

## Bringing labour back in

*Reflections on Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly*, *Worthy efforts: Attitudes to work and workers in pre-industrial Europe (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012)*, 664 p.

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### Introduction

*Worthy efforts* is a masterpiece written by two scholars who have a stunning expertise when it comes to the subject of their book. I certainly do not. I have therefore gladly left it to experts and their reviews in this issue to comment upon it. In this text, basically a collection of comments, suggestions and questions, I have instead tried to indicate what this *magnum opus*, published in a series on global *social* history, could contribute to the debate on the Great Divergence, one of the most relevant debates in global *economic* history. I will thus *use* the book rather than *review* it. My focus will be on the Early Modern Period and on Great Britain, the country whose industrialisation set the Great Divergence going.

Strikingly enough labour, i.e. its actual position and status, has been all but absent in the bulk of recent studies dealing with the Great Divergence.<sup>1</sup> That major shift in global economic relations had traditionally been interpreted as the culmination of ‘the rise of the West’, which then, in economic terms, was equated to ‘the rise of capitalism’. Capitalism in turn (amongst other things) stood for a specific mode of production and specific labour relations. Most historians currently discussing the Great Divergence, however, tend to ignore labour, labour relations, and capitalism, and hardly ever refer to them as an explanation why modern economic growth emerged in the West and not somewhere else. According to Jared Diamond and Ian Morris geography made the difference. They never refer to labour. Amongst economists so-called ‘institutionalists’ like North, Wallis and Weingast and Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson dominate the debate. They too never discuss the organization of the production process. In the

modern world-systems approach of Wallerstein *cum suis* labour relations and the 'global' division of labour do in principle hold centre stage but as Wallerstein denies the existence of an industrial revolution he ignores the very core of the Great Divergence and thus cannot contribute anything substantial to its explanation. In Volume Four of his *Modern world-system* he no longer even tries.

We do find numerous references to 'work ethic'. Fifteen years ago David Landes was quite explicit: '... what counts is work, thrift, honesty, patience, tenacity'.<sup>2</sup> More recently Niall Ferguson pointed at its specific work ethic as one of the reasons why the West became so rich.<sup>3</sup> Scholars writing about 'work ethic' tend to also write about 'discipline'. According to Gregory Clark workers in poor countries lack the qualities of 'discipline and engagement'.<sup>4</sup> Then there is the debate on the industrious revolution that has developed into a debate about the existence of an East Asian, labour-intensive road to industrialization. In the work of Jan de Vries, who connected an industrious revolution in North-western Europe and its Western offshoots with a consumer revolution, this has also become relevant for scholars looking for the origins of modern economic growth.<sup>5</sup> One comes across many references to 'middle class' or 'bourgeois' values.<sup>6</sup> Joyce Appleby did point out the fundamental importance of capitalism for the creation of the modern economic world but added that it is 'as much a cultural as an economic system'.<sup>7</sup> There, moreover, is increasing attention to the role human capital may have played.<sup>8</sup> But overall labour and labour relations as such receive scant attention.

## European attitudes and European realities

*Worthy efforts* focuses on attitudes toward work and workers, which of course are never unrelated to the actual work done by workers and to their actual position. To what extent can it be made relevant to the Great-Divergence debate? Let us take the authors' *Concluding Reflections* as point of departure. There they point at a striking difference between Europe and China and Japan where '... in most periods the value of different forms of work does not appear to have been subject of debate at least not with regard to lay people ...'<sup>9</sup> In pre-industrial Europe, so they claim '... work was a fundamental condition for social acceptance'.<sup>10</sup> Earlier on in the book they had already indicated that the idea prevailed that people have to work and that those without visible livelihood must be compelled to work.<sup>11</sup> The poor were considered 'by nature much inclined to ease and idleness' and would

only work when forced by necessity.<sup>12</sup> Adam Smith in Great Britain was the first to systematically elaborate on the advantages of a more liberal reward of labour.<sup>13</sup> For social elites work was always related to a higher purpose. Only in the eighteenth century did pursuit of individual self-interest for purely economic reasons come to be justified. Adam Smith, again quite exceptionally, even saw it as something positive.<sup>14</sup> All these claims regarding Europe (and Great Britain) are crying out for worldwide comparisons, although I personally do not think differences in these respects will have made a big difference when it comes to causing the emergence of modern economic growth.

