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Spinning a Yarn:

The Effect of Labour Recruitment on Labour Coercion in the Indian Textile Industry

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This study offers a comparative assessment of the position of labour in the Indian textile industry in the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century. It asks how changes in labour recruitment over the period have affected the degree of coercion exerted upon workers. Research on labour coercion seldom investigates the strategies by which labour is supplied to the production site and therefore overlooks the initial cause of inequality in labour relationships. This study finds that the recruitment of workers from low socioeconomic groups is a long-term strategy pursued by employers to lower the cost of labour; workers' low socioeconomic position increases their vulnerability to labour coercion. The informality of labour markets and lack of robust state regulation are continuities over the period which cause the persistence of labour coercion, whilst changes in the recruitment of female, casual and migrant workers have lowered the workforce's collective bargaining position. To reduce labour coercion, the socioeconomic position of labour needs improvement through state investment in workers' social housing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Arulmani was 14 years old in 2006 when she joined a spinning mill in Salem, in the north of Tamil Nadu, South India. A broker promised Rs.30,000 as a lump sum for three-years employment and comfortable accommodation at the factory, although she was unable to read the contract presented during recruitment. At the factory, Arulmani developed leg and back pains from standing on an assembly-line for over 12 hours every day, for which the mill refused her leave. Eventually, Arulmani needed hospital treatment and became indebted in order to pay for medical expenses. After three years of employment the mill refused Arulmani the lump sum promised, stating that the days absent in hospital required her to work an extra year before the money would be paid. Arulmani's health deteriorated and she could no longer work; the mill denied her compensation and the money promised during recruitment.[1] This is a familiar scenario among young girls employed in spinning mills in South India, some of whose experiences include beatings, rape and suicide. Last year, it was estimated that 250,000 workers are employed as bonded labourers in India's textile industry and, as the country's second largest source of employment, labour coercion is suffered by millions more.[2] Labour conditions in the Indian textile industry have been the subject of burgeoning media attention and public condemnation over the past decade. Local NGOs, international organisations and the Indian state have directed substantial resources towards abating the plight of workers: yet their coercion continues.[3]

A major shortcoming of research which investigates the position of workers in the Indian textile industry is that scrutiny is primarily afforded to labour conditions at the production site. The methods by which labour is supplied to the production site are seldom considered and in so doing, the initial cause of inequality in labour relationships is overlooked.[4] This study contends that the profile of workers targeted and the terms under which they are recruited, have a direct bearing on their labour position during employment. A second paucity of research is that present-day labour conditions are rarely situated within their historical context which overlooks long-term continuities in the conditions from which labour coercion arises. In so doing, the majority of policy recommendations for their improvement focus on the malpractice of individual international employers, without considering the structural conditions in the Indian context.[5] The informality of labour markets and *de facto* lack of

[1] Tiruppur People's Forum for Protection for Environment and Labor Rights (TPF), "Anthology of Sumangali Case-Studies 2010-2011." Tiruppur: TPF, 2011: 38–39.
[2] The Indian textile industry is the second largest source of employment after agriculture, employing 35 million people. Anon, "'2.5 Lakh Bonded Labourers in Textile Industry Alone.'" *The Times of India*, 4 March 2014.
[3] International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), *Behind the Showroom: The Hidden Reality of India's Garment Workers*, authored by Pía Navazo and Marion Cadier. Paris: FIDH, 2012; N. Mani and N. Krishnan, "Understand the Labourer's Problems under the Sumangali Thittam Scheme in Textile Industry in Tamil Nadu, India." *International Journal of Business and Administration Research* 1, no. 6 (2014): 118–22.
[4] International Labour Organisation (ILO), *Wages and Working Hours in Textile, Clothing, Leather and Footwear Industries*. Geneva: ILO, 2014; Fair Wear Foundation (FWF), *India Country Study*. Amsterdam: FWF, 2012.
[5] Martje Theuws, Pauline Overeem and M. Peppercamp, *Time for Transparency: The Case of the Tamil Nadu Textile and Garment Industry*. Amsterdam: Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) and India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), March 2013; Fair Wear Foundation (FWF), *Strategy for Combating Forced Labour*. Amsterdam: FWF, 2010.

state employment legislation are long-term characteristics of Indian employment which facilitate ongoing labour coercion, suggesting that global employers have exacerbated, rather than created, the problem of labour coercion.

