be the perfect benchmark and context to move beyond the traditional dichotomy between ‘free’ and unfree labour.

In North-eastern Italy the countryside was – much more than in Central Italy – a patchwork of private (urban) property, aristocratic and seigneurial jurisdiction and peasant, village-level, autonomies. In this area labour organization and enforcement were characterized by the entanglement of purely economic, institutional and seigneurial coercion, that had significant and sizable effects on both labour practices and representations.

During a period that could be defined as a ‘long 13th century’ (1200-1350) agricultural labour and labour organization underwent some rather serious modifications. The passage from long-term, consuetudinary tenure to short-term labour-oriented leases did not automatically dispossess peasants, but radically changed their stance, role and practical possibilities within the rural (and urban) economy. Such changes are reflected and underpinned by massive and widespread institutional intervention that can be identified and studied throughout the Padan Plain (from Milan to Friuli). As more abundant and insightful documentation confirms, later developments, taking place throughout the 1400s further consolidated such modifications.

With my contribution I will try to address three main themes:

- 1) Semantics of labour and coercion. How was labour labelled and identified by economic actors? How was it conceptualized? Was labour fully commodified or were labour relations ‘thick’ with hierarchical and political underpinnings?
- 2) Ideology of labour and coercion. How did the ‘new’ semantics of labour interact with the complex system of pre-existing meanings, connotations and textualities? Did the permanence of ‘traditional’ term like *rusticus* and *dominus* influence and shape an ideology of labour subordination?

- 3) Practices of labour and coercion. Focusing on a smaller area (Friuli) I will analyse how various 'types' of landowners – rural aristocracy, urban aristocracy and urban patriciate – organized agricultural labour on their sometimes fairly extensive estates. I will focus on the practices of coercion, geographical immobilization and rigid hierarchization they used to extract and maintain labour, as well as on the institutional framework that underpinned and allowed such practices.

Epistemic colonialism in history and historiography

Claudio Costa Pinhero (Rio de Janeiro Federal University)

The recent revival of interest in the history of slavery in Asia - and at large - has shed new light on the debate, while renovated old dilemmas. This is especially true for arguments about *incommensurability*, i.e. the heuristic exemplarity of categories based on modern Western experiences of dependency and coercion, ultimately related to concepts of slavery, to address non-Western and/or non-modern experiences of dependency and coercion.

The present contribution looks at this scenario in long-term retrospect. The article analyses practices and discourses of dependency observed in South Asia under Early Modern European colonialism, through the clash of European and South Asian understandings of "slavery". My proposal relates to both a social history of dependency and coercion, and to a cultural history of "analogy", as a central discursive apparatus that produced and universalized categories of understanding and classification.

The paper analyses 1940-60s scholarship on slavery in India to observe some of the features of a then multilingual and transnational academic community with shared epistemic values, premises, and procedures for the study of slavery/ hierarchy and society in ancient India. To develop this argument, I focus on the trajectory of the South Asian scholar Devraj Chanana and the impact of his work, by looking back at how historical linguistic analyses of the semantics of slavery in ancient India articulated different dimensions of the analogical principle. This procedure articulates epistemic-political disputes and premises inherited from the sixteenth-century colonial enterprise which are based on the establishment of an analogical regime that was central to the European ancient regime and to the colonization of Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

My hypothesis is that the study of slavery (ancient and modern) in India has consistently reinforced a paradigm of understanding the history of slavery in India - otherwise Indian society and history - as compared to "Western" (Greco-Roman and Atlantic) history. Moreover, I argue that this comparative approach is related to political-intellectual premises introduced at the of

European colonization in Asia, which consolidated a model of understanding slavery as a historical metaphor - and consequently History itself as analogy. My perspective does not engage with a theoretical analysis of the question of terminology of "slavery", i.e. a purely heuristic analysis of historiography. On the contrary, I argue that the study of the history of slavery and coercion in early modern South Asia depends on a comprehensive understanding of the controversies over the mobilization of slave/slavery as analytical categories and as politically oriented concepts by scholars from the sixteenth century onwards.

To establish a dialogue with the proposal of this conference, I will examine how instruments of translation developed in South Asia related to analogy as a basic operation for understanding, through processes of observation and description. Very often it entangles history and historians into disputed realms produced by the words they both share, reenacting epistemic disputes started with colonialism. This contribution aims to help re-centering Asian forms of dependency (coercion, bonded labour and even slavery) within a global history of early modern slavery, through the examination of disputes set in different levels: a) within the past – between those who implemented colonialism and those submitted to the driving forces of colonial empires around the globe – and, b) between past and present, by which, current historians also dispute the realm and the meanings of slavery with their "natives" and with the processes they study about. It also claims for decentering the encompassing the gravitational pull of the Atlantic paradigm in slavery studies at large.

Under this light, I argue that a procedure based solely on comparative analysis of grounded research on histories of coercion (in different times and geographies) is likely to have difficulties in challenging the so-called *terminological debate*. To address this question I argue that, apart from an engagement with both social and cultural history of the practices and discursive forms of dependency and coercion, we need a dedicated analysis of the history of the role played by the scholarship on the subject, as well as the intellectual-political discourses related to the lexicography and semantics of slavery, dependency, and coercion in South Asia since the sixteenth century.

Franz Brauner and his attitudes to robota

Miroslav Vašík (Charles University)

The relationship between the landowners and most of the agrarian population was significant for understanding living in the European countryside until the 19th century. Although these relationships were complex and had many aspects, the crucial role has the power of landowners. In the region of Eastern Europe, serfdom developed. In Central Europe, the position of noble landowners was not so powerful but remained stable until the reforms of Joseph II. These limited their power only to the economic part. The right to

forced labour, traditionally called “robotá”, was still the most significant power of the landowners. The forced labour remained in the Habsburg monarchy until the middle of the 19th century. During that time, more landowners voluntarily ended it and turned it into financial benefits. In 1846 the big peasant uprising broke out in Galicia. Over 1000 people, including members of an important Polish noble family Bogusz, were killed. This uprising encouraged liberals in some lands to request reforms; even some conservative landowners were now willing to make changes. In 1847 young Czech lawyer Franz Brauner published his book *Böhmische Bauernzustände*. In the book, he described his attitude to the relationship between landowners and peasants as a former landowner’s bureaucrat and suggested his solutions. The book was successful, and its author got a gold medal for culture and science from Emperor Ferdinand V. His reputation as an expert was widely acknowledged; therefore, during the revolution of 1848, he had a prominent voice in the act, which ended “robotá”.

This paper argues his experience from Vlašim, where he became an important bureaucrat of Fürst Auersperg called “oberamtmann” and represented the landowner in many contacts with the common population. This experience is put into the context of early Austrian liberalism represented by bourgeois societies such as Viennese *Juridisch-Politische Leseverein*, with whose members he was in contact during his study of law in Vienna, and Prager *Měšťanská beseda*, in which Brauner was an important member and became a secretary for some time. The paper compares this experience with Brauner’s position in his famous book and the act abolishing “robotá” from 1848, which Brauner decisively influenced. The paper also follows his polemic with Czech liberal journalist Karel Havlíček and argues the limits of Brauner’s liberalism. This limit is illustrative of the form of liberalism in Vormärz and during the revolution of 1848, which is crucial for the understanding of the history of Central Europe in the middle of the 19th century.

The Problem of Freedom. Status and Labour Relations in the Caribbean Age of Abolition, 19th Century

Contributors: **Elena Barattini** (University of Turin), **Giulia Bonazza** (University of Venice Ca'Foscari / Columbia University), **Siân Davies** (University of Edinburgh), **Matilde Flamigni** (Scuola Normale Superiore / University of Naples Federico II), **Amelia Spooner** (Columbia University)

Apprenticing free labour? Work, abolition, and gender between the Cuban Juntas and the Spanish Cortes

Elena Barattini (University of Turin)

The Patronato Law (1880), proclaimed after ten years of civil war, set a date for the 'definitive' abolition of slavery on the island of Cuba, imposing a compulsory apprenticeship to the formerly enslaved. This paper will address this complex moment in the trajectories of forced labor in Cuba by bringing two main types of primary sources into dialogue.

On the one hand, I will focus on the discussions that took place in the Spanish Cortes (parliament) at the end of the 19th century about how, why, and when to carry out slavery abolition. The Spanish parliament had both more and less contemporary Caribbean examples of abolition to examine, as it assessed its options for preserving the colony of Cuba, its wealth, and its revenues. By analyzing the different parliamentarians' views on the future of the island of Cuba, I will highlight two main points. First, the importance of the colony's wealth to the economy of the empire. Secondly, how the *patronato* represented a key trial to test out the coercive measures to be implemented after the abolition of slavery, to ensure that the formerly enslaved did not engage in forms of production and reproduction distant from those that had been so far imposed on them.

The actual provisions contained in the draft of the forced apprenticeship regulation will bridge the second portion of this proposal, focusing on the resistance that clashed against these plans of social engineering and the re-establishment of coerced labor. By examining legal primary sources from the Cuban National Archive, I will highlight how the forms of coercion to which the formerly enslaved were subjected shaped their notions of freedom and their practices of resistance. Consequently, I will propose a close look at the cases *patrocinadas* (as formerly enslaved women were renamed from 1880 to 1886) presented to the *Juntas de patronato*, the legal body put in place to solve controversies in the application of the abolition law. These will be extracted

from those filed at a local and provincial level in Havana and its surroundings – part today of the thousands of *expedientes* making the *Miscelanea de Expedientes* fund.

In discussing the heterogeneous strategies *patrocinadas* employed for their lawsuits, I will highlight three main aspects. First, the gendered character of these petitions. Secondly, I will underline how extra-judicial means, tools, and agreements entered into the records, leaving concrete traces of how Black women in Cuba sought to make sense of what belonged to them and their loved ones. Finally, I will highlight how the regulative efforts of both metropolitan and colonial authorities – converging in the construction of a paternalistic measure aimed at prolonging the 'transition' from slavery to multiple and coexisting forms of dependencies – aimed at disrupting as little as possible the racialized structures in place. Such plans intersected (and in some cases clashed) with the demands of *patrocinadas* when they sued their *patronos* in the appointed *Juntas*, openly confronting the legitimacy of the power of their former enslavers.

Les esclaves du roi: Coercion and worksites in Martinique (first half of the 19th century)

Giulia Bonazza (University of Venice Ca'Foscari / Columbia University)

The paper focuses on some specific worksites such as hospital, construction sites and small ship cabotage in Martinique, a French colony, where the slaves of the king (*esclaves du roi* or *du domaine*) are employed in different tasks in the first half of the 19th century. They live in a coercive condition even if the working conditions in these sites are often better in comparison to the working condition of slaves in plantation and of private slaves in the urban context. The slaves of the king are often paid, or they receive forms of remuneration. They are also employed in a rational way in specific tasks in relation to their skills or physical qualities. Furthermore, in comparison to other types of slaves they reach freedom before for different reasons. First, because they are freed thanks some specific legislations reserved for the slaves of the king before the French abolitionist law of 1848; second if they are old or unable for work, they are immediately liberated and third thanks the forms of remuneration they receive they can free themselves. So, the slaves of the king perform public works in these sites of coercion, and they live in a coercive condition but if we also consider a temporality of coercion, they have an advantage because after some years they become usually free workers of colour. This case study is relevant to reflect on coercion and worksites in the colonial world, in this case Martinique, because the slaves of the king have living and working conditions reflecting the condition of State slaves in Southern Europe and the types of worksites are similar to the worksites on the Mediterranean port cities. To conclude after a presentation of the specific worksites and working conditions of *esclaves du roi* in Martinique I will propose some comparisons with the

condition of slaves in other Mediterranean cities in the same period and at the end of the 18th century.

Competing theories of freedom: Coercion in post apprenticeship Jamaica

Siân Davies (University of Edinburgh)

The Pennant family owned and managed sugar plantations in Jamaica and Penrhyn slate Quarry in North Wales. Using the Pennant family and their sites of labour as a case study, my research considers the entangled history of transformation between Britain and the Caribbean from 1780 to c.1900. This paper considers the social relations of those who laboured on Denbigh and Pennant sugar plantations in post-apprenticeship Jamaica. After 1838, these plantations came to rely on a combination of indentured and 'free' labour. The paper considers the competing theories of freedom expressed by labourers, and management's coercive practices in this period. As well as considering the state's coercion of labourers, this paper explores the coercive practices within and between working-class communities. Management co-opted and encouraged differences within this labouring community to maintain control. Mirroring strategies that attorneys had used on the same plantations prior to Britain's abolition of the slave trade in 1808, management came to rely on previously indentured labourers who remained on the plantations to act as mediators and leaders. The dynamics between newly arrived and 'established' migrant labourers, as well as the gendered organisation of production, reveal practices of coercion within this working-class community. Moreover, the relationship between indentured labourers and free Black workers will be examined to show how different forms of coercion relied on and defined one another. The conditions of coercion and interpersonal relations within and between these labouring communities in Jamaica will be contextualised with the management and experience of labourers in the same period at Penrhyn Quarry.

Performing freedom(s). Urban slavery and abolition in the French Antilles (1831–1848)

Matilde Flamigni (Scuola Normale Superiore / University of Naples Federico II)

Especially after the mid-17th century, many blacksmiths, carpenters, small farmers, day laborers, sailors, fishers and domestic servants of African birth or descent lived and worked in the colonial cities of the French Antilles. These communities experienced great changes in the transition to freedom, and the transformations proved crucial in determining the legacy of slavery and its abolition. This paper addresses the asymmetrical structures of collective dependencies in urban slavery, questioning the fragility of the notion of

freedom and overcoming the traditional analytical dichotomy between unfree/free labour. Using archival legal sources, my goal is to examine the intertwining of the imperial process of abolition and the everyday practices of enfranchisement in the French Caribbean.

In the Emancipation era, urban space represented a meeting place for slaves, free people of colour, *libres de fait* (people legally in bondage who lived “as free”), maroons, *engagés* (indenture laborers). By the 1830s, news of the abolition process taking place in neighbouring British colonial territories circulated insistently in Martinique and Guadeloupe, and the Lesser Antilles were crisscrossed by both freedom trajectories and re-enslavement practices throughout the first half of the 19th century. Enslaved and freed people moved between societies in which slavery was allowed by law and legal regimes in which slavery was abolished, in an environment marked by imperial tensions, abolitionist ideas, slave/master conflicts, the persistence of illegal slavery, and the constant precariousness of freedom.