When it comes to specific groups the book also contains some interesting generalizations. With regard to merchants the authors claim: 'No occupational group instigated as much debate in pre-industrial Europe as the merchants did' and 'No single occupational group emphasized the utility of its own activities as much as merchants did'.<sup>15</sup> Again, Great Britain, as a big European power where merchants had major political clout, is somewhat of an outlier, in Europe and the world. That is also the case when it comes to agricultural labour. Peasants and the peasant economy were not idealised there like in China, nor protected like in China and several parts of Continental Western Europe. Authorities and 'improving' landlords tended to treat them as obstacles to progress and efficiency. Middle groups in Europe as a rule looked down upon manual labour and wage labour. Those might escape that disdain when they provided autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency.<sup>16</sup> Artisans themselves derived their status from their occupational skills, the superior quality of their work and the fact that their labour was *male* labour: 'That women were relegated to un-skilled, low-status work was never questioned'.<sup>17</sup> Craft masters of course were the elite of labour, but journeymen who had completed apprenticeship also considered themselves professionals and defended their position against unprofessional 'intruders'. Our authors describe members of craft corporations as very status conscious and their organizations as fairly closed and prone to collective action.

Lis and Soly make a second major 'comparative' claim in those concluding reflections when they write that its proletarianisation distinguished 'late-medieval and early-modern Europe, both from Classical Antiquity and from other parts of the world'.<sup>18</sup> They – quite correctly – consider this fundamental: 'The process of proletarianisation in many parts of Europe between the eleventh-twelfth centuries and the mid-nineteenth century influenced attitudes towards work and workers more deeply than any other social change, also more deeply than the rise of new religious doctrines, the

introduction of new ideas about knowledge /science, or the emergence of new schools of thought'.<sup>19</sup> Again, interestingly enough, Great Britain looks to be a fairly 'extreme' case. Around 1350, around one third of English rural households were partially dependent on wages as a source of income.<sup>20</sup> According to Gregory King, two-thirds of its rural population was landless in 1688. In 1851 seventy-three per cent of those working in England's countryside were wage labourers.<sup>21</sup> England had become a country with hardly any peasants. Wage labour was also quite common in its cities. By 1750 over half of the population of Europe except Russia seems to have depended on wage labour to some extent.<sup>22</sup> This is far more than anywhere else in the world. To work outside one's own household in the period between childhood and marriage was very common, almost the rule, also for women. Between 1574 and 1821, 13.4 per cent of the population in English communities were servants or apprentices.<sup>23</sup>

## Coercion and freedom

All this fits in nicely with the classic interpretation of the rise of West as the rise and spread of capitalist relations of production. In this context Lis and Soly present further information that again points at the rather exceptional situation in Great Britain, where 'many landowners greatly valued total wage dependence'.<sup>24</sup> A landowner put it thus in the Commissioners Report for the Poor law of 1834: 'The more they work for themselves, the less they work for us'.<sup>25</sup> The fact that employers did not object to labour being 'free' in the sense of having no means of subsistence, however, does not necessarily mean they wanted it to be free in the sense of 'autonomous', i.e. at liberty to decide what to do with their labour power. In this respect we see a 'tension' that was never solved during the period discussed in the book and that should figure prominently in any book on the Great Divergence. It can be illustrated by two quotes from the book. The first one illustrates a perspective of 'regulation': 'However much the specific measures varied from one country to another, public authorities throughout Europe assumed that free labour' did not exist' and tried to restrict 'the leeway of wage earners as much as possible'.<sup>26</sup> 'Ultimately', to again quote the authors, in that perspective, 'everybody who was mobile and figured among the have-nots was to be treated as a potential criminal'.<sup>27</sup> They provide ample examples in their book that such strategies to control mobility were quite inefficient. The second one illustrates a perspective of 'freedom' that tended to find more supporters later on in the Early Modern Period in 'enlightened' circles.