This study offers a comparative assessment of the position of labour in the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century and asks how changes in labour recruitment over the period have affected the degree of labour coercion. Labour recruitment is defined as the practices by which labour is supplied to the site of production, which include the search for, and transportation of workers, as well as the terms of employment offered to attract workers. Labour coercion is defined as relationships held between workers and employers or intermediaries, which contain a threat towards the worker. This includes active threats of physical or economic harm, or arrangements in which terms offered during recruitment are reneged upon employment.[6] This study contends that labour relationships which fail to fulfil benefits offered to incentivise recruitment are coercive because workers' are deprived of full information before deciding to enter the labour relationship.

To compare the coerciveness of labour relationships, this study gains insight from primary sources from the turn of the twentieth-century and the present. This long-term perspective has affected methodological discrepancies in the source material. Primary sources engaged from the twentieth-century include Government produced factory commissions, investigations of workers' labour conditions and census reports.[7] These sources are principally concerned with the position of labour in the workplace and, accordingly, emphasise economic coercion within labour relationships. Primary sources consulted from the twenty-first-century include NGO produced reports of workers' labour and living conditions, anthropological fieldwork studies and newspaper reports.[8] These sources are more

[6] This study employs the theory of coercion offered by Robert Nozick who argues that relationships which renege on their stated terms and deprive the recipient of an expected benefit are coercive because the individual is deceived. This erodes the binary distinction between threats and offers employed in classical definitions of coercion. Nozick suggests that the context, consequences and preferences of the recipient are integral to judging a proposition's coerciveness. Therefore that workers typically lack full information during recruitment and are from low socioeconomic groups is afforded significance in determining the coerciveness of the labour relationship. Robert Nozick, "Coercion." In *Philosophy, Science and Method: Essays in Honor of Ernest Nagel*, edited by Sidney Morgenbesser, Ernest Nagel, Patrick Suppes, and Morton Gabriel White, 440–472. London: MacMillan, 1969. See footnote 75 for classical definitions of coercion.

[7] Twentieth-century primary sources: William T. Morison, *Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission, Volumes I & II*. London: Darling & Son Limited, 1908; Janet Harvey Kelman, *Labour in India: A Study of the Conditions of Indian Women in Modern Industry*. London: Unwin Brothers Limited, 1923; Karl Schrader and Franz Josef Furtwängler, "Working India: Its Future and Its Struggle. Based on the Visit to India of the German Textile Workers." Berlin, 1928, translated by David Fernbach (unpublished manuscript); J. R. Clynes, *Royal Commission on Labour in India: Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India*. Calcutta: Government of India, 1931; S. R. Deshpande, *Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Cotton Mill Industry in India*. London, 1946; S. D. Punekar and R. Varickayil, *Labour Movement In India: Documents: 1891-1917*. Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1990.

[8] Twenty-first-century primary sources most frequently consulted: Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Captured by Cotton*. Amsterdam: Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) and India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), 2011; *Maid in India*, Amsterdam: SOMO and ICN, 2012; *Flawed Fabrics*, Amsterdam: SOMO and ICN, 2014; Solidaridad and Fair Labour Association, *Understanding the Characteristics of the Sumangali Scheme in Tamil Nadu Textile and Garment Industry and Supply Chain Linkages*. Solidaridad-South and South East Asia, 2012; Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls Employed under the "Sumangali Thittam" Scheme in Erode, Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Viruthunagar & Dindigul Districts of Tamil Nadu*, authored by K. Narayanaswamy and M. Sachithanandam. Tamil Nadu: Every Child, 2010; Government of India, *Report on*

concerned with workers' *lives* and thus show that labour relationships span workers' economic and social sites, and emphasise workers' wider coercion within the social context.[9] This is a valuable contribution since it highlights that labour relationships are not confined to the worksite. It also suggests that the low position of workers in the wider social context affects their position within *labour* relationships.

