

CALL FOR PAPERS

5TH ELHN CONFERENCE – UPPSALA, 11-13 JUNE 2024.

Dear colleagues

It is a pleasure to contact you to invite you to a new activity. The Maritime Labour History Working Group launches a Call for Papers aimed to send a proposal for panels at the **Fifth ELHN Conference which will take place in Uppsala on 11-13 June 2024.**

In this occasion, we propose to have at least four sessions, two of them in collaboration with other ELHN working groups.

We invite you to submit your proposals in the next weeks, so we can send a panel proposal. Deadline for your proposals is **6 September 2023.**

SESSION 1- MILITARY AND MARITIME RECRUITMENT AND THE LABOUR MARKET (in collaboration with [Military Labour History Working Group](#))

Organizers: Christine de Matos (historian and writer, christine.dematos@ncis.org); Jordi Ibarz (Universitat de Barcelona, jordi.ibarz@ub.edu)

The recruitment of men and women by armed forces (included the navies and air forces) in different countries at particular times has had varying effects on labour markets. When there is compulsory military service, or even an urgent large-scale voluntarism during times of war, a large segment of the population can be withdrawn from the labour market, often especially affecting the male population that can have corresponding effects on the employment of women. This affects the lives of recruits, families, and communities, the latter particularly including those that are conditioned by the imposition of strict and continuous forced recruitment systems. At the same time, conscription can reduce pressure on labour markets, significantly reducing the supply, and affect the professional careers of those who need to temporarily suspend their career progression. On the other hand, the period of military service may facilitate the learning of new useful skills that recruits can then take back into the labour market. These may have differing outcomes and impacts depending on class, gender, and identity.

Once forced military service ends, recruits may stay involved as reserves, which can limit an individual's working conditions and labour autonomy. This was the

case for the maritime industries (seafaring, fishing, shipbuilding, loading and unloading), where reserves were subjected to restrictions and threats to their freedom in hiring in other work or moving to another place.

Conversely, during times of peace or when there is no conscription, the military services may need to engage in the competitive labour market to attract new recruits. This includes attractive advertising across multiple media, emphasis on skills development, inclusion of education opportunities, and even the use of military merchandise. How such recruitment strategies have been approached has changed across time, for instance in gendered ways as more women have been encouraged to join the military services.

We therefore propose a panel of papers focused on the various dimensions of the relationship between military and maritime recruitment systems and labour markets. Comparative papers are especially encouraged, for instance comparing the situations in different countries or between services like the army and navy. We also welcome papers that discuss military service *as labour* by reflecting on the relationship between recruitment and the labour market, and on recruitment, intersectionality and the labour market.

SESSION 2- GENDER IN FISHING AND MARITIME COMMUNITIES: WOMEN, LABOUR MARKETS, AND FAMILY LIVING STANDARDS IN COASTAL EUROPE (In collaboration with [Labour and Family Working Group](#))

Organizers: Luisa Muñoz-Abeledo (History-Department, University of Santiago de Compostela, Luisamaria.munoz@usc.es); Erica Mezzoli (Universitat de Roma, Erica.Mezzoli@uniroma2.it)

The aim is to reconstruct welfare levels in maritime communities by exploring women's roles in fishing and other maritime activities and women's contributions to family economies. We will consider case studies of coastal towns where fishing and maritime industries were significant economic activities, and also regional, national, and international studies. This session will link with two ELHN working groups, namely, Labour and Family Economy, and [Working Group Maritime Labour History](#).

While gender approaches have begun to enrich maritime history in recent decades (Creighton and Norling, 1996; Muñoz-Abeledo, 2010; Colville, Jones, and Parker, 2015) further work must be done in order to create a more inclusive, realistic, and insightful history of labour and families in maritime communities. We will welcome papers that cover the following topics.

Women's work in coastal Europe. Women in maritime communities have performed a variety of jobs, from running businesses (especially as widows), to

help their family economies with activities such as net-mending, shellfish gathering, selling fish, between others. They also work in fish processing plants.

Contribution of women in fishing and other maritime families. When men's income was irregular -and during times of economic hardship- women's jobs provided important income to sustain their families. Moreover, women often performed roles crucial to maintaining the household, such as childcare when men were away at sea. Here it is important to consider aspects of domesticity and the distribution of power between genders within the family and within wider socio-economic contexts.

Women's public participation in maritime communities. Women have participated in labour associations since the first decades of the twentieth century. However, women historically had to struggle to be included in such groups, which were overwhelmingly male. Until the very end of the twentieth century, women played a secondary role in these associations.

SESSION 3 - LIBERALIZATION AND MARITIME LABOUR ([Maritime Labour History Working Group](#))

Organizers: Jordi Ibarz (Universitat de Barcelona, jordi.ibarz@ub.edu); Enric Garcia-Domingo (Universitat de Barcelona, delavelaalvapor@gmail.com)

The maritime sector was one of the fields where industrialization had a stronger effect. Its impact not only affected economic and social aspects, but also socio-labour identities and cultures.

The maritime industries suffered, at a very early stage, the effects of liberalization on the organization of different sectors (seafaring, fishing, shipbuilding, port services, etc.), in labour relationships, and in the configuration trades and professions that were key in the process of economic, social and political modernization. The end of the Ancien Régime and the development of industrial capitalism caused crisis and problems due to the adaptation of workers and employers to the new productive contexts, and the formation of professional identities. Labour conflicts arise everywhere.

We want to study how seafarers adapted to the new labour markets, whether they integrated as skilled workers while retaining their old privileges or whether due to new technologies and work processes, they joined the ranks of unskilled workers.

Did the liberalization process in the maritime industries lead the workers towards a proletarianization? Did the sea workers have a place in the rise of the new middle classes and an important stratification within the new social groups? Can we really talk about downward and/or upward social mobility?

We call for proposals on the topic of the transition from guilds to trade unions, to the liberalization of sectors such as merchant marine, fishing, docking or

shipbuilding, the development of new legislations on labour, liberalization and reformism, etc.

SESSION 4 – MARITIME LABOUR AND SOCIAL MOBILITY ([Maritime Labour History Working Group](#))

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The concept of social mobility, which describes the processes that were perceived in modern societies of change of status and passage from one social group to another, can also be applied to maritime societies.

This may be the case of some professions such as coastal trade skippers, or boatswain, apparently subject to processes of social ascent and descent, from an intermediate position between the lower classes and the ruling classes. In the case of mates, shipmasters or ship engineers, the leap is from the world of maritime labour to the world of the liberal profession ashore. The accumulation of capital, contacts, and other circumstances, allowed masters and mates, for example, to settle on ports and to become ship agents, to prosper and to enter social and economic circles that elevated them from professionals to entrepreneurs.

It is also interesting to deepen inter-professional mobility between different sectors. For example, we can find movement between occupations and jobs in different sectors such as coastal trade and fishing, seafaring and dock working, or between the merchant marine and the military. The use of these mobility strategies, linked to pluriactivity, made it possible to overcome circumstantial crisis and to create, probably, and integrated and only body of sea workers that historians tended to tag as “fishermen”, “docker” or “sailor”, in a simplification that everyday seems more inadequate.

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