In that perspective 'Workers were unfree ... because their actions were impeded by useless institutions, privileges and all kind a of monopolies' and the misery of most wage earners was considered 'attributable to their inability to exercise their fundamental right, namely their labour power, at their discretion'. The ideal state should be 'composed of free, independent individuals able to exercise their right to work without restrictions'.<sup>28</sup>

The following, not even exhaustive enumeration shows how 'mixed' the actual situation was and how important all sorts of coercion and manipulation of labour were and continued to be, *even* for Great Britain and *even* during its take-off.<sup>29</sup> In that respect the claim by Lis and Soly that '(I)n the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, England was purged of everything that might compromise the freedom of a wage earner to apply his labour, i.e. everything that inhibited the development of a free labour market ...' sounds 'over-optimist'.<sup>30</sup> The authors themselves show it to be incorrect at many places in their work. Let us begin with slavery. That did not exist in Great Britain itself but it was part and parcel of its economy. In 1800 there were some 600,000 slaves in the British West Indies and some 150,000 in colonies occupied by Great Britain. On top of that quite a number of the 857,000 slaves in the USA had begun to produce cotton for the British.<sup>31</sup> For the year 1812-1813, merchant-statistician Patrick Colquhoun (1745-1820) claimed there were 1,147,346, as he called it, un-free 'negro labourers' in the British Empire, i.e. the West Indies plus the colonies and dependencies in Asia.<sup>32</sup> When Great Britain granted full emancipation to its slaves in 1838, their number was 750,000.<sup>33</sup> After 1800, the number of slaves in the United States increased steeply to 1.5 million in 1820 and about four million in 1840, a number that remained more or less stable until Abolition. Until slavery was finally abolished there in the 1880s, yet another 1.7 million slaves were transported to Brazil and 700,000 to the Spanish Antilles. Many of these slaves, in particular of course in the USA, also produced for Great Britain.

Then there were tens of thousands of convicts, or political deportees, doing coerced labour in its colonies. When it was no longer possible to expel them to the North American colonies, Australia became the favourite destination for Great Britain's convicts. Between 1788 and 1868, no fewer than 165,000 were sent there to perform hard labour.<sup>34</sup> Then there was indentured labour. According to one estimate, of the total number of Europeans that immigrated to the thirteen colonies that were to become the United States between 1700 and 1775, 152,000 were free, 52,000 convicts, and 104,000 indentured servants.<sup>35</sup> After slavery had been abolished in the British Empire, indentured labourers often took over the role of slaves e.g. on tea plantations in India.

Tens of thousands of people were forced into Britain's Navy via 'impressment'. This policy to man the fleets in wartime was only abolished in 1833. During the Seven Years War (1756-1763) some 90,000 men were forcibly enlisted on ships of the Royal Navy and in the period from 1776 to 1783 some 80,000.<sup>36</sup> Coercion played a substantial role in enrolling military men too.<sup>37</sup> Occasionally the British army used slaves.<sup>38</sup> Britain's armed forces functioned as a collective of 'military workers'. Overseas they often were also used to build roads and fortresses. Discipline in army and navy was extremely harsh.<sup>39</sup> The numbers involved are staggering. Military historians estimate that about one in sixteen adult males in Britain was serving in the armed forces during the War of Austrian Succession, one in eight during the War of American Independence and one in five during the French Wars from 1793 to 1815.<sup>40</sup>

We still have not exhausted the ways in which the economy of industrialising Britain profited from coerced labour. Thousands of persons were put away in workhouses or poor houses: in 1850 no less than 123,000. By far the majority were not able-bodied, full-time employed adults. But these places nevertheless housed a substantial 'coerced' labour force.<sup>41</sup> Several thousands of people – in the 1770s per year some 9,000 to 13,000 – were put to work in so-called 'bridewells' or 'houses of correction'.<sup>42</sup> In the first decades of industrialization, moreover, thousands of orphans or children worked as pauper apprentices for mill owners. They were bound by contract to work at their mills until adulthood. By the late 1790s about a third of the workers in the cotton industry were pauper apprentices.<sup>43</sup> Although they worked under contract, domestic servants also were not free in the sense we use that word now. There were many of them: In the first decade of the nineteenth century, some ten per cent of the population, overwhelmingly women, may have been engaged in waged domestic labour in England.<sup>44</sup>