Adopting a multi scalar approach, the proposal analyses the freedom’s lawsuits that people in bondage pursued as the imperial administration intensified efforts to regulate slavery and reorganize colonial societies until abolition in 1848. In the court rooms, different actors shared in the production of legal categories, and the dynamic attribution of statuses was intertwined with the negotiation of freedom by enslaved people in litigations that mobilized their social networks, skills, professions, abilities. On the one hand, their petitions revealed the existence of extra-legal and customary practices of manumission, highlighting the performative character of freedom in colonial urban space. On the other hand, census requirements, compulsory slave registration and regularization of the colonial workforce became part of the imperial strategies to cope with the transformations occurring in the Caribbean. These provisions illuminated a wide range of conditions of dependency translated in legal categories beyond slavery and freedom and revealed the abilities of coerced people to gain spaces of autonomy in the complex dialogue between legal and illegal practices.

Affranchissement before abolition: Labour and the law in French Guiana, 1831–1848

Amelia Spooner (Columbia University)

Before the second abolition of slavery in 1848, slaveowners in the French empire selectively freed enslaved people via the legal mechanism of *affranchissement*. This paper considers changes in the law around *affranchissement* in the so-called *vieilles colonies* of the Ancien Régime: Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, and Réunion, with a focus on French Guiana from 1831 to 1848. I am particularly interested in describing and explaining conflicts between the elected *Conseil colonial* and the appointed

Conseil général, between colonial administrators and slaveowners (frequently synonymous with each other), and between the various factions of the colonial ruling class and metropolitan bodies like the *Chambre des Députés*. Those opposed to loosening restrictions tended to characterize *affranchissement* as the “abandonment of private property,” a threat to slaveowning as a form of property-owning and even to private property itself. Other stakeholders sought to relax laws around *affranchissement* as part of a move toward general abolition. While slaveowners were known to use the mechanism of *affranchissement* to offload the elderly and/or infirm, freedpeople turned it to their advantage, emancipating family members after purchasing them.

This paper tracks the evolution of *affranchissement* law alongside adjacent legislation designed to manage workers both enslaved and legally free: for example, increasingly restrictive legislation on *vagabondage* and the imposition of 7-year labor contracts for trafficked workers, victims of the illegal slave trade who had been intercepted in French waters.

I hypothesize that with the legal end of slavery in the British empire (1833) and the prospect of colonial expansion in North and West Africa, where slavery was not the primary mode of production, French stakeholders began to devise a new legal regime designed to receive formerly enslaved workers into it while ensuring production would continue apace. Even as *affranchissement* laws in some cases became less restrictive over this period, administrators and private actors began to anticipate general abolition by introducing laws intended to manage and control workers’ movements and work conditions.

Conceptualising Coercion II: WORKsites on Trial. Graph Modelling as a Transversal Approach to Social History

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The “Grammars of Coercion” project began on a premise that lies at the heart of the COST Action WORCK: After decades of critique of the analytical frameworks and labels with which we are accustomed to analyse labour and power relations in past societies, social and labour historians remain dependent on, if not prisoners, of the same frameworks that we claim to deconstruct. For Working Group 1, the necessity to free ourselves from the unfitness, the presentism, and the Eurocentrism of the categories of the modern West was perhaps felt with an even greater level of frustration as many of us study periods and spaces that often remain at the margins of (and marginalised in) labour history. Since many of us come from area studies, work with sources written in non-European (and “dead”) languages, or have an inclination for philology by training, we embraced the “problem” through the prism of language and semantic. Combining the historical semantics approach with the “Entry-Extraction-Exit” model and the “verb-oriented” method, we trained ourselves to dialogue with the sources in an agnostic and self-reflexive manner, to unveil, with all their contextual ambiguities, actor- and action-centred sequences of coercion. We experimented with coloured pencils and whiteboards as well as digital tagging, text-mining and network analysis software. Our shared horizon was and remains the formulation, from the bottom-up, of a renewed and empirically-grounded ontology of labour coercion.

In the process, we have faced many of the issues that have been discussed within the COST Action in general: the challenges of delimiting and defining, the nesting and overlap between coercive labour and power relations, or the tensions between the path of modelling and the infinite variations of social configurations and contextual factors on the ground. In fact, our journey led us to the conclusion that a new “Grammar of Coercion” cannot be dissociated from a broader engagement with power relations and from a more “transversal approach to social history”. Our digital experiments recently led us to develop the embryo of a graph-model which, we believe, might help to digitally implement such a transversal approach – transversal being understood (a) as a way to move from the concrete, empirical level to the abstract and the conceptual level, and (b) as a common digital method of analysis for social historians working on different worksites, time periods, geographical regions and language communities.

Our paper presents the graph model we are currently developing and discusses its potential through the exemplary analysis of two samples of court records. By demonstrating the procedure of transforming court cases into digital data, we would like to reflect on the challenges of moving from the empirical to the abstract level and discuss ways of relating historical findings across time and space. The paper therefore contributes to the general conceptual discussion of the WORCK network by presenting a proof of concept for an empirically grounded, bottom-up way of doing social comparative history.

Coercive Fields in Empires

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Contract labour and indentured Indian woman migrant labourer in British colonial Natal South Africa

Umoh Adetola Elizabeth (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Indentured labor, notably migrant Indian women, was prevalent in African countries such as South Africa in the 19th-20th century. Indenture women migrants from India play a critical role in the sugar industry of Natal in the British Empire sugar estate in South Africa. They also played a critical role in addressing labor shortage in South Africa after slavery was abolished, as raw materials were exported from India. In light of this, the paper discusses indentured labour in KwaZulu-Natal and to what extent the system of indentured Indian labour is similar to slavery. Second, it gauges British labour regulations legislation for employers-employees and how women were used to punish or reward workers on the sugar estates. Data was gathered from oral interview, archival sources, documentary and archival source. The paper found that labourers who left India had no idea about the job contract, bound themselves for five years and on contracts to unknown masters, under little-known conditions to fill the vacancies created. The paper argues that labour legislation law was not always strictly enforced and in the case of Natal, there were employers who defied the law and subjected their employees to a type of Lynching. The paper argues that Kwazulu-Natal was a site of coercion because indentured labourers played a significant role in addressing labour shortage in sugar plantations. Also, most Indian South Africans are descended from indentured laborers because of their early dissemination in nearly the entire province of Natal.

Foreign Polish labour migrants in the German empire: Between coercion and autonomy

Beate Althammer (Humboldt University of Berlin)

In labour history, migrants from the Russian and Austrian territories of partitioned Poland to the German Empire in the period before World War I occupy a special position. At the end of the nineteenth century, they became – most famously in the early works of Max Weber – the epitome of a “Slavic flood” that was allegedly threatening the eastern German borderlands. One century later, then groundbreaking studies by Klaus Bade and Ulrich Herbert described

the large-scale seasonal employment of “foreign” (in contrast to “domestic” Prussian) Poles mainly in Prussia’s East-Elbian agriculture as the first incidence of organized labour-importation into Germany, overshadowed by radicalizing nationalism and repressive state control. More recently, this historic precedent has found the attention of international scholars (e.g. Cindy Hahamovitch, Kristin Surak, Mahua Sarkar) who have identified it as one of the first “guestworker” programmes in global history. In this strand of research, it appears as the forerunner of a new type of capitalist labour exploitation that draws on nominally “free” migrant labour but without granting the recruited foreigners any rights as members of society.

Despite their many merits, most of the existing studies tend to depict the migrants in question as mere pawns that were imported and re-exported at the will of agrarian capitalists and Prussian state bureaucrats. Klaus Bade and Ulrich Herbert have done so to underline how foreign Poles were treated as quasi-dehumanized labour power, and recent contributions from global labour scholars paint an even darker picture of discrimination and coercion. However, they tell us little about how these labour migrants (among them a high percentage of women) themselves experienced and shaped their social relations. This paper aims at a reassessment. It will first critically review the historiography, and second discuss migrants’ agency by looking at concrete interactions in local settings. What were the migrants’ own choices, how did they negotiate labour conditions, sidestep or alter official regulations, and how did they find allies in their host society?

The paper will draw particularly on court proceedings in which migrant workers sued their employer as a source that provides more nuanced insights into the world of rural labour on Prussian East-Elbian estates. Such proceedings indicate that some agriculturists indeed treated their foreign workers in a ruthless manner that matches the conventional historiographic narrative. Yet they also indicate that this was rather the exception than the rule, that state institutions clearly disapproved of abusive employer behaviour and that migrant workers were quite determined and able to fight for their rights. Given that the paper is placed in a panel titled “Coercive Fields in Empires”, it will finally pose the question whether, and in what respects, the situation of Wilhelmine Prussia’s foreign Polish workers can be regarded as akin to coerced labour systems in imperial-colonial contexts, as some historians (e.g. Christoph Rass) have actually suggested.

Indigenous and African slave labour and social interactions in the 17th century Portuguese-America

Diogo Cardoso (University of Porto)

In the Early Modern period, the Portuguese presence in Brazil, and the subsequent introduction of the sugar-cane plantation, created a world where the social interaction between the Portuguese, the indigenous populations, and the increasing number of African slaves was determined by their economic role and social status. The first decades of the 17th century were of economic growth, mainly due to the expansion of the sugar-cane plantation in the Northeast, particularly Pernambuco and Bahia, and the areas surrounding Rio de Janeiro. The society built around the production and trade of sugar, as well as the defense and expansion of the territory, created a very specific socioeconomical role to its several agents based not only on the type of occupation, but also the skin colour and place of birth.

The present paper will focus the Inquisitorial sources to study the differences of treatment among people of different origins, the social interactions of African, American, and European populations and the way the “other” was seen in the light of the religious mindset of the time. Issues as the chronical absence of the non-Portuguese and women from this particular historical source (and a lot of others) will be discussed. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate the jurisdictions under which the non-European populations of the 17th century were subjected to in Brazil. With that, one can understand the private criteria and punishment they answered to, instead of the laws guarded by the Holy Office.

Finally, the occupations of the Portuguese-born inhabitants and their descendants will be studied by using the *Historical International Standard of Classifications of Occupations*. This new methodology applied to Brazil will open the debate on how this occupations' harmonization system, created to classify occupations held in Europe by their social status, adjusts itself to the South American reality of the Early Modern period. The predominance of the religious, war, and sugar related activities and the mobility of the workforce from the most important settlements to the borders of Portuguese America are some of the main conclusions of this topic.

Networks, Mobility and Migration

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Replacing Chinese “coolies”: Spanish racialised discourses on immigration in Cuba and in the Philippines (1847–1898)

Mònica Ginés-Blasi (ENS de Lyon)

This paper argues that nineteenth-century rhetoric and discussions on race with regards to labour – especially plantation labour – were decisive in the selection of labour migrants from specific ethnicities and locations in the colonial world. These discourses became so influential that they even impacted major historical processes, such as affecting international politics and the unfolding of armed conflicts. To develop this analysis, I focus on the search for labour migrants for the Spanish colonies of Cuba and the Philippines during the second half of the nineteenth century. Based on international source material, this paper aims to provide an integrative perspective of the racial rhetoric produced in both contexts as a consequence of the need for migrant labour which could replace Chinese migration.

This paper analyses both the ethnic variant of the Chinese migrant population as well as the different projects and strategies generated as a result of the need to replace Chinese migrants – either due to anti-Chinese sentiments or to find further sources of labour when Chinese migration became scarce. Most authors have until now viewed Chinese labour in Cuba and in the Philippines as homogeneously “Chinese”, coming from Guangzhou and Fujian. Yet, two nuances need to be added to this perception. Firstly, paying attention to the ethnic origin of the Chinese in Cuba sheds light on the diversity of experiences and fates that contract labourers experienced. For instance, labourers from Punti and Hakka origin were recruited under forced conditions for being prisoners of inter-ethnic wars between these two groups. Secondly, another indentured group in Cuba, Mexican Yucatecs, were also simultaneously recruited as prisoners of war, and even worked alongside their Chinese counterparts. The use of Yucatec prisoners of war was only one partially successful project which was part of a long list of ventures to find alternatives to Chinese indentured labourers. These included, among others, Honduran families, Turkish immigrants, Japanese and Annamese workers. Regarding the latter, the interest in Annamese workers was crucial in the decision of Spanish authorities to take part in the French conquest of Vietnam in the mid-nineteenth century. This shows how the need for cheap labour and racialized discourses on agricultural work were mutually impactful and tightly intertwined, and had ultimate consequences in shaping major historical events.

Coercive social processes in the African Atlantic trade (1435–1622)

Fernando Mouta (University of Porto)

Coercion underpins social relations in uneven power relations. Coerced labour, especially in the context of the African Atlantic trade, was primarily molded by the usefulness of the worker, his religion, and the asymmetric Afro-European relations. Contrary to later centuries, between 1435 and 1622, Africans held the upper hand. They were superior in warfare and controlled European settlement by limiting access to land, victuals, and fresh water. During this period, we find enslaved persons owned by Europeans working away from their masters, without supervision, and earning income thanks to their specific set of skills that could later be used to buy his freedom and improve his living conditions. The distance from enforcers can shape new social processes, eroding forced connections, eventually modifying, or even destroying them. Slavery was a fluid status that could change according to the slave's positioning in the Afro-European relationships. Coerced existence and/or labour in African territories in the early days of the Atlantic trade was also common, as many Europeans did not freely arrive in Africa or performed tasks of their choice.

This presentation showcases these processes, focusing in two examples: the *línguas* and the *lançados*. The *línguas* were locals kidnapped by the first European expeditions arriving in coastal African regions where the language was unknown. They were reduced to slavery and brought to Europe to learn the language and culture (mainly Portuguese-related). They would work as translators in subsequent expeditions, labouring alongside their master or leased to other captains or merchants. Even though they were slaves, they were entitled to retain articles of trade, even other slaves, as payment. The profit of selling these items was usually invested in buying their freedom and manumission was to be expected. They were considered essential for the success of any expedition until Europeans were able to establish more permanent relations.

