

Occupational structure and industrialization in a comparative perspective

Edited by Osamu Saito and Leigh Shaw-Taylor

The book will be edited by Osamu Saito and Leigh Shaw-Taylor. It will have three sections. An introductory section consisting of an introduction written by the editors emphasising that the whole book is based on the use of the common occupational coding system and the careful examination of various problems associated with the use of early censuses and related material and a chapter by E.A. Wrigley on the PST occupational coding scheme he has developed over the last ten years in conjunction with the late Ros Davies, The second and much the longer section will consist of nineteen chapters summarising what is known about individual countries written by individual researchers or research teams. The list of countries includes Britain and Belgium, the leaders of fully fledged industrialization, European and non-European late-comers, and also covers Asian countries under colonial rule and twentieth and twenty-first century industrializers. The third section will contain three thematic chapters written by Mora-Sitja, Saito and Shaw-Taylor drawing out some conclusions from a comparison of the country chapters. Female employment and by-employment are the themes of the first two chapters, followed by a more general discussion of occupational structure in long-run economic development. It is our hope that the book will, in due course, be followed by further publication of more country studies. It is our intention that there will be further more detailed comparative work. To this end we are planning a session at the WEHC 2015 in Kyoto.

We expect the book to be a major contribution to global economic history and one that university libraries and scholars working on international economic history will want to have on their shelves. Historical data on occupational structure matters in two different ways. Firstly, they are an essential constituent part of historical national accounting, the dominant paradigm for examining long-run economic development. But it is clear from our work that much work on historical national accounting is based on occupational data which are not entirely reliable which vitiates both national studies and comparative work. Second, occupational data matter in their own right in a variety of ways. They are more reliable than the somewhat fragile historical estimates of GDP and its sectoral components and they pose fewer problems of comparison. Unlike estimates of national income, data on occupational structure provide quantitative evidence on every sector of the economy and are often available for sub-national units, sometimes right down to the parish/municipality shedding detailed light on economic geography which is a much neglected aspect of economic history. Comparative work on occupational structure remains relatively rare. The major works to date were made by Colin Clark, Simon Kuznets and Paul Bairoch. The datasets our authors have assembled far exceed the datasets available to these pioneering scholars in terms of data quality, data commensurability and sectoral disaggregation. In consequence we are able to reassess the arguments made by these earlier writers as well as Alexander Gerschekron's influential theses and recent arguments made by Kaoura Sugihara and others about an Asian labour-intensive path to industrialization.

Detailed sub-sectoral data shed light on an almost infinite number of diverse subjects. Three examples from Britain may serve to make this clear. Data on the building trades allow one to map the spread of brick and slate construction over the nineteenth and the slow decline of stone and thatch, right down to the parish level, and to document the relationship between changes and the

opening of new railway lines. Data on coal merchants suggests that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, even close to the coal fields, coal was not widely consumed at the beginning of the nineteenth century in settlements not on navigable rivers or canals. It was the coming of the railway which made coal a universal fuel. Data on textile occupations allows the precise identification of textile producing regions for the first time and sheds considerable light on hitherto unsuspected spatial divisions of labour within the textile trades.

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