In the new factories children and young women provided the bulk of labour. Over the period from 1835 to 1870, adult males never formed more than roughly one third of the labour force in cotton and woollen factories.<sup>45</sup> Even the position of many of the formally 'free', adult male labourers in Britain was, as Lis and Soly are well aware, much less free than that of modern employees working under a contract.<sup>46</sup> The Combination Acts that were in force till 1824, and were then only slightly relaxed, prohibited labour to 'combine' in order to raise its wages. Wage earners were considered domestics and were supposed to provide a service. Their work was usually conceived as their master's property and they had to be at permanent disposal. Employer and employee never were truly equal contractual partners. England, as Lis and Soly themselves show, was a place where intervention

in the labour market had always been and even during industrialisation *continued* to be rife.<sup>47</sup> In their view 'Nowhere else (than in England PV) was national labour legislation enforced so consistently and for so long'.<sup>48</sup> Craven and Hay claim that, on the whole, work-related criminal sanctions were *reinforced* between 1720 and 1850 and not loosened.<sup>49</sup> Discipline on board of ships of the merchant navy was so harsh that they have been compared to sweatshops.<sup>50</sup> Industrialising Britain, directly or indirectly, at home, on sea and abroad, profited from an enormous amount of labour whose 'freedom of movement' was restricted. On top of that the country had a wide range of 'mercantilist' regulations to manipulate foreign trade and enabled several chartered companies to use their monopolies until far into the nineteenth century.<sup>51</sup> All the sweet talk about 'property rights', 'markets' and 'inclusive institutions', so dear to institutionalists like Acemoglu, Robinson and North, tends to completely obscure these harsh realities.

## Discipline and relief

Europe had more mobile and more wage labour than any place in world. Not by coincidence, it also was the place where, more than anywhere else, labour was 'disciplined' by all sorts of public authorities. This phenomenon, in particular for the early modern era, has been dealt with extensively in social history. Chapter seven of *Worthy efforts* is largely devoted to it. What is interesting for someone studying the Great Divergence is whether all this disciplining made any difference, economically speaking. One might think it depressed wages. Even in the unlikely case it did: Britain had the highest real wages in the world during the eighteenth century.<sup>52</sup> Disciplinary institutions in any case did not contribute to 'primitive accumulation'. Nowhere in Europe were workhouses of whatever kind self-supporting, let alone profitable. In England it soon became apparent that it was much cheaper to maintain people on outdoor relief in the form of cash payments. Their main function apparently was to create apprehension amongst the poor and make them keep their capacity for labour.<sup>53</sup> Was all the disciplining 'successful' in the sense that Britain's (or more broadly Europe's) labour force entered the factories more 'willingly' and/ or more disciplined? Or did it only become 'better' disciplined *once* it was in those factories? Or are the differences in labour productivity that Clark claims to have found between Britain's and in his case India's industrial labour force not due to discipline but to other factors, like skills?<sup>54</sup> In my view these questions are still open.

There also was massive intervention *on behalf of* labour. In 1802-1803, e.g. there were 1,041,000 people on relief in England and Wales; 735,000 on permanent and 306,000 on occasional relief, on a total population of some nine million. Thousands of labourers under the so-called Speenhamland system received allowances to increase their wages to market level or were paid by parishes with tax money to work on farms. In 1776 workhouses in England and Wales, excluding London, were capable of housing almost 90,000 persons.<sup>55</sup> In 1850, the number of people receiving relief there, as indicated, was 123,000, whereas 885,696 persons received outdoor relief.<sup>56</sup> As compared to the entire rest of the world, Britain, when it took off, had a very high rate of proletarianisation, a quite extensive regulation of its labour market and a very high rate of poor relief.<sup>57</sup> What can be the connection between these facts?