The *lançados* were Portuguese convicted to temporary or permanent banishment from Portugal. Incorporated in the crews of these first European expeditions to Atlantic Africa, they were to be abandoned (therefore the name "those cast away") in unknown regions until the return voyage, to learn the most about local communities, especially the language and social conventions. To survive in a hostile environment, they had to establish relations, mostly as mediators between host societies and European newcomers, by expanding business opportunities and trade networks. Many were Jews, or New-Christians, and some attained very relevant social and commercial status, eventually overcoming their disadvantaged arrival. They lived a freer and liberating existence in Africa compared to their previous existence in Europe.

They were so successful that eventually anyone who settled in the African mainland of their own free will to conduct trade received the same designation. These are just two examples of cultural go-betweens that surpassed coercive social processes and benefited from their specific positioning in the complex world of Afro-European relations to overcome the traditional stereotypes associated with coerced labour and slavery.

The long quest for autonomy: The case of Afro-descendants in Esmeraldas, Ecuador

Tathagato Ganguly (University of Delhi)

The province of Esmeraldas in Ecuador provides us with an interesting case of understanding coercion beyond the dichotomy of free and unfree labour. In fact, the entire region of what has been termed as the *tierras baja del pacífico* (pacific lowlands) (West 1957) that roughly corresponds to the present-day southern Colombian pacific and northern Ecuadorian pacific, is marked by both, unabated captivity, and a relentless pursuit of freedom (Barragan 2021). Thus, making it a space quite distinct from the more familiar regimes of plantation slavery. To elaborate, since the early eighteenth century, the region was marked by the presence of both enslaved Africans and free settlements of Blacks (maroon communities), interacting with and supporting each other. This is not to say that these maroon settlements in the region were free from any threat, rather the intention is to highlight the fact that these spaces of tenuous freedom often provided unusual opportunities for practicing Black autonomy.

In the case of Esmeraldas, in 1994 by virtue of the Law of Agrarian Development (*Ley de Desarrollo Agrario*), 37 Afro-Ecuadorian farm communities were granted collective land titles in the form of *comunas* (communes). The Ecuadorian state authorized 127,279 hectares of land for the said *comunas* in the northwestern part of Esmeraldas province. *Comunas* are spatio-legal entities recognized by the Ecuadorian constitution and enjoys certain special protections and rights. These *comunas* correspond to the maroon settlements in the region and are considered as 'ancestral territory' by the Afro-Ecuadorians of the region. But, in the two decades since, they are under tremendous pressure due to the expansion of extractive activities in the region and have lost around 30,000 hectares of land to the mining industry, oil palm plantations, and shrimp farming industry. Meandering mangroves are divided into monotonous plots for shrimp farming, and large swathes of tropical forests are being cleared for logging activities and palm oil plantations. Territorial conflicts have ushered a cycle of violence against the Afro-Ecuadorians from which no easy escape seems to be in sight. Further, as these lands are overtaken by oil palm (*Elaeis Guineensis*) plantations, much of the manual labour in these plantations are performed by the very people who are being forcefully dispossessed from their lands. And it is in response to these

developments that a strong and vibrant territorial struggle has emerged in the region.

By taking a *longue durée* view of the coercive practices in Esmeraldas and the histories of resistance to them, this paper will attempt to historicise and challenge the binary of freedom-unfreedom. It would rather argue and try to demonstrate that how certain ideas and practices gets sutured to certain spaces. Secondly, the paper would demonstrate the way places (not as the opposite of uprootedness or as its solution, but something through and around which lives are led and made meaningful) shaped and shape how freedom, or lack of it, is constantly managed and contested.

Punishment and Coercion: Carceral Assemblages in Early Modern Europe

Contributors: **Andrea Giuliani** (University of Rome Tor Vergata), **Emilie Luther Valentin** (University of Southern Denmark), **Teresa Petrik** (University of Vienna), **Johan Heinsen** (Aalborg University)

From the galleys to the Ergastolo: The convict labour in Austrian Lombardy in the second half of the eighteenth century

Andrea Giuliani (University of Rome Tor Vergata)

For centuries, the offenders of serious crimes in the Lombard territories had served their sentences as rowers on the foreign galleys, in particular on the Venetian ones. Starting from 1760s, this consolidated practice ended due to new criminal policies, causing many practical problems in the management of the condemned. To solve that complex situation, in 1769, it was established the erection of the Ergastolo of Milan, intended to confine the national convicts. The new institute would punish the condemned by employing them in forced public works for the benefit of the state. With the activation of the new Ergastolo, three different results would be achieved at the same time: to chastise, and possibly rehabilitate, criminals thanks to the work fatigue and ethic; to reduce the high maintenance costs of the condemned; to discourage people to commit crime by showing the atrocious fate reserved for offenders. A few years later, following imperial directives from Vienna, another Ergastolo was opened in Mantova, on the example of the Milanese one. In fact, until that moment, the galley convicts in Mantova were entrusted to the military authorities so that they could be employed in the military fortification of the city. In any case, the life of the Mantuan Ergastolo was soon interrupted. In 1786, following a series of centralizing reforms promoted by Emperor Joseph II, both institutes were replaced by a single large Ergastolo in Pizzighettone, intended for all convicts in Lombardy. During its ten years of activity in Pizzighettone, the Ergastolo kept transforming and adapting itself as it had done in Milano and Mantova.

Through the examination of archival sources related to the administration and management of these institutes, this speech aims to reconstruct the history of the Lombard Ergastolo as well as to understand how it changed over the years. In order to show the multifaceted and adaptable nature of the Lombard Ergastolo, the speech intends to focus the analysis on two particular aspects: the type of condemned confined over the years and the different methods of work and coercion that were experienced within the institution. In fact, the aim of the talk is to demonstrate how the continuous configurations and

reconfigurations of the Ergastolo were determined not only by punitive theories but also by the practical needs connected with work and coercion.

Between coercion and autonomy: Inmate agency in the prison workhouse at Christianshavn, 1769–1800

Emilie Luther Valentin (University of Southern Denmark)

On the outskirts of Copenhagen, a large prison workhouse towered the eighteenth-century town square of Christianshavn. The prison was the largest of its kind in the kingdom of Denmark. Since its establishment in 1662, the prison had been tied both to the system of poor relief and the penal system. Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, the prison workhouse grew in penal responsibilities, and by the last three decades of the century, the institution transitioned from being suspended between the system of poor relief and the penal system to what in a modern perception seemed more like a prison. From a normative perspective, the cause of this transition can seemingly be pinpointed to a string of legislative changes of the period – for instance, the prison's break with the poor relief system in 1781, the changing judicial practice concerning the punishment of theft in 1789, the reorganisation of the prison workhouse in 1790 which separated hardened criminals from low-level offenders, and the use of the institution as a kind of maximum-security prison in 1802. These legislative changes have mainly been perceived as products of a humanistic ideology enforced by the state; however, by studying the experiences of the inmates of the prison workhouse it becomes evident that the changes of the prison were closely connected to the actions of the inmates.

Daily life in the prison workhouse was bound to the organisational system of the prison administration which framed and enforced practices of coercion and autonomy. The institution's open layout, and the fact that it was organised around the labour of the inmates, meant that only a small number of staff could oversee the daily management of the prison; conversely, this also allowed for a certain autonomy among the inmates. The different practices of coercion and autonomy were connected to the inmates' relationships to the different members of the prison personnel, to their knowledge of the prison layout, and to their ability to work the system in their favour. Thus, the inmates' different backgrounds and circumstances shaped their experiences within the institution and the different ways in which they navigated the coercive strategies of the institution. In this paper, I will take a closer look at the different ways the inmates navigated their experiences within the prison workhouse – and how their actions produced changes in the prison on an everyday level. This relates to the inmates' negotiations with the prison system, their exit tactics (both legal and illegal), as well as conflicts that arose as a possible consequence of imprisonment.

Making people work, creating productive subjects? The Vienna *Zuchthaus* and convict labour in early modern Austria

Teresa Petrik (University of Vienna)

With the founding of the first *Zuchthaus* in Vienna in 1671, the capital of the Habsburg Monarchy became part of the international (yet regionally specific) development of certain “punitive landscapes”¹. By sentencing people who were perceived as criminal, deviant or non-productive to confinement, and making use of their labour power, authorities started connecting elements of punishment and social discipline to notions about work, productivity, and honour. While much has been written about the functioning of these early modern poor- and workhouses as (total) institutions of discipline and control, placing them within the grand narratives of modern western societies², historians have also pointed towards the intertwined relationship between workhouses and extramural forms of convict labour (such as galley rowing, forced military service or fortress construction), as well as systems of deportation within the early modern Habsburg empire, pleading for a more integrative study of these different forms of coercive labour relations³. Within the sources themselves, one is confronted with varying, and in part contradictory understandings of the character of workhouses: Throughout the 18th century, authorities increasingly tried to establish a distinction between the prison as a site of punitive confinement on one hand, and the workhouse as a site of labour on the other (even resulting in a temporal spatial division of these two entities in Vienna)⁴. However, the reality of entry, extraction and exit in regard to these institutions demonstrates that such distinctions cannot be adopted uncritically and highlights the necessity of investigating histories of the prison, forced labour institutions, as well as poor laws in their entanglement.

In my paper, I will trace the history of the Vienna *Zuchthaus* as site of labour coercion and outline the transformation of its character throughout the late 17th and 18th century, situating it within the wider field of punitive practices. Moreover, I will connect the genesis of such sets of institutions and practices to the fields of vagrancy and poor laws in Austria. Through this, I will showcase how the entanglement of discourses of idleness, narratives about the masterless poor as well as governmental attempts at criminalising and controlling the lower classes contributed to the construction of specific subjects of “workers” and “non-workers” within early modern society.

¹ Heinsen, Johan (2021): Historicizing Extramural Convict Labour: Trajectories and Transitions in Early Modern Europe, *International Review of Social History*, 66(1), 111–33, 131

² Stekl, Hannes (1986): „Labore et fame” – Sozialdisziplinierung in Zucht- und Arbeitshäusern des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts“, in: Sachße, Christoph & Tennstedt, Florian (Eds.): *Soziale Sicherheit und soziale Disziplinierung. Beiträge zu einer historischen Theorie der Sozialpolitik*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 119–148

³ Krause, Thomas (2003): *Opera publica*, *Comparativ* 13(5-6), 117–130; Steiner, Stephan (2015): “An Austrian Cayenne”: Convict Labour and Deportation in the Habsburg Empire of the Early Modern Period, in: De Vito, Christian & Lichtenstein, Alex (Eds.): *Global Convict Labour*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 126–143

⁴ Codex Austriacus IV (1752), 158ff

Shackled history: Extramural convict labour across early modern Europe

Johan Heinsen (Aalborg University)

Global histories of extramural convict labour have tended to project the history of extramural convict labour onto the world as an alternate history of punishment tied to empire-building that existed in parallel with the history of prisons that evolved in Europe itself – as if European states diverged from their colonial counterparts by hiding the coercive spectacle of convict labour behind walls. To some extent, this makes sense if we look at the histories of Britain and the Netherlands where the punitive practices diverged qualitatively between European and non-European territories. It makes less sense if we look at those states that employed convicts on galleys throughout the early modern period – a practice that combined immobilisation and hard convict labour for the state itself – and no sense at all if we look at those that developed enduring, but ever-shifting, practices of chaining male felons and putting them to labour – typically in military infrastructure – for the state itself. We find the latter practiced in multiple forms across the majority of Europe. They came to form entangled traditions of labour coercion and punishment. Everywhere, it was the combination of chains and outdoors labour that defined such punishments. The fact that they looked nothing like what was presumed to be the trajectory of modernity expected to be found in Europe has led some global historians to conceptualise the institutions built around such practices as “internal colonies”. However, this only seems to highlight their existence as an anomaly. In reality, such punishments often sat at the heart of the penal systems that developed across early modern Europe.

This paper examines these traditions and their relations to wider assemblages of punishment. It focuses mainly on early modern Scandinavia in which the punishment became known as *slaveri* (“slavery”). It argues that the punishment combined a host of elements in response to multiple considerations, most notably the labour needs of states caught up in military arms races, evolving criminal codes responding to a host of social processes, and the internal tensions of institutions built to exploit felons with minimal costs while also keeping them from escaping. From this perspective, the paper argues that the history of punitive institutions is best examined as historical dynamics that reveal themselves in the linkages of different sites into overlapping fields of coercion. Thus, it makes the case for a contextual social history of punitive institutions understood as assemblages of coercive practices.

Architectural, Diagrammatic and Artistic Practices: How Can Coercive And Interdependent Relationships be Depicted Along Different Media?

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Coercive consequences of the NS-regime in the work of architect Hans Scharoun

Waltraud P. Indrist (Graz University of Technology / Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna)

“My work is an eternal battle against the shortage of materials and labour, but maybe one day I will be able to celebrate resurrection in your office! Finally to recreate space again! Right now, we are exhausting ourselves! What does exhaustion actually have to do with creation? Or can exhaustion be creative?”

This statement was part of a letter written by the German modern architect Hans Scharoun (1893–1972) to his former students and employees, the twins Lubomír and Cestimír Šlapeta from Olomouc, in 1944. Scharoun’s (German) play of language between “exhaustion” (Erschöpfung) and “creation” (Schöpfung) points to their fundamental etymological connection. For an architect, the process of creation – in the sense of being “creative”, artistic (schöpferisch) – is an essential part of his daily work routine. If the environment – in this specific case: the fascist and oppressive NS-regime – does not enable this, the process of creating can turn into exhaustion – a coercive environment.

In the scientific community, Scharoun’s work has been primarily assessed to this day as not being associated with the NS-regime. Rather, he suffered from several oppressions such as a house raid, the withholding of his architect’s license, and regular harassment regarding building permits. However, towards the end of the 1930s and the invasion of Poland by the National Socialists’, as well as the beginning of WWII, some projects can be identified that indicate collaboration with institutions close to the regime.

For this, a pivotal criterion must be taken into account, namely that an architect is bound to a far greater extent to the state and its laws in order to exercise his profession and survive economically than other artists such as writers, painters or musicians. Hence, the contribution will analyse paradigmatic encounters with the institutions and its respective legal

framework, as well as it will compare differences to colleagues such as the Luckhardt' brothers.

This contribution will elaborate the entanglement of artistic / architects labour, the legal conditions for carrying out the profession, and their coercive consequences in the work of an architect like Scharoun.

