

First ELHN Conference - Turin, 14-16 December 2015

“Factory Level Analysis: A Methodological Exploration”

Although among different types of work, industrial work has received the utmost attention by labour historians, studies focusing on a single factory are very few. Factory as a site of both industrial production and social relations of production is often taken as given and treated as the backdrop for the real action. The ELHN Factory History Working Group (FHWG) calls for a reconsideration of this particular workplace as the site of one of the most important relationships in society that between worker and employer with the insights gained from the new social history.

This reconsideration could be carried out on a number of lines some of which are as follows. To begin with, the study of a single factory is based on a complex weave of history, economics, culture, labour, industry, production, and ideology. As such, the history of a single factory lies at the intersection of different disciplines, sub-disciplines and methodological approaches: social history, economic history, business history, urban history, Marxist social theory, sociological inquiry, discourse analysis and micro-level analysis. A complete study of factory history would have to look at a number of social phenomena related to its actual physical existence (such as its relation to urban space, to ecology etc.), as well as its economic, political and social functions. Thus, factory level analysis could put labour history in a dialogue with other historical fields of study resulting in a rich array of details on the experience of industrial work.

The study of the relations in production at the factory level allows the historian to depict the connections between the labour process and the changes in workers' consciousness and their individual and collective political behaviour could be depicted. Also, factory level analysis makes the divisions within the labour force most visible. Documenting this heterogeneity could also be helpful in understanding different types and levels of militancy, shop loyalty, alienation, and competition among workers. Moreover, a systematic study of factory files could bring the hidden, and isolated instances of resistance to surface. Focusing our attention on the level of factory not only enriches the historical details of that process, it also allows the historian to depict the dense and non-deterministic web of interrelationships at the point of production. Studying a single factory requires that the management is also given special attention. The analysis of the shaping and reshaping of the form and content of the managerial practices in relation to workers' resistance practices paves the way for a more dynamic depiction of the relations between management ideologies and practices and workers' reactions to these. Similarly, analysing the changes in the ownership patterns could shed light on their effects on labour relations.

The FHWG invites scholars to explore the methodological possibilities of factory level analysis. Both individual paper proposals and session proposals are welcome. Please send your proposal (200 words max. for single papers, 8000 words in total max. for sessions) to both coordinators until June 30th 2015.

Görkem Akgöz, Hacettepe University, gorkemakgoz@yahoo.com
Nicola Pizzolato, Middlesex University, N.Pizzolato@mdx.ac.uk

Program

Panel 1 -The Transformation of the factory

Discussant: Nico Pizzolato

Görkem Akgöz -'Back into the Factory: Writing Theory and Practice of the Industrial Workplace into the 21st Century History and Social Theory'

Lars K. Christensen -'Between Fordism and unionism. Industrial relations at Ford Motor Company A/S in Denmark, 1919-1966.'

Jarmo Peltola -'The development of production process and labor relations at Finlayson's Cotton Mill in Tampere Finland, 1820-1918'

Onur Can Taştan -'Factory Regime and the Evolution of Workplace Union Organization: The Çayırova Plant in Turkey, 1963-1980'

Panel 2 -Factory workers and the state

Discussant: Marcel van der Linden

Asli Odman -'Ford Motor Company Export Inc., İstanbul 1925-1944 as a place of work, spatial enclave and territorial condensation'

Jorge Fontes -'The Setenave shipyard: from workers' control to social pact'

Rory Archer and Goran Musić -'The single factory case study in late-socialism. Methodological considerations from Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s'

Erol Ülker -'Class, Nation, and Workers: The Silahtarağa Power Plant in Istanbul, 1914-1928'

Panel 3 -The Production of Politics and the Politics of Production on the Shop Floor

Discussant: Leda Papastefanaki

Dimitros Kopanas -'Printing for the Greek State: The Aspiotis-ELKA Graphic Arts Company'

Kostas Paloukis -'Lanaras factory and the neighborhood of Peristeri, Atgens: political and cultural ruptures of a new labor generation in interwar period'

Niccolo Serri -'Unemployment welfare and industrial conflict in post-war Italy: the use of wage integration at Alfa Romeo Arese 1968-1987'

Gülhan Balsoy -'Female Workers, Tobacco Industry and Medicine: Gendered Experience of Work at *Cibali* Tobacco Factory'.

Panel 4 -Labour relations and the production process

Discussant: Richard Croucher

Özgür Balkılıç -‘Negotating the Terms of Running the Factory: The Worker’s Invasion of the Türk DemirDöküm Factory, 1969’

Matt Myers -‘The factory and the city – The methodological possibilities of factory-level analysis in the case of the Cowley car-factory, Oxford’

Irina Shilnikova -‘Labour stimulation of Soviet textile workers during the first five-year plan (1928-1932): Factory level analysis’

Karl Lauschke -‘The iron and steel plant in Bremen. A case study’