## The commodification of labour

In classic rise-of-capitalism-stories wage labour and free labour have always been standard ingredients. The same goes for the separation of household and firm, which as a rule was regarded as a necessary pre-condition for maximum efficiency. We must be wary not to make firms at the time of Britain's take-off too modern. I can do no better than quote Micklethwait and Wooldridge in their discussion of industrialising Britain: 'Symptomatically, the two most dynamic and controversial parts of the British economy – the slave trade and the growing industrial sector – both preferred partnerships (and occasionally joint-venture associations) to joint-stock companies'.<sup>58</sup> Nor did industrialization herald the end of family enterprise, far from.<sup>59</sup> An important potential indicator of the separation of household and firm is the extent to which members of households work outdoors. I referred to this earlier on but some extra comments are in order regarding the position of women and children. In all preindustrial societies women and children work hard. That is not the point here. What is striking is that the number of women and children working *outdoors* in Europe in general but also in the first factories in Britain was so high. For the case of Qing China, Jack Goldstone has claimed, that the fact that women were not allowed to work outdoors under one roof with strangers seriously hampered industrialisation. Not everyone agrees and the debate is still open.<sup>60</sup> Western labour overall at least looks less fully encapsulated in extended kinship groups like families, lineages, clans, tribes or castes than labour elsewhere in the world. This may also have had implications for the spread and development of

skills. As compared to India, for example, where knowledge of crafts would have been more confined to kinsmen, and kinship and training were widely integrated, knowledge in Europe became more of a public and traded good.<sup>61</sup> Working outside one's kin group for remuneration also, I would assume, made Western labour – and its skills – more mobile.<sup>62</sup> The question to what extent labour and exchange relations are (im)personal and/ (in)formal is interesting and relevant for understanding economic development but also for the kind of social history Lis and Soly want to write.<sup>63</sup> For me at least it is a pity that they did not more explicitly pay attention to it.

### Crafts, corporations and innovations

It is widely recognized that cities, for various reasons, tend to be more prone to become motors of development than the countryside.<sup>64</sup> Western Europe happened to be one of the most urbanized regions in the world in the early modern era. To talk about cities in pre-industrial Europe means to talk about guilds. For quite some time it was commonly accepted that their impact on economic development was negative. They were regarded as monopolies and conservative obstacles to progress. Recently a different view has been propagated in which the emphasis has shifted to the fact that they were important for training and transmitting skills, controlled the quality of members and products, and often facilitated the spread of skills and knowledge.<sup>65</sup> Lis and Soly certainly are aware of the potentially negative effects of craft corporations for consumers and innovation. They do, however, emphasize the fundamental importance of skilled labour, and thus of some kind of training, for innovation: 'All technical innovations that provided the foundation for the Industrial Revolution were the work of skilled artisans or engineers, who generally lacked a university education and achieved their results without relying on scientific theory'.<sup>66</sup> To me, however, it remained unclear whether they think such artisans and engineers were so innovative *thanks to* or *notwithstanding* the existence of organised crafts. When it comes to the assumed irrelevance of scientific theory, I do not agree. The steam engine, for example, simply could not have been invented without theoretical 'scientific' knowledge. The necessity of global comparisons here again is obvious. Fortunately several scholars are taking up the challenge.<sup>67</sup>

That the Industrial Revolution and its innovations would have been impossible without skilled labour does not mean that industrialisation in Britain in its initial phases presupposed a high *overall* level of skills.

According to David Mitch, as late as 1841 only five per cent of working men and two per cent of working women, had a job that required them to really be 'literate'.<sup>68</sup> In the first stages of industrialisation there overall was a noticeable *deskilling* of the labour force.<sup>69</sup> Machinery and factory discipline made many jobs simpler instead of more complicated. The overwhelming bulk of industrial labour *during take off* was almost the exact opposite of the self-conscious master artisans described by Lis and Soly before industrialisation: it tended to be unskilled, unorganised, very young and female. The factory thrived on factory hands not skilled craftsmen.