Statistics and art: The possibilities of making connections through images

Anamarija Batista (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna / Vienna University of Economics)

Large quantities and averages collected through questionnaires and interviews represent references to reality of labour relations. Here, number, line/curve or geometric shapes such as circles or rectangles are visual elements that display relationships in an abstract form (Werner 2017). Through their representational apparatus, they also shape the scope of imagination and thus the horizon of meaning of individual and collective ways of acting. In combination with verbal and written lines of argumentation, the diagrams achieve a high degree of abstraction and are used as control and analysis tools. "As a complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies, and figurality" (Mitchell 1994, 16) the diagrammatic images are a product of specific form of rationalization, standardization and abstraction processes as well as of the specific design of graphic information design.

Images produced within the artistic practice are likewise concerned with the questions of work conditions and the ways of coercion since centuries. With their own means artistic practice touch, compose and convey work themes and coercive circumstances. It increasingly brings bodily, aesthetic and situational experiences back into the field of discourse and addresses social relations through the image, the object and the voice (Batista 2023). On the contrary, stating numerical relationships represented by diagrammatic images abstracts local and cultural circumstances to make them comparable with each other across locations and time intervals. However, specific formations and inscriptions of work and coercive relationships as well as the imaginaries about the own and collective needs become more difficult to grasp in the course of this subsumption. This also complicates the formation of knowledge about the interplay of imagination, action and responsibility.

The following conference contribution will explore how artistic practices and social sciences negotiate issues of work and coercion in their own practices through images within their disciplines. What understanding of work and coercion is constituted through diagrammatic and artistic images? What imaginaries about present and future options for action can be derived from

the process of image reception? The selected artistic and diagrammatic images will be analysed and reflected.

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Work and coercive mechanisms in marriage relations

Iva Simčić (Academy of Fine Arts, University of Sarajevo)

It was surprising to notice that majority of common people do not consider marriage to be a contract (even registrars in a Town Hall who perform weddings were astonished by that notion despite the fact that they themselves emphasized that only the institution of court has the power to dissolve it). Marrying couples are not presented with factual contract documents to sign. However, by the power of their signatures, they are bound by a set of agreed terms, prescribed by the law. Even more so, the marriage presupposes indefinite contractual obligation although it is a contract without a "contract".

There is an everlasting romantic notion of love implied in the concept of marriage, although many are arranged for many different reasons. The patriarchy has a firm grip on the idea of marriage: the capitalist notion of "labour out of love" maintains the implied idea that marriage presumes love. The idea of marriage also presupposes that marital partners are equally committed to jointly and privately resolve all challenges inflicted upon them by the outside social conditions. It is implied that they will take upon themselves to combat problems that state (or capitalism as a social conditioning that permeated every aspect of human life) has chosen not to address or has purposefully neglected. The marriage takes over where the state fails. The love, implied by the institution of marriage, is supposed to alleviate and somehow absorb all emotional, psychological, existential and financial damage inflicted upon the person by the social structure and relations.

This artistic exploration is based upon a personal account, impact that precarious work relations have had on my marriage. Precarious labour contract is a very precise legal agreement defined by its temporary nature. Precarious contract enables an employer to protect his/hers interests, leaving an employee responsible for his own wellbeing. Precarious labour nurtures the neoliberal idea of personal responsibility for his/her social position and status.

Growing up in Yugoslavia, a socialist country, we have never been confronted with issues related to insecurity or unstable future. As capitalism of the 21st century took over, precarious labour is becoming the most frequent form of employment. The insecurities that this temporary employment connotes are related to slowly shifting power relations within my marriage and consequent emotional and psychological damage.

I will present these issues in artistic terms, as a series of artworks. There is always a challenge in presenting an abstract idea (with real life consequences) by artistic means, especially in traditional ones like painting, drawing, printmaking, without it becoming illustrative or didactic. The main idea is to evoke, in visual and metaphorical terms, a personal account of two very different but intertwined contractual obligations.

Coercion, Labour Market and Institutions

Contributors: **Lucie Dušková** (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, GWZO), **Fia Sundevall** (Stockholm University), **Johan Svanberg** (Stockholm University), **Yvonne Svanström** (Stockholm University), **Sofie Tornhill** (Linnaeus University), **Judith Spicksley** (University of Hull), **Sofi Vedin** (Karlstad University)

The “Socialist work discipline” and its impacts on everyday working and living in state-socialist Czechoslovakia

Lucie Dušková (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, GWZO)

The concept of the Socialist work discipline was integrated among key pillars of new mode of working and living that the Communist party of Czechoslovakia sought to introduce after it came to power in 1948. The concept consisted of several norms and values that expressed the communist perspective on how the people should behave in their work life, but also in their everyday life, to support the Czechoslovakia’s path to the communist society. Its principles were embedded in the Constitutions of 1948 and of 1960, and into the Labour Code of 1965. But it was also constantly reminded in popular culture and in press. Every citizen of Czechoslovakia should know it and acquire its principles.

The principles of the Socialist work discipline were defined especially by two paragraphs of the Labour Code of 1965. They concretized obligations of working persons and of supervising and leading staff. They formulated for example the principles of working culture, the methods of remuneration, the working hours, and the status of individual professions. The norm also defined sanctions for its transgression.

Nevertheless, despite the menacing sanctions, the concept of the Socialist work discipline headed many challenges in its everyday practising by Czechoslovak citizens. These were given by the economic reality of the state-socialist planned economy; the omnipresent lack of the daily use and important household goods systematically undermined several principles of the concept, such as the respect of the socialist ownership. Czechoslovak citizens were brought to circumvent, distort, or misrepresent in every way possible the rules, which lead to curious paradoxes and extensive judicial inquiry with often even more extensive justifications for judgments.

This paper intends to explore these paradoxes by analysing the meaning of the term Socialist work discipline, putting it in the ideo-economical context, and

exploring its concrete impacts on everyday life. In its first part, the paper presents and explains the content of the concept such as defined in the Labour Code. It also focuses on what makes it specific to socialism (especially the obligation to respect the socialist ownership). The second part addresses the functioning of these principles in the everyday practices.

The paper illustrates its findings on two case studies from the beginning of the 1960s. At this time, the Communist party rule was already stabilized. New – the Socialist – Constitution was introduced, so Czechoslovakia officially became a socialist state. Principles of the Socialist work discipline were already formulated and ready to be introduced into the then elaborated Labour Code, which entered into force at the beginning of the 1966.

The analysis is therefore based on this normative text, which brings the complete text of the concept, and on the judicial investigations solving the transgressions of the concept. These investigations contain the records of practices of the working people, and their motivations when eventually transgressing the rules.

Coercive labour relations and the Swedish welfare state (1920s–2020s)

Fia Sundevall (Stockholm University), Johan Svanberg (Stockholm University), Yvonne Svanström (Stockholm University) and Sofie Tornhill (Linnaeus University)

Contrary to the idea that capitalism in principle relies on free wage labour, labour historians have pointed out its continuous dependency on unwaged and unfree labour. It has been argued that unfree and coercive labour have constituted integral parts of capitalism in its different contexts and phases, rather than figuring as external remains of earlier forms of capital accumulation or something mostly occurring in the Global South today (de Vito et al 2020; Federici 2012; Fraser 2022; Strauss 2012).

In many regards, demarcations between “acceptable” and unacceptable forms of coercion are pivotal to labour market politics, negotiations between trade unions and employers’ associations and collective struggles for increased autonomy. Workers’ abilities to contest coercive elements are conceivably larger in contexts where universal systems of social welfare imply that social reproduction is, at least partly, detached from wage labour than is the case when access to social services is firmly premised upon the pay check. Yet, also in strong social democratic welfare states, examples abound of coercive labour relations and practices, sometimes propelled by direct political interventions and regulations in response to crises or alleged labour market challenges and sometimes linked to vulnerable socio-economic positions.

Centring on the case of Sweden, the overall contribution of this paper is to expand discussions of coerced labour relations to encompass their significance for the formation of the welfare state, from its gradual evolution to its partial disintegration. With examples from different contexts spanning from the 1920s to the present, the aim is to understand how and why different forms and degrees of coercive regulations and practices have shaped the labour market and working conditions. Focusing on how the Swedish labour market model has been *both* underpinned *and* undermined by coercive labour relations, the paper analyses both manifest and subtle forms of coercion and how these have been generated, upheld and contested by state actors, trade unions, employers' associations and workers.

To account for continuity and change, the paper examines the rationalities and effects of coercive labour conditions in Sweden in four different temporal and contextual settings: (1) vagrancy and coerced labour from 1920s-1940s, (2) various forms and degrees of coercion in war labour during the Second World War-period, (3) more subtle forms of unfree elements of working conditions for migrant workers in post-war economic boom with focus on the crisis-ridden textile- and garment industry, and (4) coercive elements in the contemporary use of work permits and state subsidized employment for long-term unemployed, the youth and newly arrived migrants with focus on the restaurant and cleaning sectors.

Together, these examples shed light on different economic and political contexts and sectors in which coercive aspects have been motivated to meet social challenges. Moreover, they illustrate how coercive labour relations are upheld by different types of possible sanctions—incarceration, eviction, withdrawn unemployment benefit and deportation—in conjuncture with intersectional inequalities in terms of gender, class, migration and citizenship status.

“Slaverie” before slavery: An acte for the punishment of vagabondes, 1547

Judith Spicksley (University of Hull)

Slavery, understood as an institution that reduced individuals involuntarily to the status of property, is widely held to have been an ancient legal practice that came under fire in the early modern period. I argue here that it was only from the early modern period that slavery, as we understand it today, began to emerge, and use the 1547 Act against Vagabonds to demonstrate this. Writing in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* in 1765, Blackstone argued that the English had never been able to stomach slavery. ‘And when it was introduced by the statute of 1 Edw. 6 c. 3. ‘which ordained, that all idle vagabonds should be made slaves . . . the spirit of the nation could not brook

this condition, even in the most abandoned rogues; and therefore this statute was repealed in two years afterwards.'

It was during the now famous court case of Somerset versus Stuart, in 1772, however, that slaves under the 1547 Act were perhaps described as property for the first time. Somerset, described as 'the Negro Slave and the property' of Charles Stewart, having attempted escape while in England, was to be sent to Jamaica for sale as plantation labour. But following a writ of habeas corpus, Somerset's case was brought before King's Bench. Sergeant William Davy, one of Somerset's advocates, in arguing that 'no Man at this Day is, or can be a Slave in England', referred to the 1547 Act as 'the only Act of Parliament that had that ever attempted to introduce Slavery into this Country'. He was keen to note, nevertheless, that the Act was quickly repealed, because 'the English Mind' revolted at such severity, even for 'Rogues and Vagabonds'. (Andrew Lyall, *Granville Sharpe's Cases on Slavery*, 2017, 156-66)

This is the view we find in modern scholarship - that 'slaves' under the 1547 Act were chattel. Given that this accords with the mainstream definition of slavery, it should not be surprising. The model of the 'slave' as property dominates the historiography, is applied in historical analysis and has for some time been at the core of international anti-slavery law. Yet a close reading of the text reveals that it was not the *persons* of vagabonds that became the property of their masters; only their 'service and labour' were defined as chattels. In addition, anyone discovered to be in the ownership of others already - 'wardes bondemen or neifs of blood' - were to be discharged from 'Slaverie' and returned to their owners.

The term 'slavery' was a neologism that appeared in the English printed literature no later than the 1540s. In this paper I consider what the term 'slavery' meant at that time and how this played into the 1547 Act, and set this against later calls for vagrants to be enslaved, in which the idea of the 'slave' as chattel had begun to emerge. I will end with a short discussion of what this means for our understanding of slavery today.

Help Wanted: Recruitment, Coercive Labour and Power Relations of Domestic workers in Sweden 1890–1939

Sofi Vedin (Karlstad University)

This paper is a part of a chapter in progress from my ongoing dissertation project. The chapter in question concerns representations of class in work advertisements for domestic workers, and the aim of the dissertation as a whole is to study the practices and hierarchies of paid domestic work in Sweden, from 1890–1939.

In Sweden, as well as most of Europe, the so-called “servant crisis” was a hot topic of debate during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While the number of women employed in domestic work increased continuously from 1870 until 1930, the main concern was the lack of qualified domestic workers. The decline has been attributed to a changing labour market due to industrialization, where women left domestic work to take employment in other sectors, with better working conditions and higher salaries. However, there was no lack in demand – employers still wanted domestic workers. This paper concerns recruitment of domestic workers via advertisements in Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*. In the advertisements, workers and employers described themselves and the other party in terms of personality and skills, but they also described the benefits and working conditions and the material conditions of the home (which would also be the workplace). In the advertisements, we can see how employer’s descriptions of the terms of employment changed over time, how they adapted to the shortage of domestic workers, and in what ways they tried to attract the most qualified workers. In the advertisements, there was a shift around the 1920s, regarding how the terms of the employment and the home were described by the employers. Through the findings of my research, I argue that while domestic work changed, the traditional live-in system gradually disappeared and women left the occupation at an increasing rate, employers wanted to preserve “servanthood”, by coercing domestic workers to keep living in their employer’s homes.

Problematizing Freedom

Contributors: **Therese Christofferson** (Stockholm University), **Viola Müller** (University of Bonn), **John Latham-Sprinkle** (Ghent University)

Free labour? How non-public labour market intermediaries shaped “free labour” in Sweden 1884–1942

Therese Christofferson (Stockholm University)

During the industrialisation of the late 1800s and early 1900s, people in Northern Europe increasingly depended on wage labour for their subsistence. People moved from rural to urban areas where they were increasingly dependent on local actors who could mediate work. In the late 19th century Sweden, economic theoreticians and labour associations alike expressed that labour mediation has a pivotal role in establishing the “free” labourer, often conceptualised as the not-farming, wage labourer.

The first Swedish public employment service set up office on municipal level in 1902. Still, until the national monopoly of the Swedish employment agency in 1942, work was to a large extent mediated by a diverse set of non-public actors. Various associations and organisations typical of the time, mediated work as one of several services provided with political or religious purpose. However, private intermediaries such as individual brokers and businesses with profit intentions were many. According to early findings, this type of labour market intermediary has been important for female workers especially.

This paper will investigate how private labour market intermediaries constructed “free” labour and labourers during the establishment a wage-labour market in Sweden 1884–1942. The hypothesis is that labour intermediaries of the past had effects on social inequalities by restricting freedom and limiting the agency of labourers – in the same manner that transnational labour intermediaries influence the *what*, *where*, and *who* of labour mobility today. Furthermore, the hypothesis is that intermediaries depended on, developed, and reproduced social differentiation in their operations – differentiations which came to be consolidated in the institution of wage-labour market. By including labour market agents previously excluded from research on the early Swedish labour market, this study questions the notion of “free” labour as synonymous with contract-based wage-labour.

