

English version

The important changes that are currently taking place in the job market have prompted historical consideration of the issues of job insecurity and flexibility. Far from being exclusive to modern day societies, a mobile workforce - above all between sectors - was also a feature of the early modern world of work. The work of charitable organisations and confraternities, individual and family strategies, career paths, contracts and work agreements are all fields in which traces of this mobility are visible and it was seen not so much, or not solely, as a chance for social betterment but also and above all as a unstable state. The goal of this workshop is to contribute to an analysis of certain more specific labour mobility issues in the light of the historical debate which has taken place over recent years. Workers' attitudes and approach to labour mobility varied widely. In some cases they themselves were responsible for it when they terminated contracts in advance or moved around freely. In other cases they were the victims of it when they were sacked or in periods of non-employment and forced relocation.

For a more in-depth understanding of this issue it is important, firstly, to reconstruct the roles of certain key players in it and understand the strategies used at such times. In other words it is a matter of examining the tools available to such figures, the resources mobilised to limit or defend mobility and the consequences that a labour mobility situation had on both the various manufacturing sectors and on the urban social fabric itself.

The goal is thus to focus primarily on individuals placed in situations of labour mobility and more specifically on the strategies and tools they used in moving from one occupation to another, from employment to unemployment and vice versa and from one type of labour relation to another and the impact that such processes had on individuals' lives and their roles within urban societies.

We are convinced that such a research strategy - concentrating in the first analysis on individuals and their social customs - will give us a more in-depth understanding not only of the functioning of the labour market but also of the *raison d'être* of certain important urban institutions (guilds, confraternities, hospitals) and the solutions that such societies conceived of to deal with mobile employment conditions.

We hereby put forward four themes around which research should be encouraged

1. **PLAYERS.** Reconstructing individual and family career paths can help in an understanding not only of which groups were involved to the greatest extent in labour mobility phenomena but also the various strategies which skilled and unskilled workers, men and women, foreigners and citizens were able to harness in periods of labour mobility.

- Which strategies, both individual and family, were mobilised in the face of employment insecurity?
- Which workers were most subject to labour mobility? Is it possible to reconstruct certain social types or groups?
- Which strategies varied according to workers' gender, age or status to the greatest or the least extent?

2. NETWORKS. Studies in sociology and anthropology have demonstrated the importance of social networks in the search for work. We believe that an understanding of how such networks were set up and the tools they made use of as well as when it was useful for individuals to remain within such networks and when it was more advantageous for them to leave is required.

- Who did individuals in a relationship network turn to within their networks in periods of job mobility?
- Which places in towns encouraged socialisation and exchange of information in relation to job supply and demand?
- How did a personalised employment market based on social relationships interact with the wholly impersonal employment markets referred to in the sources, marketplaces such as the celebrated Parisian Place de Grève. Were they truly two different worlds or was there one or more point of contact?

3. ORGANISATIONS. In individual and family life paths, certain urban institutions (guilds, charitable associations and confraternities) played a fundamentally important supporting role at times of unemployment guaranteeing assistance, managing occupational mobility and thereby contributing to maintaining public order. In this sense they were simultaneously resources to resort to at moments of crisis and social control techniques which workers often came into conflict with. Rather than an institutional history of such bodies what is required, we believe, is an examination of the demands individuals made of such bodies, the contexts in which they were granted access to them and those in which access was denied them.

- What questions did workers pose to these town organisations and bodies in periods of employment mobility?
- How did individuals gain access to such bodies and how did they approach them?
- What relationship existed between workers and such institutions in normal times?

4. INSTITUTIONS. A number of studies have illustrated the role played by certain institutions - i.e. by legal and social restrictions such as laws and contracts - in encouraging or limiting labour mobility. Contract terms were often the result of bargaining between employer and employee which gives us an insight into the demands made by the two parties to the contract and the strategies used to encourage or limit the free circulation of labour. Working agreements defining working relationship type (free or servile, for example), the way wages were paid (with or without advances) and the issuing of end of employment permits were tools used to regulate labour force mobility and were subject to negotiation and re-negotiation between the parties to them. On the other hand, other laws - statutory or common law - limited contract renegotiation blocking violation of the original agreements and arbitrary sacking in order to prevent vagrancy or wandering from place to place. Observation of job contract renegotiation, then, can help us to better understand the claims made by the parties to them and the strategies they employed.

- What demands could workers take to notaries and courtrooms when they needed to renegotiate a contract as a result of mobility?

- What rights did the parties to a contract have at the moment at which renegotiation for employment mobility was required?
- Which clauses or contractual tools were used by individuals to block or encourage mobility?

Contributions can deal with one or more of the fields referred to above. Individual proposals (300-500 words) in French or English must be sent together with a brief, 1 page CV by 31st January 2015 to the following email: [workersmobility@gmail.com](mailto:workersmobility@gmail.com). Proposals will be selected on the basis of their relevance to the research guidelines contained in this call for papers. Speakers will be informed of the acceptance or otherwise of their papers by 7th February 2015.

This workshop has been organised jointly by EHESS in Paris and Padua University in the context of the activities of the Marie Curie IEF – Intra-European Fellowships “Migration, integration and labour market: skilled workers and building sites in Turin in the Eighteenth Century” and FIRB 2012 – Futuro in ricerca “Maritime borders in the Mediterranean: how permeable are they? Exchange, control, denial of access (16th to 21st century)” projects. The workshop is the first of a series of meetings to be held in the 2015-16 two-year period on the issue of the history of work and migration which will culminate in a series of group publications on the subject.

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Date limite

- le samedi 31 janvier 2015

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