## Concluding remarks

*Worthy efforts* is a brilliant and erudite book. It will definitely become a classic in its field. But is also extremely valuable for those who study the Great Divergence. Its almost encyclopaedic erudition shows that 'labour' in the preindustrial as well as the industrialising world was a very variegated category. It provides lots of relevant information for scholars who seriously doubt that the Great Divergence can be reduced to the rise of the market, free labour and inclusive institutions and to the succession of one mode of production and exchange by another one. Great Britain took off in a complex setting that combined visible and invisible hands, freedom and coercion, inclusion and exclusion. Its Industrial Revolution that triggered the Great Divergence was a transition in which several modes of production and exchange co-existed and interacted, not a neat succession. That clearly shows in the composition of the labour force.<sup>70</sup>

From a global comparative perspective many questions are still open, some not even addressed. But no one can blame Lis and Soly for that. They did an excellent job when it comes to describing and analysing the European side of the equation. It is up to others to pick up the challenge. Books like *Worthy efforts* are great not because they put to rest minor debates but because they ignite major ones.

## Notes

1. To not overburden this text with footnotes I refer to my *Escaping poverty. The origins of modern economic growth* (Göttingen 2013) for a very extensive analysis of the Great-Divergence debate and an extensive bibliography.
2. David Landes, *The wealth and poverty of nations. Why some are so rich and some so poor* (London 1998) 523.

3. Niall Ferguson, *Civilization. The West and the Rest* (London 2011) chapter 6.
4. Gregory Clark, *A farewell to alms. A brief economic history of the world* (Princeton and Oxford 2007) 15.
5. Gareth Austin and Kaoru Sugihara (eds.), *Labour-intensive industrialization in global history* (London 2013); Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution. Consumer behaviour and the household economy, 1650 to the present* (Cambridge 2008).
6. See e.g. Clark, *Farewell to alms*; Deirdre McCloskey, *Bourgeois dignity. Why economics can't explain the modern world* (Chicago 2010) and idem, *The bourgeois virtues. Ethics for an age of commerce* (Chicago 2007).
7. Joyce Appleby, *The relentless revolution. A history of capitalism* (New York and London 2010). For the quote see page 4.
8. For literacy see for example Robert C. Allen, *Global economic history. A very short introduction* (Oxford 2011) and his *The British Industrial Revolution in global perspective* (Cambridge 2009); for book production see Jörg Baten and Jan Luiten van Zanden, 'Book production and the onset of modern economic growth', *Journal of Economic Growth* 13, 3 (2008) 217-235, and for numeracy the publications of Jörg Baten listed on his website at the University of Tübingen. Maarten Prak and Jan Luiten van Zanden, eds., *Technology, skills and the pre-modern economy in the West and the East* (Leiden and Boston 2013) provides the best recent overview. The article in that volume by Gijs Kessler and Jan Lucassen, 'Labour relations, efficiency and the Great Divergence: Comparing pre-industrial brickmaking across Eurasia, 1500-2000', provides an example of the type of analysis that up until now is sorely missed.
9. *Worthy Efforts*, 554.
10. *Worthy Efforts*, 551-552.
11. *Worthy Efforts*, 443.
12. *Worthy Efforts*, 478.
13. *Worthy Efforts*, 492-493.
14. *Worthy Efforts*, 557, 563-564.
15. *Worthy Efforts*, 562, 561.
16. *Worthy Efforts*, 526.
17. *Worthy Efforts*, 524.
18. *Worthy Efforts*, 567.
19. *Worthy Efforts*, 567.
20. *Worthy Efforts*, 567.
21. See Mark Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England. The transformation of the agrarian economy 1500-1850* (Cambridge 1996) 178, and Peter H. Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'Revising England's social tables, 1688-1812', *Explorations in Economic History* 19 (1982) 385-408.
22. Charles Tilly, 'Demographic origins of the European proletariat' in: David Levine, ed., *Proletarianization and family history* (London 1984) 26-52, 30-34.
23. Jan Luiten van Zanden and Tine de Moor, 'Girl Power. The European marriage pattern (EMP) and labour markets in the North Sea region in the late medieval and Early Modern Period', *Economic History Review* 63, 1 (2009) 1-33, 11, note 16.
24. *Worthy Efforts*, 448, also 450.
25. *Worthy Efforts*, 451.
26. *Worthy Efforts*, 439, 569.
27. *Worthy Efforts*, 464.
28. *Worthy Efforts*, 499.
29. This enumeration is based on information I collected myself. I would have appreciated some more quantitative information in *Worthy efforts* with regard to the groups discussed.
30. *Worthy Efforts*, 500.