The paper is a part of a dissertation within the field of economic history, giving special attention to traditions in social and labour history. With the perspective of intersectional and media theory, the dissertation asks questions related to the role, operations, and effects of private intermediaries in the shaping of wage-labour and the market of labour: How did these intermediaries formulate

notions of “free” wage labour? How did intermediaries shape and restrain worker agency on a labour market? How did intermediaries translate perceptions of gender, class, and ethnicity/regional belonging to labour power properties? And how did this conceptualisation translate to the labour market in terms of type of work, conditions, labour related social relations? Thus, the paper questions the notion of labour market mediated wage-labour as inherently free and shows that even the so-called “free” labour market has a heterogeneous composition of social labour relations with different degrees of freedom and agency. The paper argues that, with intermediaries as vehicles of continuity, power asymmetries from 19th century were consolidated in the 20th century institutions of the wage-labour market upon which the Swedish welfare state came to rest.

Labour coercion, pollution, and immobilisation in 19th-century Regla, Havana

Viola Müller (University of Bonn)

In 1844, the Almacenes de Regla were opened, an industrial warehouse complex across the Bay of Havana. Primarily designed to store export sugar, Regla significantly differed from the older merchant houses in Havana by its centralized, highly effective organization that included massive cast-iron structures, artificial embankments, and internal railways. The new warehouses, owned by a joint stock company, mostly employed (and accommodated) enslaved Black and indentured Chinese workers to the detriment of the socioeconomic position of free Black men (Rood 2017).

But Regla was more than just its warehouses. It was also a village with a local population, mostly of white people. Large numbers of them were employed either “en el mar” or in the trade with molasses. The former suggests a direct link to nature via the sea, whereas the heavily refined molasses and sugar exemplify a product that originally came from nature but had undergone an industrial process that essentially detached it from nature. Now, it was a standardized product, packed in sealed boxes, and stored in iron shelves. Did people in Regla also perceive this division of their work into “nature” and “industry”? Can we discern a push back of nature in favor of industry that over time rendered workers more vulnerable to exploitation and increased their coercion by employers? Or, in other words, what was the relation between labor coercion, the natural environment, and the private industrial complex?

This paper explores the spatial organization of Regla with an emphasis on its (social) infrastructure and the natural environment. There are conflicting accounts on the living conditions of Regla’s inhabitants, with some stating that it lacked basic infrastructures that typically characterized a residential place of the time, including a market place and wide-spread access to drinking

water. Instead, contemporaries remarked on impassable streets, idle lots, and unhealthy mangroves and swamps. It also seems that the surrounding hills and the fact that a transfer to Havana was only possible with a fee-based ferry essentially immobilized most parts of Regla's working population in a narrow, increasingly polluted, and efficiently regulated place. Employers, as the paper argues, had a particular spatial understanding of where and how to remodel nature and exploit people for their business endeavors. In this case, in a place that was geographically confined and at the same time widely connected through large-scale flows of goods and people.

Labour, debt and enslavement in the late medieval northwest Caucasus

John Latham-Sprinkle (Ghent University)

The Northwest Caucasus— modern-day Krasnodar Krai of the southern Russian Federation— was a critical source of enslaved people during the late medieval and early modern Mediterranean. Known to outsiders as Circassia or Zichia, this region is most famous as the origin of the ruling elite of the Circassian Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt. However, the Caucasian background to this slave trade remains obscure. While contemporary and later ethnographic sources highlight the role of violence in processes of entry into the slave trade, it has previously been unclear what role debt networks may have played in the process of enslavement and the new horizons of labour exploitation that were opened up as a result. This paper introduces new evidence from the late fifteenth century, which suggests that networks of debt played a significant role in transforming dependents into enslaveable individuals.

Late medieval ethnographic sources, which can be tentatively supported by archaeological finds, suggest a fragmented political landscape in the late medieval Northwest Caucasus. Peripatetic princes and bands of retainers claimed a shifting and uncertain sovereignty over peasant communities, enforced through violence and slave raiding. Some of these peasant communities— the so-called 'Rebellious Villages' (*casales rebeldes*) or 'Black Circassians'— seem to have refused to recognise the authority of princes altogether. This situation was complicated by the presence of Genoese and Venetian colonies on the coast, including the Genoese colony of Caffa in Crimea (modern Feodosiia) and the colonies of Matrega, Mapa and Bata on the northwest Caucasian coast (modern Taman', Anapa and Novorossiisk). In the latter half of the fifteenth century, these colonies were ruled by the autonomous Genoese noble families which recognised the overlordship of Caffa and local Circassian princes.

Documents from the Bank of San Giorgio, which bought the Black Sea colonies from the Genoese Republic in 1453, are strongly concerned with the treatment of debtors. They repeatedly command that indebted Circassians should not be

processed in the autonomous colonies of Matrega, Mapa and Bata, but rather should be brought to Caffa. Slightly earlier documents also implicitly designate Circassians as enslaveable, and record enslavement for debt as a punishment in the Italian colonies of the Black Sea. Taken together, these documents suggest that the Bank of San Giorgio attempted to control the supply of enslaveable Northwest Caucasians. Later ethnographic and legal sources record a wide variety of social distinctions within Northwest Caucasian societies, with a patchwork of restrictions on the labour that could be demanded from peasant communities. By contrast, enslavement through debt opened up a wider range of labour exploitation that could be demanded from these forcibly isolated individuals.

These documents suggest that strategies of deracination and labour exploitation through debt were well-established in Italian colonies in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Given the well-documented role of Genoese entrepreneurs in the establishment of the West African slave trade and their utilisation of commercialised credit networks to render Africans enslaveable, it is possible that the Genoese Black Sea colonies indeed acted as a 'laboratory' for strategies used in the Atlantic slave trade, as Charles Verlinden long ago suggested.⁵

⁵ Charles Verlinden, *The Beginnings of Modern Colonization*, (Ithaca, NY, 1970), 3-5.

Coercive Spaces and Technologies

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Coercive technologies: Lifts, labour and affective space in Johannesburg, South Africa in the 20th century

Bridget Kenny (University of the Witwatersrand)

Based on archival research and interviews, this paper examines the labour of lifts in Johannesburg, South Africa, between the early decades of the 20th century and the 1970s. Using the site of the elevator, an everyday urban infrastructure, it shows how coercive practices involved the intertwining of mechanisms of access to skill and training, direct racial exclusions through job reservation, and discourses of technological progress and prowess. Lift technology relied immediately on daily labour to maintain it, thereby servicing white city residents. Repair was based on skilled engineering and artisanal labour predicated on white men's access, bolstered through apprenticeship systems negotiated by the state and trade unions to support white men. The operation of passenger lifts for a white public was defined as unskilled labour and reserved for whites, in a context where passenger lifts were racially segregated 'public amenities'. In some sectors lift operators were white women. In different ways, then, black men's labour was reproduced as unskilled 'help' or threatening service. Lifts were intimate affective spaces of belonging which configured and legitimated South African coercive labour relations in multiple ways, imbricating the materiality of their technology with legal orders of exclusion and discursive practices constituting city space over the 20th century. The paper explicitly engages with post-colonial science and technology studies to argue for how labour and coercion are an under-examined set of relations critical to explaining the incorporation and adaptations of technology to urban South Africa.

Mines, migration and close compound system in 19th-20th Century South Africa

Samuel Uwem (University of Hradec Kralove)

Mining has been the bedrock of the South African economy for many years, from the 18th century until now. Playing a crucial role in the sector is migrant labour utilized to extract diamonds and gold in South Africa's mining sector in 18- 19th when extreme global labour mobility was prevalent after World War II. It alludes to the inability of the local population to meet the demand for

mining employees, which led to the hiring of labour migrant mineworkers from other countries, including Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Tanzania. The workers reside in a 'compound' called 'De Beers Compound' as part of their contractual agreement, which facilitated their control and surveillance. 'Compound' is also linked to where black mining employees stayed when they had nowhere to live because they frequently commuted from their homes to diamond fields for work. Compounds, owned by the mine owners, served as housing for the black employees. The compound structures were also maintained in isolation from the accommodation for white people. Drawing from historical analysis of archival sources, oral history, and interviews, the paper examines the environment of working space recruitment practices, industrial working terms, and the migrant labour contract system in South Africa's mining sector, notably diamond. Second, to analyse the nature and (re) contracting in the 1886 "closed labour compounds." Third to examine the link between 'compounds' and working practices as an aspect of labour to guarantee the maximum impact of 'labour as the engine of production'. The paper argues that 'De Beers compound was a chameleon combination of "forced labour, bondage, and terrifying resemblance to slavery because of restriction of workers freedom. The paper also argues that the historical antecedence of work practices in South Africa's mining sector spill over to current *destabilizing labour relations*

Displaced, not “lazy”: Contradictions of im/mobilisation on a Papuan frontier of “empowerment” and “protection”

Jacob Nerenberg (Leiden University)

Debates about how to characterise labour regimes that seem to show elements of both freedom and coercion are not restricted to scholarly contexts. In many sites undergoing economic transformation, political conflicts and formations of citizenship are destabilized by moralized disagreements over responsibility for the growth of so-called “surplus” populations, those “floating” strata whose idiosyncratic livelihoods are commonly accused of consisting of anything but work. In the central highlands of West Papua, a contested territory at Indonesia’s eastern limit, new programs of “social protection” and “indigenous empowerment” have intervened in a scene where growing numbers of indigenous residents are exiting the “traditional” agricultural sector. The inter-ethnic constellation in Papua’s La Pago customary territory features an autochthonous majority increasingly shifting from technologically rudimentary agriculture into informal work and attachment to indirect extractive rent distribution via an expanding State administration, alongside a growing, variegated commercial trade sector dominated by newcomers from distant Indonesian islands. While newcomer traders entering Papua have often exited situations of stagnant job markets in their home regions, Papuan

highlanders tend to leave their rural villages without any coherent job markets at all to welcome them.

Narratives of indigenous displacement and “laziness” compete and yet overlap in commentary from a range of perspectives, including those of indigenous pro-independence activists, Christian church authorities, local development workers, and representatives of central State offices. Together these narratives take part in constructing discourses that characterize an ethnically segmented citizenship, wherein the recognition of customary land title is made effectively conditional on both the non-recognition of indigenous labour and its immobilisation beyond an agrarian sphere under increasing market pressures. This segmentation of citizenship is itself under pressure from expansion of the newcomer commercial sector, whose rapid growth threatens to overflow its urban confines, generate new rural real estate markets and insinuate itself into local relations of debt and control of productive agrarian land. At the same time, a new indigenous elite wages internecine conflict to command the distribution of the State’s “social protection” and “empowerment” dividends, which many critics lament as a force that fosters idleness and furthers their separation from the means of autonomous agricultural production.

Evocations of customary smallholders made “lazy” (whether due to “culture” or “handouts”), and their contrast with images of “clever” and “industrious” newcomer traders, tend to serve the agendas of ascendant class strata on both sides of the local ethnic divide. These evocations effectively conceal the forms of indirect coercion and disguised immobilisation that characterize (at different scales of space and time) both the pressures on social reproduction of the indigenous smallholder agrarian sphere, and the migratory trajectories of small newcomer traders. Essentialist discourses of inter-ethnic comparison thus play a role in perpetuating a type of indeterminacy that complicates efforts to articulate displacements from agrarian production and exclusions from waged labour regimes.

Linking Coercion to Historical Change

Contributors: **Marian Niedermayr** (Johannes Kepler University Linz), **Siân Davies** (University of Edinburgh), **Tibor Valuch** (Hungarian Academy of Sciences), **Måns Jansson** (Uppsala University)

Personal dependence, exploitation and class relations on the estates of the bishopric of Passau in what is today Austria, ca. 1250–1367

Marian Niedermayr (Johannes Kepler University Linz)

The paper deals with labour coercion and the struggle over labour rent in the Lower Austrian manorial system in the time period between the sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth century. The trajectories of European manorialism, from its medieval origins to Late Medieval rent-taking lordship and the emergence of demesne lordship in Early Modern East-Central Europe, have long been a widely discussed topic in historiography. New approaches emphasize the diversity of possible pathways for the institution's development that emerged at different times and places and were the result of complex interactions, negotiations and power struggles between landlords and peasants. Lower Austria was already described in light of older conceptions as one of many transition zones between the 'Western' rent-taking and the 'Eastern' demesne system where the Early Modern expansion of the demesne economy 'got stuck', despite the fact that the normative and legal framework developed in favour of the landlords and the status of the peasantry deteriorated. A distinguishing feature of the region was the predominance of viticulture, characterized by wage labour relations and a small-holding agrarian structure, which determined the use of labour services in the manorial economy.

The paper starts with a general outline of the development of the demesne economy in Lower Austria and discusses the attempts of the emperor to regulate labour services. While labour rent was of little significance in the Late Middle Ages and most peasant households were obliged to work only a few days a year for their landlords, the sixteenth century saw an increase in the demand for *corvée* and the resulting tensions. Labour services as well as the compulsory service by children and orphans were matters of debate between emperor and estates at the diets in the mid of the century. The nobility eventually succeeded in gaining the right to demand unlimited labour services, but was still expected to leave 'old (local) customs' unchanged and not to overburden their subjects. This led to very different outcomes and arrangements of labour services in individual manors. The paper proceeds with an analysis of court documents and peasant supplications from two of these sites of coercion, the manors of Ottenstein and Grafenegg. The sources

allow to get an impression of the conflicts and negotiations between peasants and landlords that shaped labour services at the local level. They illustrate how the diverse labour arrangements depended on the structure of the manor and the needs of the demesne economy, but in particular they provide examples for some of the rules, the range of arguments and the means that actors invoked to manipulate the outcome of these conflicts in their favour.

