

Call for Papers:

## Coercion, worksites and historical change: a source-based approach

14-15 June 2022

Bonn (Germany)

The WORCK Working Group 2 began with the ambition to study **work-related coercion in designated worksites**, seen as loosely defined spatial entities. These sites were related to wider spatially and institutionally defined settings (fields). Whereas the exploration of the spatial aspect of this undertaking has progressed smoothly, particularly through a collaboration with Working Group 3, one crucial aspect remains to be tackled for WG2, and that is the matter of temporality and historical change. This aspect has also been highlighted at the recent WORCK conference in Vienna; it is high time to **reinstate the question of historical change**, and causes for change, in relationship to coercion within worksites.

We therefore suggest that a good starting point for the investigation of **the temporality of coercion** could be the study of historical change on sites and fields. In other words, we can start by asking ourselves: why and how do coercive practices change across time within specific sites? For example, we might ask how and under which circumstances the interactions of actors (conflicts, negotiations, collaborations) within the site produce change at the everyday level. Moreover, we can interrogate how far change emerges from social processes that take place within or beyond the site (i.e. how larger historical events impact on the site, but also how trans-local change produces larger societal changes at the legal, political, economic and cultural levels).

Addressing the question of historical change in the site implies **an epistemological and methodological issue**. A common approach has been to do **micro-level analysis**, or in other ways approach their topics by thorough empirical investigation on an everyday level. The main downfall with such ways of writing history is that synchronic knowledge, or 'thick descriptions', often prevail at the expense of a diachronic understanding of historical processes. An outcome of this, is the surrender to **macro approaches** when analysing historical change; the micro level is then, viewed merely as a study of "small" historical objects, and relegated to become a 'case' for explanations developed on a more abstract and 'higher' level!

We want to alter this and **initiate** a discussion about **historical change from the bottom up**. What are the processes that we can detect in our studies of specific and connected worksites, which change the course of history?

We **aim** to tackle these challenging questions from **a source-based perspective**, whether based on the archival or other types of historical sources. As empirical scholars, we have the fullest knowledge of the value and potentials of the sources with which we are working, and we should take that as our starting-point. We want to begin with the sources and initiate this discussion about historical change from below! To this end, we wish to find **new ways of collaborating around the reading of the sources**, rather than discussing only the outcomes of research, as drafts, papers or published texts. What can a specific **document**, or a set of documents, reveal **about the transformation of coercion** in one worksite? In which types of sources are we more likely to encounter relevant information? How can we make the sources talk about changing patterns of coercion in worksite, even if they have been designed to deal with other processes? And how can we combine different types of sources, and sources from distinct archives, in order to **generate a more nuanced picture** of the processes of historical change?

At the crossroads of these different perspectives – coercion, worksites, historical change and empirical sources – we would like to invite proposals for papers to a two-day workshop, **Coercion, worksites and historical change: a source-based approach**, organised by Working Group 2, in Bonn, Germany to be held at 14-15 June 2022. The workshop is open to all members of WORCK, as a forum where we can start discussing the question of the temporality of coercion.

We aim to conclude the workshop with a roundtable discussion addressing the main issue of the workshop, coercion, worksites and historical change or the nexus time/space in a diachronic perspective

To this end, we invite abstracts of 500 words, and a very short CV. We explicitly ask for the presentation to be structured around a source or a set of sources providing an insight into how such sources (whether oral history, archival sources, official documents, etc.) relate to the theme of the workshop. Participants are invited to find creative solutions to present, comment upon and discuss sources in a variety of languages and formats. Please send your abstracts to [goran.ryden@ibf.uu.se](mailto:goran.ryden@ibf.uu.se) by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2022.

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