31. Robin Blackburn, *The making of New World slavery. From the Baroque to the modern 1492-1800* (London New York) 581.
32. Patrick Colquhoun, *A treatise on the wealth, power and resources of the British Empire in every quarter of the world* (London 1815) 7.
33. James Walvin, 'Freedom and slavery and the shaping of Victorian Britain', *Slavery and Abolition* 15, 2 (1994) 246-259, page 246.
34. See e.g. Anand Yang, 'Indian convict workers in Southeast Asia in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries', *Journal of World History* 14, 2 (2003) 179-208; David Meredith and Deborah Oxley, 'Condemned to the colonies. Penal transportation as the solution to Britain's law and order problems', *Leidschrift* 22, 1 (2007) 19-40. For general information I refer to Christian G. De Vito and Alexander Lichtenstein, 'Writing a global history of convict labour', *International Review of Social History* 58, 2 (2013) 285-325.
35. Aaron S. Fogleman, 'From slaves, convicts, and servants to free passengers. The transformation of immigration in the era of the American Revolution', *Journal of American History* 85 (1998) 66-76, page 71.
36. Nicolas Rogers, 'Vagrancy, impressment and the regulation of labour in eighteenth-century Britain', *Slavery and Abolition* 15, 2 (1994) 102-113; N.A.M. Rodger, *The command of the ocean. A naval history of Britain, 1649-1815* (London 2004) 396.
37. Lawrence James, *Warrior race. A history of the British at war* (London 2001) 296-301.
38. James, *Warrior race*, 300-301.
39. See e.g. Niklas Frykman, 'Seeleute auf den europäischen Kriegsschiffen des späten 18. Jahrhunderts' in: Marcel van der Linden and Karl Heinz Roth, eds., assisted by Max Henninger, *Über Marx hinaus. Arbeitsgeschichte und Arbeitsbegriff in der Konfrontation mit den globalen Arbeitsverhältnissen des 21. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin and Hamburg 2009) 55-84, and James, *Warrior race*, 292-317.
40. C. Emsley, *British society and the French Wars, 1793-1815* (London 1979) and S. Conway, 'Britain and the impact of the American War, 1775-1783', *War in History* 2 (1995) 127-150.
41. Martin Daunt, *Progress and poverty. An economic and social history of Britain, 1700-1850* (Oxford 1995) 454-455.
42. Patrick Patriquin, *Agrarian capitalism and poor relief in England. Rethinking the origins of the welfare state* (Houndmills 2007) 109.
43. See e.g. Jane Humphries, *Childhood and child labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge 2010).
44. See Carolyn Steedman, *Labours lost. Domestic service and the making of modern England* (Cambridge 2009) chapter 2, in particular 36-39.
45. Eric Evans, *The forging of the modern state. Early industrial Britain 1783-1870* (Harlow 1996, originally 1983) 123. For a very recent interesting debate about the implications of the fact that so many women in Great Britain were wage labourers and worked in manufacturing see Jane Humphries, 'The lure of aggregates and the pitfalls of the patriarchal perspective: a critique of the high wage economy interpretation of the British industrial revolution', *The Economic History Review* 66, 3 (2013) 693-714 and the response to this critique by Robert C. Allen, 'The high wage economy and the Industrial Revolution. A restatement', Discussion Papers in Economic and Social History Number 115, June 2013, on Allen's website.
46. See e.g. Robert J. Steinfield, *Coercion, contract and free labour in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge 2001) and idem, *The invention of free labour. The employment relation in English and American law* (Chapel Hill 1991).
47. *Worthy Efforts*, 494-509.
48. *Worthy Efforts*, 444.
49. Paul Craven and Douglas Hay, 'The criminalization of 'free' labour: master and servant in