Racialising the will to work. Coercing transformation in and between Jamaica and North Wales

Siân Davies (University of Edinburgh)

In 1782, Richard Pennant became the manager and owner of the Pennant family's sugar plantations in Jamaica and the Penrhyn estate in North Wales. For the next 150 years, these sites of labour would remain connected by Pennant ownership and oversight. This paper considers the changing nature of coercive practises and labourers' responses at Penrhyn slate quarry in North Wales, and on the family's sugar plantations in Clarendon and Westmoreland, Jamaica. Focusing on two periods of transformation, initial proletarianization on the Penrhyn estate in the late eighteenth century, and post-emancipation Jamaica, this paper explores racialised coercive transformations in two differing locations, tracing their connected temporality.

At the end of eighteenth-century Richard took control of highly profitable, centrally owned and strictly managed sites of labour in Jamaica. In North Wales, taking advantage of the slate rock on the Penrhyn estate, he sought to create one. As part of his transformation of Penrhyn Quarry, he created a new wage-dependent labour force. Richard Pennant's memorial, completed in 1820 obscured the struggles he faced to create this labour force and the limits of economic coercion. This idealised distortion masked the reality of labour relations in Britain and was used as a benchmark for comparison when freedom was granted in Jamaica. In Jamaica, freed people's perceived attitudes towards work which were similar to those of the labourers on the Penrhyn estate, were explained as habitual faults of their race. By considering these two periods of coercive transformation, one at the end of the eighteenth century, when Richard Pennant brought industrial capitalism home to North Wales, and one in mid-nineteenth century Jamaica, when emancipation threatened to create a vacuum of coercive power, we can witness racial capitalism in action, as different forms of coercion were practised and justified, and the will, or lack thereof, to work was explained in vastly different ways.

The coercion of labour in Hungary before, during and after communism in a Central European comparison

Tibor Valuch (Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

The history of Hungary and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th century has been characterised by frequent political transformations and repeated regime changes. Without claiming to be exhaustive, economic and social relations were shaped by the peace in Paris at the end of the First World War, the expansion of the Soviet empire, the communist takeover and the regime changes of 1989/90. During these transformations, the conditions of work incentives and work coercion have radically changed. The market economy systems that had operated between the two world wars were abolished by the communist takeover in 1948/49, which introduced a centralised planned economy. The collapse of the state socialist system in 1989/90 created the opportunity for a return to a market economy. Obviously, in each of these periods there were differences between the economies of the various countries, as well as differences in the practice of labour coercion. Focusing on the Hungarian case and comparing it with the Central and Eastern European countries, I will present a longitudinal analysis of how the everyday practice of work incentives and work demands changed at the plant level between the two world wars, in the state socialist era and in the post-communist transition period.

Using the examples of Hungarian and regional heavy industry plants and mines, I examine the characteristics of working life, socialization, work pressure and work discipline in these three periods, based on archival sources, reminiscences and oral history interviews.

I analyse the external and internal factors of work coercion and incentives. I will describe disciplinary practices and the economic and non-economic means of work coercion. These analyses also allow me to compare the practices of work coercion in different periods and in different socio-economic systems.

Seeing, knowing, and doing coercion: Mobile state administrations and changing work practices in the early modern European metal trades

Måns Jansson (Uppsala University)

This paper explores changing forms of coercion and altered potentials for controlling work in the eighteenth-century European metal trades, as perceived by mobile Swedish state officials. As part of shaping themselves into knowledgeable servants of a growing mining administration, these men travelled across Europe, reporting on varying ways of taming nature, improving production processes, and supervising working people. Many of them were later offered opportunities to exercise inspections and managerial

duties at different levels of the domestic mining and metalworking sector, professional roles that often involved repeated journeys among worksites in the Swedish realm.

This form of state-related mobility, both in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe, have been related to rising institutions of expertise as well as to technical improvement and knowledge circulation in the metal trades. Scholars have, rightfully so, spoken about early forms of industrial espionage and, more recently, about emerging linkages among scientific, administrative, and artisanal practices. Some worksites, like important mines and large smelting works, have even been dealt with as “trading zones”, triggering constructive interactions between academically trained men and craftspeople. Such studies have, however, often been conducted without further consideration of altered hierarchies of work, changing areas of conflict, or refined control mechanisms at the local level. Nor has the existing research occupied itself with examining the connections between, on the one hand, mobility and the spread of (technical) know-how in the early modern metalworking sector, and, on the other hand, the modification of coercive practices and the local implementation of new supervisory regimes.

In this regard, Swedish archival sources, including travel diaries, reports, and protocols, do offer eye-opening findings. I use a selection of this vast collection of documents in order to highlight ways of observing and mediating hierarchies of work and means of coercion in different European localities. Secondly, I connect these observations, made by travelling civil servants, to ideas on how to organise, supervise, and improve work practices as well as to the actual implementation of such measures at Swedish worksites. Finally, I stress that a developed discussion on the relationships between state-related knowledge transfer and coercion also necessitates in-depth investigations both into the performances of working people and into ways of understanding and regulating bodily procedures. In doing so, we can more fully appreciate the complexities of metalworking processes within specific sites and across fields, while also emphasising how a variety of individuals, through (collaborative or conflictual) interactions and joint work efforts, produced historical change at the everyday level.

Religious Difference at Work: Exclusion Coercion, and Opportunity in the Medieval Mediterranean

Contributors: **Ana Echevarria** (National Distance Education University, UNED Spain), **Delfi Nieto** (Queen Mary University of London), **Clara Almagro Vidal** (National Distance Education University, UNED Spain)

Trade privileges and limitations for Muslim neighbours of Castilian cities

Ana Echevarria (National Distance Education University, UNED Spain)

Muslim minorities in the Iberian Peninsula enjoyed a number of specific privileges granted by the kings (*fueros de moros*), but were also included as citizens in privileges concerning the *universitas* of the inhabitants of towns and cities. While limitations to their trades and travels were exerted, these Muslims sought the protection of the more general legal system, appealing to the kings against local authorities who tried to impose taxes on them, or abused their rights. This paper will show how the mechanics of these exchanges worked in fifteenth-century Castile and how they could affect labour and business through different forms of coercion.

Li fromages vostres ne sont pas vendus: Inquisitorial persecution, social disruption and alternative networks

Delfi Nieto (Queen Mary University of London)

When the weaver Peire Esperendiu was brought before the inquisitorial court in August 1325, he recounted how royal officials had confiscated a cartload of cheese sent to Narbonne by the fugitive Guilhem Verrier. A candlemaker by trade, Verrier had not been able to earn a living for years, as he was forced into clandestinity when the religious group to which he belonged was declared heretical in 1317. Selling cheese was not his occupation but rather a means to survive and to support his struggling religious network, which had become a persecuted minority almost overnight. This paper will discuss how the inquisitorial procedure against heresy was meant to disrupt the social framework itself. It will argue that, as any top-down process of persecution, it needed to undermine existing social relations in order to impose a confrontational narrative that turned any alternative to orthodoxy into a threat to the community. Inquisitorial penances had social and economic consequences, interrupting the life trajectories of the accused not only through imprisonment or even execution, but also in more subtle ways such as

forced pilgrimages and shameful badges. For all intents and purposes, by putting the normal course of life on hold, inquisitorial sentences created a new social group that was marked for exclusion on the basis of religion.

Ecclesiastical authorities were perfectly aware that family, friendship, and even acquaintanceship connections lay the groundwork for the transmission of beliefs, practices, and information. Furthermore, material interactions were intertwined with the strengthening of pre-existing social ties, on which they heavily relied. Therefore, mapping these material exchanges had the potential of revealing the full extent of the social fabric that needed to be cleansed from heretical tendencies. The premise was strikingly simple: dissident persecuted movements could not endure if their members were cut off from supporting themselves and from receiving external support.

Restrictions and choice in work for Muslims under the rule of military orders

Clara Almagro Vidal, (National Distance Education University, UNED Spain)

Muslims under Christian rule in medieval Iberia worked and made a living under circumstances that distanced them from the Christian majority through written law and unwritten social practices. Military Orders were an important factor in shaping economic activities of the Muslims under their rule, as they had final say in many aspects of their vassals' lives. At the same time, Muslims sometimes encountered opportunities for economic advancement through collaboration, negotiation and even conflict with their lords.

The aim of this paper is to explore the ways in which Military Orders shaped choices for occupation among the Muslims under their rule and the way in which they developed their economic activities. In this sense, military orders in medieval Iberia played a role as coercive agents that limited available options for the Muslims under their rule and at the same time, these institutions sometimes constituted an opportunity for some Muslims' social and economic advancement. Through the presentation of a number of case studies from the kingdom of Castile and the peninsular territories of the Crown of Aragon, ranging from the 13th to the 15th centuries. In the first aspect, the analysis will include regulations issued by military orders regarding labour practice of Muslims, the customs that ruled Muslims' access to the property of land and taxation in kind as examples of the limitations established by military orders. This will be put into relation with the roles played by Muslims when working for military orders. By doing so, this paper will analyse the dual role played by these institutions in the working lives of their Muslim dependants and vassals, the agency that Muslims held within the coercive systems built by their lords and the strategies followed by both to profit from each other.

Coercion, Work, and Punishment in the U.S.

Contributors: **Thomas J. Adams** (University of South Alabama), **Deborah Goldgaber** (Louisiana State University), **Cedric Johnson** (University of Illinois Chicago), **Matthew Stanley** (University of Arkansas)

Freedom, work, and compulsion: Toward a new political-historical synthesis

Thomas J. Adams (University of South Alabama)

What compels us to work? From the so-called old labor history to its successive waves of “new” and “new, new” labor history, scholarship has been strangely silent on this question. On the one hand, old proletarianization narratives have died hard, suggesting a generally whiggish movement from artisanal work and/or household production to the labor market. From social and customary compulsions of craft, tradition, and ascription to double freedom (freedom to quit, freedom from the means of self-sufficiency/production). Standing next to these conceptions lies the broad account of bonded and seigneurial labor giving way—through revolutionary upheaval or gradual legal and social transition—to doubly free labor. While these narratives often cross-pollinate each other (enslaved to petty proprietor to proletarian in post-emancipation US South) and inspire debates about classification (was women’s “traditional” work under legal regimes of coverture, customary obligations and gendered labor market discrimination effectively bonded or did it fall under the broad rubric of household production?), to a large degree across time and space they remain our interpretive arcs for understanding (albeit indirectly) the history of labor compulsion.

Despite increasing addenda and internal debates within these narratives they nevertheless remain the central historiographical, anthropological, and sociological ways in which we categorize discrete contexts of labor. This paper asks (in the relatively recent and discrete period since work has been understood to be a distinct aspect of human life) and begins the task of answering, what happens if rather than start from long-standing categories (like proletarian, free laborer, servant, housewife, slave, convict, proprietor, etc) of labor, we start from a thickly described compulsion?

To do so it sets as its first goal a disambiguation of the question of why we work itself. The typical direct answers to this question—structured internally by the category of labor they take as their subject—in various times and places, answers such as the whip, the contract, the work ethic, the tradition or norm,

or more recently ‘mute compulsion,’ often elide more than they explain. I want to be specific that is, that asking this question requires a host of specificities, specificities that have been far too often collapsed when the topic has been explicitly broached. These include: Why we work in general? Why we work, more or less, when we work? Why we work where we work? Who—broadly construed to imply not just individuals but groups, institutions, and states—structures the answer to these questions in a given time and place? This talk draws out these disambiguations with attention largely to the North American/Atlantic World context since the 18th Century. In so doing, this paper seeks not to necessarily challenge these ongoing and often compelling narratives on their own terms but ask—from the perspective of the *longue duree*—how a different set of themes centered on regimes of compulsion might reinvigorate both the study of work and labor and simultaneously provide a new entry point into a critique of modern political economy and workplace powerlessness.

Policing surplus population

Cedric Johnson (University of Illinois Chicago)

Given its sheer scale, magnitude and diversity, many pundits, scholars and activists celebrated the 2020 George Floyd rebellion as an historic watershed, one where the possibility of real reform came into view. For too many, however, the euphoria of the moment suspended any critical analysis of what it all meant. This is a deeper problem for the US left—the tendency to read protests as always prefigurative rather than contingent, and as a manifestation of real power rather than a reflection of potential. Such wish-fulfillment thinking, however, forgets that mass mobilization is not the same as organized power, and that mass mobilization is much easier now with the endless opportunities for expressing discontent provided by social media, online petitions, memes and vlogging. In that context, the scale of street protests can be misleading, and their actual effectiveness, regardless of their size, is dependent on the balance of political forces, the organized power and capacity of opposition, and the clarity of objectives among activist organizations and publics. Much of the confusion resides in the power of popular anti-racist slogans to illuminate *and* obscure the actual demography and rationale of carceral power. While the real historical Jim Crow subjected blacks to legally codified second-class citizenship, the New Jim Crow and Black Lives Matter narratives insist that all blacks face a similarly universal threat of bodily harm and incarceration regardless of the real progress in black political and social life since the end of Jim Crow apartheid. Conjunctural analysis might illuminate the circuitous routes and unexpected political bedfellows that birthed mass incarceration, and, likewise, enable us to see the potential for building a counterpower capable both of contesting the underclass ideology that supports that apparatus and of dismantling the leviathan of local and state ordinances that comprise the current carceral order. Rather than reading the

symbolic referents of the Cold War urban–suburban class divide as forms of constituency—in other words, seeing black and white as proxies for relative disadvantage, privilege and discrete interests—this account insists that focusing on the policing of relative surplus population is a more helpful way of understanding how policing has come to function in US society since the postwar years. This frame not only brings the strategic and tactical prerogatives of urban policing into sharper focus, but it also connects that context to policing modalities in smaller towns, counties and rural areas, which are not fully captured in popular mobilizations around viral-video killings of civilians and slogans like the New Jim Crow and Black Lives Matter. Grounding the development of policing and mass incarceration more fully within political economy might serve as a proper antidote to the errant view of liberals and conservatives alike that the current mode of policing might be made more civil. The problem before us is that the policing of surplus population is necessary for capital's system preservation, which depends on massive dispossession and exploitation.

“Voluntary slaves”: Contract, competition, coercion, and the meaning of “Free Labor” in the Illinois coal fields

Matthew Stanley (University of Arkansas)

This paper explores the highly publicized request of coal miners in Spring Valley, Illinois, to "enslave" themselves to mine owners in the summer of 1895. Not only did the miners' demand constitute a blurring of the distinction between freedom and unfreedom; it was the result of a myriad of labor systems, arrangements, and traditions across races and ethnicities, as well as sections and even continents. And in addition to being a damning indictment of so-called "free labor" and patent rejection of a Whiggish postwar history, which presented the U.S. Civil War as a progressive arc from slavery to (some kind of) freedom, the miners' request reveals how workers in relatively high union density industries in comparably labor-friendly states found the direct, legal, and non-pecuniary coercion of "slavery" preferable to what Marx termed the "dull compulsions" of the market. In sum, this case study challenges and expands our understandings of how "free labor," "white slavery," and "wage slavery" functioned during the Gilded Age. It also illuminates the importance of specific workplace conditions, discrete group culture hybridity, and local material/power relations in developing such concepts.