Differences in the focus of historical and contemporary source material reflect changes in the organisation of textile production over the past one-hundred years. The large-scale factories which prevailed in the early-twentieth-century gave way to small-scale workshops in the latter part of the century. This paralleled the retrenchment of textile production in the formal sector.[10] To show the effect of industrial change on labour recruitment, this study focuses on factory production in the formal sector in order to maintain as much methodological consistency as possible between historic and contemporary sources. Where possible, it draws evidence from the South of India; Madras before Independence, now present-day Tamil Nadu. This region was selected because of its continued prominence in cotton textile production: textiles in Calcutta have been dominated by the jute industry throughout the period, and in the contemporary industry, Mumbai and Ahmedabad have diversified into synthetic fibre production.[11] To reflect the expansion of textile production in the informal sector, this study also draws evidence from Tamil Nadu's power-loom industry in order to provide a counterbalance to the formal spinning sector, which forms the main empirical basis of this study. This comparison is worthwhile because the two industries show differences in the degree of labour coercion which is perhaps linked to differences in their respective export markets; the power-loom industry typically supplies the Middle East, while the spinning sector supplies North America and Europe.

This study advocates an economic explanation for the interplay between labour recruitment and labour coercion. It argues that recruitment strategies are used as a means to lower the cost of labour. This is predominantly facilitated in the textile industry through the recruitment of labour from low socioeconomic groups. Focus is given to the recruitment of female, casual and migrant workers whose employment has been integral to recruitment strategies over the past one-hundred years. Within this continuity, changes in recruitment have increased the vulnerability of labour to coercion by increasing the proportion of female employment and lowering their age of recruitment, increasing the proportion of casual employment and increasing the promotion of individual, as opposed to

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Conditions of Work and the Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector. National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS). Delhi: NCEUS, 2007.

[9] The link between workers' worksites and social sites through intermediaries in the early-twentieth-century is a theme dealt with only in more recent secondary literature. See Subho Basu, *Does Class Matter?: Colonial Capital and Workers' Resistance in Bengal, 1890-1937*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[10] The Indian Government defines the formal and informal sector as the 'organised' and 'unorganised' economy. This study employs the terms formal and informal since they are used by international organisations and in the academic literature. In general, the formal sector refers to the regulated part of the economy and the informal sector to the unregulated. Production units in the informal sector are typically unregistered worksites that employ less than one-hundred people. Government of India, *Report on Conditions of Work*, 2007: 3.

[11] Tirthankar Roy, "Growth and Recession in Small-Scale Industry: A Study of Tamil Nadu Powerlooms." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 44 (1999): 3141.

family, migration. The effect has been to decrease the collective bargaining position of the workforce, which has increased the degree of coercion exerted upon workers. These changes in female, casual and migrant labour recruitment are defined as processes of feminisation, casualisation and migrantisation: feminisation increases the proportion of females recruited and the proportion of unskilled jobs traditionally occupied by women; casualisation increases the proportion of workers without permanent contract or employment benefits; and migrantisation promotes the recruitment of workers who migrate as individuals. Collectively, these processes demonstrate the informalisation of labour.[12]

The structure of the argument proceeds as follows: chapter two contextualises long-term continuities over the period and questions the role of intermediaries in labour recruitment. The study is organised according to the socioeconomic groups of labour employed; each chapter asks what changes have occurred in their recruitment. Chapter three shows that the proportion of females recruited has increased in South India, and the age of female recruitment declined. Chapter four discusses growth in the proportion of workers casually recruited within the formal industry. Chapter five argues that the promotion of individual, as opposed to family, migration has increased in contemporary recruitment strategies. To question how the position of labour has been affected, chapter six provides explanations for these changes which suggest that employers capitalise upon underlying continuities in informal recruitment, workers' poverty and labour-intensive textile production. Chapter seven concludes that these three characteristics of the Indian textile industry explain long-term continuity in labour coercion, and that the declining socioeconomic position of workers explains its increase over the past century.