- comparative perspective', *Slavery and Abolition* 15, 2 (1994) 71-101. See for a general overview Perry Gauci, ed., *Regulating the British economy, 1660-1850* (Farnham, UK and Burlington, USA 2011).
50. Leon Fink, *Sweatshops at sea. Merchant seamen in the world's first globalized industry, from 1812 to the present* (Chapel Hill 2011).
  51. I again refer to my *Escaping poverty*.
  52. Allen, *British Industrial Revolution in global perspective*, chapter 2.
  53. *Worthy Efforts*, 477-478.
  54. Clark, *Farewell to alms*, chapters 16 and 17.
  55. Daunton, *Progress and poverty*, 471.
  56. Evans, *Forging of the modern state*, 426.
  57. See for some figures and comparisons regarding poor relief Peter H. Lindert, 'Poor relief before the welfare state: Britain versus the Continent, 1780- 1880', *European Review of Economic History* 2 (1998) 101-40; idem, 'De bonnes idées en quête de nombres. Réponse à Gilles Postel-Vinay et R. Bin Wong', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 62, 6 (2007) 1417-1423, and Patriquin, *Agrarian capitalism*, chapters 4-6.
  58. John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The company. A short history of a revolutionary idea* (New York 2003) 40.
  59. For the importance and endurance of family firms in industrial capitalism see Jürgen Kocka, *Geschichte des Kapitalismus* (Munich 2013). For some case studies see David Landes, *Dynasties: fortunes and misfortunes of the world's great family businesses* (London 2006). For a global perspective see Paloma Fernandez and Andrea Colli, eds., *The endurance of family bussines: a global overview* (Cambridge 2013).
  60. See for the comparison China/ Britain in this respect my *Zur politischen Ökonomie des Tees. Was uns Tee über die englische und chinesische Wirtschaft der Frühen Neuzeit sagen kann* (Vienna 2009) 111-112.
  61. So at least Tirthankar Roy claims in his 'Knowledge and divergence from the perspective of early modern India', *Journal of Global History* 3, 3 (2008) 361-388. Parthasarathi clearly holds a different view. See his *Why Europe grew rich under 'caste system'*.
  62. Anne Winter, 'Population and migration: European and Chinese experiences compared' in: Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford 2013) 403-420.
  63. See e.g. Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Roy Bin Wong, *Before and beyond Divergence. The politics of economic change in China and Europe* (Cambridge Mass. and London 2011) chapters 2 and 3.
  64. See e.g. Edward L. Glaeser, *Triumph of the city. How our greatest invention makes us richer, smarter, greener, healthier and happier* (London 2011) and Mario Polèse, *The wealth & poverty of regions. Why cities matter* (Chicago and London 2009).
  65. For these opposing views see Sheilagh Ogilvie, *Institutions and European trade. Merchant guilds, 1000-1800* (Cambridge 2011) and Stephan R. Epstein and Maarten Prak, eds., *Guilds, innovation and the European economy* (London 2008). For further elaboration see Prak and Van Zanden, *Technology, skills and the pre-modern economy*.
  66. *Worthy Efforts*, 421.
  67. See e.g. several articles in Prak and Van Zanden, *Technology, skills and the premodern economy*.
  68. David Mitch, *The rise of popular literacy in Victorian England. The influence of private choice and public policy* (Pennsylvania 1992) 14-15.
  69. This is already an old 'thesis' but I refer the reader to forthcoming work by Sandra de Pleijt and Jacob Weisdorf for a new 'proof'.
  70. See for a very neat illustration: Peter Mathias, *The first industrial nation. An economic history of Britain 1700-1914* (London 1969) 260.

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