Violence, Retribution, Chastisement

Contributors: **Carla Andrés Bauzá** (University Pompeu Fabra), **Hillary Taylor** (University of Cambridge), **Ben Raffield** (Uppsala University)

Afro-descendant women at war in Cuba (1868–1878). Interpreting colonial violence and black women's agency in the military archives

Carla Andrés Bauzá (University Pompeu Fabra)

On October 10th, 1868, the first independence war started in the Spanish colony of Cuba. For ten years, actors from different socioeconomic and political backgrounds got involved in the war. This asymmetric conflict between a regular colonial army and a highly decentralized network of guerillas included combatants and non-combatants. The roles of enslaved and formerly enslaved people of African descent in these events eventually led — among other factors — the final abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1886.

Although we know about black participation in the anti-colonial wars, the focus remains on the actions undertaken by male insurgents and, sometimes, the involvement of white female revolutionaries in exile. This paper argues that the participation of enslaved and free Afro-descendant women in the Ten Years' War was far more significant than appears in the historiography. Their revolutionary activity also helps us to better understand the transformation of social relations in slave societies and the factors that drove emancipation processes in the Atlantic.

The mobilization of male combatants meant a lack of a working force that could finance the war and provide victuals, a problem faced both by the colonial army and the self-declared 'Republic in Arms'. This led to an increase in forced labour among women. Although the nineteenth-century imaginary of gender roles in imperial Spain relied on the idea of white, wealthy females as 'housewives', this did not apply to poor working-class white women or black women – whether enslaved or free. Throughout the war, colonial authorities forced enslaved women to work in the plantations, military fortifications, and households of white families. But many of those women refused to remain in chattel slavery. A perceived possibility for freedom pushed them to escape into the woods, where they joined the rebel guerillas.

Coercive social relations affected black women in every aspect of their lives. The repression and violence intensified when they were imprisoned and judged in military trials. Rebellious, and the possibility of being captured by the Spanish

military, meant exposing themselves to deportation, jail, sexual violence, and sometimes death. How can we study their actions, motivations, and ideas when their voices only emerge under the extreme pressure of interrogations? Various strands of historiography have shown how a detailed knowledge of context and an ability to contrast the versions given by different witnesses in specific trials can allow us to interpret historically invisibilized actors. Sometimes we might even read between the lines and consider what silence, or the absence of information, could mean. This paper discusses these methodological challenges, allowing us to observe the changes and continuities in enslavement practices during wars of emancipation, and to reveal how black women resisted and tried to oppose multi-sided coercion.

Violence and labour discipline in English agricultural work, c. 1600 – 1800

Hillary Taylor (University of Cambridge)

Extant analyses of labour discipline in early modern England can be divided into a few strands. Historians have examined how, from the late seventeenth century, employers adopted novel and comparatively 'impersonal' methods (for example, fines and timesheets) to discipline workers. Others have assessed how employers created incentive structures that encouraged discipline, thus highlighting more 'positive' techniques of labour management. Others have examined mercantilist theories about the so-called 'utility of poverty,' which aimed to ensure workers' productivity and obedience, while curbing their alleged leisure- preference. Others have considered employers' increasing recourse to the penal sanctions in employment law, as a means of enforcing labour discipline (and punishing recalcitrant workers) from the early nineteenth century.

This paper adopts a different perspective on contemporary ideologies and practices of labour discipline by placing violence — specifically disciplinary violence — at the centre of its analysis of early modern English labour relations. It focuses on a period in which England was transitioning to capitalist agriculture, when farmers variously employed agricultural servants who lived 'in house' on annual contracts and labourers who were hired by the day or for shorter terms.

This paper defines 'disciplinary violence' as fatal and non-fatal physical violence (e.g., beatings) that farmers or their subordinates who occupied managerial positions used to punish workers' infractions and to instil a sense of discipline in them. It uses a range of sources — including farmers' diaries, workers' autobiographical writings, and legal records — to reconstruct the causes and consequences of disciplinary violence. This paper has a few goals. First, it examines farmers' commentaries on the (dis)utility of using disciplinary violence against their labouring subordinates, considering how farmers

conceptualized labour relations; violence's role in labour management; and the relationship between violence and less obviously coercive forms of control such as paternalism. Second, it surveys the range of workers' infractions that supposedly 'merited' violent discipline, as well as the extent to which disciplinary violence was inflected by workers' age. Finally, this paper examines how workers responded to disciplinary violence at the individual and collective levels during a period in which they were not legally 'free' to exit an abusive or otherwise unsatisfactory employment relationship of their own accord. If disciplinary violence provided opportunities for members of the agricultural labouring population to assert their interests via legal or extra-legal channels, it also created circumstances that could inhibit their capacity to form durable bonds with one another.

Life on the margins: Structural violence and coercion in Viking-age Scandinavia

Ben Raffield (Uppsala University)

Current paradigms for the study of the Viking-Age (c. 750-1050 CE) are framed almost exclusively by discussions of elites. These were the martial rulers, their kinship groups and retinues, and the aristocratic landholders who occupied the upper strata of Scandinavian society. The emphasis ascribed to these groups in both scholarly and popular literature reflects cultural historical perspectives dating from the 19th- and early-20th century, when antiquarians and early archaeologists sought to anchor the developmental trajectory of the Scandinavian nations within the prehistoric past.

Today, the focus of research on high-status social groups continues to cast a shadow over the lives of the wider population, including members of the lower-status freeborn classes and a range of semi-free, unfree, or enslaved peoples. There have been few attempts to identify and study the lives of these socially vulnerable subaltern groups, nor to examine the conditions that allowed hierarchical social structures to be established and upheld across generations. As such, our understanding and knowledge of the past remains heavily biased and incomplete.

In this presentation, I shall explore the potential for interdisciplinary approaches to provide new insights into social inequality and coercive practices in Viking-Age Scandinavia. Drawing on sociologist Johan Galtung's seminal framework for the study of 'structural violence,' as well as current debates in Viking studies, I will consider how the archaeological and historical records speak to the maintenance of asymmetrical hierarchies of power within households and communities. In exploring their manifestation, I will attempt to demonstrate how systemic inequality and coercion impacted the prospects, health, and lifeways of different groups across the social spectrum. This will not only provide a crucially overlooked perspective on Viking-Age society that

ascribes primary to the lives of historically-marginalised peoples, but also shed light on the historical trajectory of coercive mechanisms that continue to impact societies globally today.

Inside the Household

Contributors: Carolina Uppenberg (Stockholm University), Amalia S. Levi (University of Bonn), Corinna Peres (University of Vienna), Olimpia Capitano (University of Teramo)

The benevolent patriarch? How early-modern households' labour organisation reveals the reach of patriarchal care across the Baltic Sea, 1723–1809

Carolina Uppenberg (Stockholm University)

This proposal is part of a larger project, which aims to test how male and female servants were taken care of by their masters in times of hardship and how this differed across the Baltic Sea. While the laws and the ideals were clear: a master had the responsibility for taking care of the servant; the practice is unknown. This means that the current state-of-the-art cannot answer the question of how the coercive structure of the early-modern household and the servant institution functioned in practice.

Servants were the most important employed labour force in early-modern Sweden, including Finland. Besides being numerically dominant, the structure of the servant institution was a micro-cosmos of the early-modern society. It was in its essence a coercive, patriarchal function, meaning that landless, unmarried men and women had to go into service in a landed household and being subservient to the employing household, but in return relying on protection for the year-long employment. However, there is no study systematically investigating whether servants actually *were* taken care of by their masters in times of hardship, i.e., whether the servant institution provided the protection it was assumed to; assumed both during the early-modern period and in present-day research. This project uses short-term crises such as harvest failures as a method to locate court cases in which the question of the benevolent patriarch was brought to a head.

This project contributes to research on coercions in work and the history of coercive social processes, since it adds to the strand of research questioning the traditional view of Swedish early-modern servants, where power relations have been downplayed since the dominating idea has been that servants will later become landed peasants and employers of servants themselves. This understanding has been challenged by research emanating from the Worck project, as well as by a focus on laws and regulations, showing that even supposedly beneficial labour arrangements were forced through with harsh regulations, also in the early-modern western Europe not subject to serfdom. In previous studies, I have found scattered evidence that sick or hurt servants

were sent back 'home', to their parental home, rather than being taken care of by their masters. This study will make a systematic comparative investigation of the reach of patriarchal care in the household, through an analysis of court cases regarding conflicts over employment, eviction and run-away servants and care for servants being ill or hurt, taking place before, during and after a number of short-term local crises such as harvest failures. Since marriage pattern and family formation differed between Sweden and Finland, although they were part of the same realm and with the same laws until 1809, a comparison between these regions is ideal for understanding the mechanisms of patriarchal care in early-modern households. This paper will present the first results from this project.

Manumitted enslaved people in Jewish households in Bridgetown, Barbados

Amalia S. Levi (University of Bonn)

Early modern Atlantic ports cities were spaces populated by intersecting networks of people inhabiting urban households in close proximity and held together through asymmetrical relationships and coercive processes. For actors marginalized due to their race, religion, class or gender, such processes resulted in dependencies of varying degrees.

My research highlights such entanglements by focusing on the community of African and mixedrace people enslaved in Jewish households in Bridgetown, Barbados, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These enslaved people lived and interacted with their Sephardic owners who in turn were marginalized by the majority slave-holding Christian society of the island because of their status as the religious 'Other.' Approaching these enslaved people at the micro-spatial level⁶ allows us to understand them both as spatially and temporally situated in Bridgetown while at the same inhabiting intersecting expansive networks across space and time.

This ongoing doctoral research that centers life stories of enslaved individuals is meant as a way to enact reparative justice by restoring this silenced group of people into the historical record.⁷ During this work, I am conscious that using digital tools in the process of collecting, analyzing, and publishing data inadvertently introduces new silences,⁸ and I critically examine how the practices, processes, and infrastructures that sustain and provide access to the historical record shape scholarship about the past. Left uninterrogated,

⁶ Christian G. De Vito and Anne Gerritsen, "Micro-Spatial Histories of Labour: Towards a New Global History," in *Micro-Spatial Histories of Global Labour* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018).

⁷ Lae'l Hughes-Watkins, "Moving Toward a Reparative Archive: A Roadmap for a Holistic Approach to Disrupting Homogenous Histories in Academic Repositories and Creating Inclusive Spaces for Marginalized Voices," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 5, no. 1 (May 16, 2018), <https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol5/iss1/6>.

⁸ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1997).

such dependencies get perpetuated with each new reformatting of information, thus demonstrating that material we use to write history with is in fact “evidence of terror”.⁹

For this particular paper, I will present on the manumission of Clarinda, an enslaved woman who in the span of only a little more than a year became free and then a slave owner in her own right. In Clarinda’s case, time is an important element, both as an attribute of data and as a category of analysis. Time was one of the parameters that instituted the power of documents to include or exclude and possess or dispossess.¹⁰ Establishing the (Christian) date of an event beyond doubt, despite the fact that the people in the networks contained in the records usually inhabited different ‘calendars’, was one of the prerequisites for ensuring the authenticity of a document, and by extension the transactions within. Using Clarinda’s story as a case study, I argue that deconstructing a document into its constitutive parts to bring to light the sedimentation of information within and its spatial and temporal trajectories¹¹ provides us with details that can help reveal information about affect and agency that might otherwise remain invisible.

Through Clarinda’s life, I discuss larger themes of manumission, and the life that previously enslaved people made for themselves after legally acquiring their freedom. What happened to coercive networks previously holding “in place” the enslaved and their Jewish owners? I will examine how such networks morphed and survived, and in which ways it was co-opted by the newly freed people of African or mixed ancestry to form new identities, forge a living, and claim their place in the colonial fabric.

“A slave woman ... is beholden to us for the next eight years”. **Slavery and debt-credit relations in late medieval Tuscany** Corinna Peres (University of Vienna)

In the midst of transactions between large companies and rich merchants, the enslaved woman Agnesa obtained her own entry in the account book of the Pisan branch of Francesco Datini’s company system in the western Mediterranean. On 11 March 1398, the day the company of Pisa bought her from a Florentine residing in Pisa, she was registered as a debtor owing 45 florins. In other words, the amount of money paid by the company for her

⁹ Jessica Marie Johnson, “Markup BodiesBlack [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads,” *Social Text* 36, no. 4 (137) (December 1, 2018): 57–79, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-7145658>.

¹⁰ Jarrett Drake, “Blood at the Root,” *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 8, no. 1 (April 16, 2021), <https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol8/iss1/6>.

¹¹ Alex Gil, “Placing Césaire,” *Continents Manuscripts. Génétique Des Textes Littéraires – Afrique, Caraïbe, Diaspora*, no. 8 (February 26, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4000/coma.852>; Rainer Simon et al., “Periplo: A Tool for Exploring Heterogeneous Data through the Dimensions of Space and Time,” *The Code4Lib Journal*, no. 31 (January 28, 2016), <http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/11144>.

purchase was converted into Agnesa's personal debt. The entry further specified that this debt was to be settled through eight years of work. Each year Agnesa would fictitiously deliver her annual wage of 5,625 florins, thus gradually reducing her pseudo-debt. On his deathbed in 1400, however, the head of the company, Manno degli Agli, decided to free Agnesa "before her [due] time," as explicitly stated in the account book. Although Agnesa left the Pisan company household to live with Manno's relatives in Florence, her remaining years of service to repay the initial purchase price did not vanish. The pseudo-debt passed posthumously to the one who had freed her, the already dead Manno.

In late medieval Tuscany, it was not uncommon for slaves to work for wages, whether real or fictitious as in the case of Agnesa. Local labour markets were underpinned by a rental system wherein slaves worked as household workers or wet nurses for employers who were not their actual owners. The wages earned by slaves often belonged to the owners, who used them to settle their own debts. Interestingly, slaves could even be listed as creditors in rental arrangements. In such cases, the credit was part of an agreement between the lessor and the lessee, aimed at covering expenses associated with the slave's daily working life.