[12] For literature on labour informalisation through the employment of female, casual or migrant workforces see Alessandra Mezzandri, "Globalisation, Informalisation and the State in the Indian Garment Industry." *International Review of Sociology* 20, no. 3 (2010): 491–521; Guy Standing, "Global Feminization Through Flexible Labor: A Theme Revisited." *World Development* 27, no. 3 (1999): 583–602; Jan Breman "The Study of Labour in Post-Colonial India–The Informal Sector." In Jonathan Parry, Jan Breman, and Karin Kapadia, eds. *The Worlds of Indian Industrial Labour*, 407–432. Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999; Dae-oup Chang, "Informalising Labour in Asia's Global Factory." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 39, no. 2 (2009): 170.

2. CONTEXT

The institutional persistence of labour intermediation in the Indian textile industry is a long-term continuity in how recruitment has been facilitated. Labour intermediaries intersect workers and employers in facilitating or regulating how labour is recruited, organised and controlled.[13] The literature predominantly considers recruitment through the perspective of labour intermediation since it is a ubiquitous institution in numerous labour markets.[14] In the Indian textile industry, intermediaries continue to be individuals in the employers' employment. In the late-nineteenth-century, labour recruitment was controlled by the foreman, or *jobber*; and in the twenty-first-century labour recruitment is facilitated through commissioned brokers or other employees. This chapter appraises arguments for the establishment of labour intermediation in the Indian industrial context, and argues those most relevant for the textile industry. It discusses changes in labour intermediation between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century and situates these within wider changes in the industrial context.

Historiographical explanations for the establishment of labour intermediaries in Indian industry fall within a social or an economic perspective. Firstly, the social perspective emphasises the pre-capitalist origins of intermediation and argues that industrialisation adapted an existing social structure to a capitalist context. It suggests that labour intermediaries in an industrial setting replicated the social hierarchy of village headmen as a remnant of India's agrarian political economy. This was necessary to integrate rural agrarian labour within the urban industrial workforce.[15] A variant of this perspective argues that labour intermediaries were necessary to act as cultural mediators between European industrial managers and an Indian workforce.[16] Secondly, the economic perspective emphasises the cost effectiveness of intermediaries in the recruitment, organisation and discipline of labour for employers. It argues that during the initial stages of industrialisation when labour was

[13] David Autor, *Studies of Labor Market Intermediation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009: 1.

[14] Ulbe Bosma, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk and Aditya Sarkar, eds. "Intermediaries of Labour: Indirect Recruitment of Free and Forced Workers around the World." *International Review of Social History Special Issue* 57, no. 20 (2012). See the editor's introductory article for a detailed historiographical review.
Labour intermediation occurs in multifarious contexts; *jobbers* existed in Lancashire textile mills during the British Industrial Revolution, and brokers exist in numerous industries within India today. These include construction, brick kilns, gem cutting, rice mills and sugar plantations. See Isabelle Guérin, "Bonded Labour, Agrarian Changes and Capitalism: Emerging Patterns in South India." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 13, no. 3 (July 2013): 405–23; Isabelle Guérin, Govindan Venkatasubramanian and Bert D'Espallier, "Debt in Rural South India: Fragmentation, Social Regulation and Discrimination." *The Journal of Development Studies* 49, no. 9 (2013): 1155–71; Karin Kapadia, "The Profitability of Bonded Labour: The Gem-Cutting Industry in Rural South India." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 22, no. 3 (1995): 446–83; David Picherit, "'Workers, Trust Us!' Labour Middlemen and the Rise of the Lower Caste." In *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New*, edited by Jan Breman, Isabelle Guérin, and Aseem Prakash, 259–83. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009. For a historical account of labour intermediation outside the textile industry see C. P. Simmons, "Recruiting and Organizing an Industrial Labour Force in Colonial India: The Case of the Coal Mining Industry, 1880-1939." *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 13, no. 4 (October 1976): 455–85.

[15] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal 1890-1940*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989: 223; Richard Newman, "Social Factors in the Recruitment of the Bombay Millhands." In *Economy and Society: Essays in Indian Economic and Social History*, edited by Clive Dewey and K. N. Chaudhuri, 277–98. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977: 281.