In the context of hired labour, slave labour entailed both contract labour and wage labour. Remuneration and indebtedness were integral aspects of the practices of domestic slavery in late medieval Tuscany. Pseudo-debts immobilised slaves after the sale process and partly legitimised enslavement in a contentious religious atmosphere. Remuneration functioned as a tool to mobilise slaves for temporary transfers of labour, which facilitated the owner's profit-making. Understanding the role of slave labour in late medieval Tuscany, particularly in comparison to legally free women working as servants, necessitates considering the intricate web of debt and credit relationships within Datini's merchant community. Exploring the non-digitised and unedited materials in the Datini Archive, including account books, expense ledgers, and lists can help to unravel the social dynamics and power structures that informed the labour relations of slaves by showing links between 1) debt and the temporary slavery model and 2) wages, credit, and the rental system of enslaved labour.

Historicizing social coercive processes through the lens of paid domestic work

Olimpia Capitano (University of Teramo)

During pre-industrial times, **households** (both in rural and urban contexts) were considered as sites of production (both for themselves and for the market), consumption, reproduction, and care. Between the 18th and the 19th century the organization of activities into domestic spaces changed a lot, along

with a **decline of the economic function** of the household. Moreover, the development of classical economics and value theories marked a strong division between what could and couldn't be considered as **productive labour**: housework was definitely excluded by the set of productive activities and began to be considered as a "naturally" female duty and resource, rather than as "**proper**" work. These dynamics firstly involved unpaid domestic labour but influenced paid domestic work's devaluation too. The very recent connection between studies on domestic work and global labour history should be a starting point to develop broader inquiries. This is yet more valid considering the matter of **historical change**. Indeed, coercive practices in this working sector have changed across time but, simultaneously, many historical characteristics of this sector are still current today, redefining themselves in a worldwide framework and involving new socially marginalized niches. I'll focus on the Italian context, and I'll briefly introduce my specific **case study** about Cape Verdean, Ethiopian, Eritrean and Filipino domestic workers in Rome (1970-1989), linking it to the **global labour market of paid domestic work**.

My PhD research has converged on aforementioned ethnic groups because they were the first ones moving to Italy – and especially to Rome – and they were all required to work as domestics – women above all but also men in a smaller amount. In regard to the periodization, I decided to focus on 1970's and 1980's because during these decades new hierarchical and exploitative geographies unfolded worldwide, defining a global labour market of domestic and care work and its first trajectories – later defined as **global care chains** by Arlie Russell Hochschild. I believe that **global care chains** should be assumed as a **field of coercion** which connects different **households** as different **sites of coercion** across the local, the national, and the global. Global care chains' development can also be assumed as an important **historical change** in relation to some shifts in the social composition of paid domestic work.

Moreover, moving the periodization forward would have required to involve all the flows following the Berlin wall collapse. This decision – as well as the choice for a specific case study – responded to the need to go deeper into the analysis of a phenomenon that, in the years under analysis, saw the structuring of those premises that have influenced the **gradual delegation of domestic work and care work to foreign workers**.

Just to add some other notes: my research is still a work in progress, and I have two main goals. **The first one is to investigate coercive dynamics into households**, how hierarchies are constantly renegotiated, and which strategies are developed by domestic workers both inside and outside the household, individually and collectively. **The second goal is to question the social constructed division between a "private" and a public space.**

In this sense, I'm connecting workers' experiences with the development of global care chains, with changes in laws about domestic work and migration policies, with the role of feminists, catholic associations, and trade unions, and with the public narrative on domestic work and immigration. I'm referring to literature, archive sources and oral sources, comparing them in a not hierarchical way. In this specific occasion I won't delve too much into my research's first impressions and results, but I'll keep the focus on the theme of the historicization of social coercive processes through the lens of domestic work, introducing some other **theoretical considerations**, to introduce some suggestions to develop further research, as I'm trying to do through my specific case study.

Coercive Archives: Labour Coercion in the Courtroom and Its Afterlives

Roundtable

Contributors: **Johan Heinsen** (Aalborg University), **Vilhelm Vilhelmsson** (University of Iceland), **Müge Özbek** (Kadir Has University), **Aigi Rahi-Tamm** (University of Tartu), **Akın Sefer** (Koç University), **Nayan Jyoti Kalita** (Central European University), **Viola Müller** (University of Bonn)

WORCK organized a workshop titled "Coercive Archives: Labor Coercion in the Courtroom and Its Afterlives," held on September 10-11, 2022, at Kadir Has University in Istanbul. With the aim of enabling an in-depth investigation into judicial archives, the organizers invited contributions centered around documents generated within courtrooms, detention facilities, interrogation rooms, and similar legal and carceral environments. By means of diverse case studies spanning various historical eras and geographical regions, the workshop aimed to address the following questions: What do they tell us of labour coercion as a practice? In what ways were the courtroom and its paper trail constitutive or generative of labour coercion? What does that mean for the way historians encounter and engage with those archival traces? Finally, we ask contributors to consider the question 'how do we narrate coercion?' Hence, we wanted to extend our exploration towards a reflection on the temporal entanglements of labour coercion as we reckon that the past, the present, and the future of labour coercion and its narrations are not discrete and cut off from one another.

As a continuation of the "Istanbul Workshop," this roundtable aims to delve deeper into the discussion by posing a series of questions to the participants. Here are a few of these questions: What was presented in the archive you worked with? What specific questions were you hoping to answer? Or, what did you ask from the archive? What friction did you encounter between 'what the archive presents' and 'your inquiries/demand from the archive? How can we overcome such friction? What methods did you employ to overcome these challenges? Should we strive to resolve these frictions? In the data stories, we primarily focused on single or a small number of data documents. How can we effectively handle larger quantities of documents? How can we shape/ think with 'big data'?

You may reach the CFP for the Istanbul Workshop through the link below:
<https://worck.eu/2021/12/15/call-for-papers-workshop-coercive-archives-labour-coercion-in-the-courtroom-and-its-afterlives/>

Paternalism in the Household and on the Shop Floor

Contributors: Lawrence T. McDonnell (Iowa State University), Göran Rydén (Uppsala University), Diego Latorre Manglano (Complutense University of Madrid), Joel Quirk (University of the Witwatersrand)

Households and Haushalten in eighteenth century Swedish iron making

Göran Rydén (Uppsala University)

The traditional Swedish view about the important group of ironmasters (*Brukspatroner*), is one that highlight benevolence and caring for subordinated artisans and peasants at their estates. In my paper I intend to refute that, with an analysis that place the concept of household, or rather the practice oriented concept of *Haushalten*, in the foreground. In early-modern Swedish writings, the word household is conspicuously absent, with the concept of householding in more frequent use; Linnaeus talked about the 'householding' of animals, as well as that of different places around the globe. There was a 'layering' of the concept, with God's householding, *Oeconomia Divina*, at the top, encompassing the universe. Below was General Householding, comprising nations, and individual householding for small groups of people, each with an elaborated division of labour where everybody had an allocated place and obligations to fulfil; everybody had to 'work in the sweat of their brow' within an almost 'ecological' link between work and the God created nature. At the top of each layer was an omnipotent Master, God, the King or a *Hausvater*.

Some writers added extra layers to the hierarchy, and within the important sector of ironmaking people elaborated upon what was called *Brukshushållning*, with an all-powerful *Brukspatron* at its helm. Swedish ironmaking was organised in s.c. *bruk* (ironmaking estates), comprising (proto-) industrial sites, mines and tracts of woodland for charcoal making, populated with artisans, miners and lease-holding peasants. *Brukshushållning* was the way in which the division of labour was organised on these estates, as well as how labour was surveyed and controlled. It was the task of these people to make iron, based on resources from mines and forests. The aim of my presentation is to scrutinise *Brukshushållning* in the county of Uppland. My empirical foundation comes from the rich Leufstabruk archive, the largest and most precious of all *bruk* in Sweden, owned by heirs to Louis de Geer, the Dutch merchant arriving in the seventeenth century. I combine a discursive approach with a material analysis, as I begin with texts written by ironmasters or their inspectors, on how to run an estate. This is followed by a meticulous

reconstruction of the division of labour and the working life of the estate's subordinated artisans and peasants. At the centre of the analysis is the amount of coercive labour they performed, during long working hours in arduous workplaces, deep in mines, at the forges or in the middle of the forests in cold winter nights. There was a pronounced gender division of labour, also governed by the *Brukspatron*. As a conclusion, I reinstate *Brukshushållning* into the 'grand structure' of householding, with links to God, Sweden and individual householding, and in doing so I pose questions about boundaries and authority; how should we perceive artisan and peasant households in relation to the grand *bruk*, and should we view the owners of these estates as benevolent *Brukspatroner* or coercive *Hausväter*.

Paternalism, indirect compensation and resistance in Franco-era Spain

Diego Latorre Manglano (Complutense University of Madrid)

Franco's dictatorship took a step back in terms of workers' freedom and standards of living. The new national-catholic regime promoted several laws, institutions and organisms focused on labour control by employers. Obviously, the prohibition of association and strike liberties was harmful for the workers and the working movement; but the political and economic power resorted to many other ways to maintain the discipline in the factory and control the workers' productivity. Although coercion was widely used by employers in order to maintain the discipline, seduction was necessary too.

Many companies tried to get discipline and productivity through a variety of rewards and benefits with the support of the State. These rewards and benefits were a kind of indirect salary for the most obedient and hard-working workers. While direct salary only assured that workers made the effort enough to get the minimum production, indirect wage payments like bonuses, rental subsidies or education grants could force workers to reach the maximum. Nevertheless, employees did not always obey quietly. Although associationism, striking and unionism were illegal, workers made use of other practices against industrial labour. James Scott has defined everyday forms of class resistance like "any act(s) by member(s) of the class that is (are) intended either to mitigate or to deny claims (e.g. rents, taxes, deference) made on that class by superordinate classes (e.g. landlords, the state, owners of machinery, moneylenders) or to advance its own claims (e.g. work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis these superordinate classes". So, in accordance with this definition and with the documentation available, it is possible to find daily and hidden cases in which workers did not obediently respect the employer's control practices.

The aim of this paper is to debate about indirect wage payments as a way of reinforcing the discipline and productivity in the factories during the Franco-

era Spain. While labour struggle around coercion has already been widely analysed, it has not been the same case for seduction. Rewards and benefits - indirect wage- were used to maintain discipline in factories too. But it does not mean that there were not conflicts against this kind of control. Although this struggle could be more aggressive or more peaceful, more public or more hidden; it is clear that it was frequent and happened on a daily basis. Workers did not always accept that they had to work harder to get the bonus and sometimes they considered it more a right than a reward. Moreover, this framework let us to introduce in the debates around the concept of paternalism, its differences with indirect salary and its adequacy in this context. With that purpose, I use a wide range of sources and documents - labour laws, worker's oral history, labour courts files, companies' internal regulations, etc- preserved in several Spanish archives such as *Archivo General de la Administración*, *Archivo Histórico del PCE* or *Archivo de Historia del Trabajo*.

Paternalism as “benign” coercion

Joel Quirk (University of the Witwatersrand)

Enslavement was historically justified on many different grounds, with economic and political interests being wedded to a range of ideological appeals to theology, “natural” hierarchies, historical precedent, and, most controversially, claims about the moral value of enslavement. The most familiar example of this last point is enslavement as a “progressive alternative” to the summary execution of war captives. In this paper, I am chiefly interested in another set of claims about the morality of enslavement: ideologies of paternalism. These ideologies can be traced back to the assertion that there is an essential equivalence between the interpersonal hierarchies that govern familial relationships between parents and children and other larger social formations. In its most basic form, paternalism rests upon the argument that external “protection” becomes necessary in circumstances where a person – or an entire category of people – is unable to protect themselves effectively and/or make appropriate decisions independently. Within the Atlantic world, this formula reduced enslaved Africans to a “child-like” status (with adult men routinely being described as “boys” into old age), who were said to be fundamentally incapable of looking after themselves. Framed in these terms, enslavement effectively becomes an exercise in “benign” coercion.

Paternalism has been widely understood as a superficial and self-serving reaction to the growth of opposition to enslavement as a institution within the Atlantic World. While there is undoubtedly an argument to be made here, in this paper I am primarily interested in the ways in which ideologies of paternalism persisted following the growth of organised anti-slavery and in the aftermath of legal abolition. Paternalism was invoked by both defenders and opponents of enslavement during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. This is

epitomised in the famous Wedgwood medallion, which features an image of a supplicant slave who appeals for external intervention with chained arms raised in a desperate plea. The language of 'Am I Not Man and Brother' has too often been read as a proto-egalitarian commitment, rather than an attempt to mobilise sentiment via appeals to the moral obligations of 'superiors' to provide for the protection of their supposed 'inferiors'. This core dyad of "supplicants" and "saviours" tends to reinforce and legitimate hierarchy, rather than acting against it. There were both egalitarian and paternalistic strands to anti-slavery, but the later become increasingly dominant in the wake of the "mighty experiment".

The main role of organized anti-slavery during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was to both legitimate and reinforce deeply rooted hierarchies which saw European states and their peoples position themselves at the moral and racial apex of 'civilization'. The foundational premise of organized anti-slavery – no one should be enslaved – would be primarily understood in terms of paternalistic "protection", with 'civilized' Europeans justifying unprovoked wars of colonial conquest as "humanitarian" missions to prevent "savage" and "backward" peoples in other parts of the globe from enslaving each other. These themes were especially pronounced during the conquest and colonisation of Africa. Appeals to moral and religious enlightenment (the 'civilising mission') and altruistic sacrifice (the 'white man's burden') were integral to the colonial project. By portraying their African subjects as 'backward children' who were said to be unable to make decisions for themselves, Europeans were able to both justify and excuse any number of external actions and interventions. During the age of high imperialism slavery would be banished symbolically via legal abolition while many of its defining features continued alongside everyday forms of colonial violence and exploitation. In case after case colonial governments who congratulated themselves on abolishing slavery continued to justify and defend forms of exploitation and coercion against 'inferiors' and 'outsiders'. When slavery was legally abolished colonial states sponsored forced labour schemes would be consistently used in replacement. Once again, coercion was justified as being in the interests of the people who were being coerced.

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