[16] S. D. Mehta, *The Cotton Mills of India: 1854 to 1954*. Bombay: The Textile Association, 1954: 245–7.

scarce, recruitment was outsourced to intermediaries as a cheap method to mobilise labour migration to expanding textile centres.[17]

Yet the implications of both arguments have limited applicability to the textile industry throughout the period under study. The social perspective highlights the agrarian character of the industrial workforce which is difficult to reconcile with evidence that workers had relatively limited interaction between rural and urban areas, even at the beginning of industrialisation. The 1890 Indian Factory Commission found that 23% of Bombay textile workers had only periodic links with their village or agriculture, and 56% had no link at all.[18] This suggests that portraying the industrial textile workforce as fundamentally agrarian is misleading since it appears that workers settled into the urban economy relatively early during industrialisation.[19] The cultural mediation argument is similarly problematic since cotton manufacture was overwhelmingly organised by Indian management in the early-twentieth-century. The 1921 census reported that in Bombay, Europeans operated 17 out of 193 company managed mills and European or Anglo-Indian private owners numbered just 27 out of 622.[20] From an economic perspective, the labour scarcity argument is insufficient since intermediaries persisted in the textile industry during periods of labour abundance in the 1920s and 1930s.[21]

Instead, this study suggests that the benefit for employers to devolve the cost of recruitment to intermediaries offers a more compelling economic explanation for their establishment. This benefit appears relevant to the historic and contemporary textile industry, and thus provides a plausible explanation for long-term continuity in labour intermediation. The argument follows that intermediaries provide a legal buffer between employers and employment legislation such that if regulations are evaded or breached, employers can lay blame with intermediaries and avoid fines or factory closure for misconduct. In effect, employers mitigate the risk costs associated with cheap labour recruitment by outsourcing the responsibility to intermediaries. A German Trade Union delegation which investigated Indian textile factories in 1928 uncovered that employers who failed factory inspections for breaching the Factory Acts typically avoided punishment by implicating the *jobber*.[22] In return for providing a convenient scapegoat, employers overlooked the bribes and extractions which *jobbers* imposed on the workforce to supplement their income, and afforded them considerable influence on the shop-floor.[23]

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[17] Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India. A Study of the Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854-1947*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965: 6–7; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 100.

[18] Baniprasanna Misra, "Factory Labour during the Early Years of Industrialization: An Appraisal in the Light of the Indian Factory Commission, 1890." *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 12, no. 3 (January 1975): 213.

[19] Ranajit Das Gupta, "Factory Labour in Eastern India: Sources of Supply, 1855-1946: Some Preliminary Findings." *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 13, no. 3 (July 1976): 312; Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 9–12.

[20] Government of India, "Occupation." *Census of India, Volume I*. Calcutta, 1921: 252.

[21] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "The Decline and Fall of the Jobber System in the Bombay Cotton Textile Industry, 1870-1955." *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (January 2008): 154.

[22] In 1928, the Factory Acts were most commonly breached through the employment of children, women on nightshifts or workers in excess of ten hours.

[23] Karl Schrader and Franz Josef Furtwängler, "Working India: Its Future and Its Struggle", 1928: 39.

Intermediaries appear to occupy a similar function in the contemporary industry, which enables employers to absolve themselves of liability for coercive recruitment practices. In a telephone interview, Martje Thuews, the co-author of research investigations in Tamil Nadu's spinning mills conducted by the Centre for Research on Multinational Research (SOMO), said that employers "hide behind" recruitment brokers in order to evade responsibility for the coercion used. In cases of girls employed without the minimal education standard, employers sidestep accountability by arguing that brokers are culpable for failing to impose stringent checks during recruitment. Similarly, employers deny that recruitment relies on deception by arguing that the use of 'false promises' to influence girls' recruitment owes to the malpractice of individual brokers.[24] Yet evidence that recruitment posters distributed by factories recapitulate these false promises demonstrates that employers are indeed implicated in coercive labour recruitment.[25]

The cause of persistence in labour intermediation is a second historiographical debate for which an economic perspective provides a compelling argument. The economic benefit of intermediaries applies to workers as well as employers, suggesting that top-down and bottom-up forces explain long-term continuity. Alongside employment, recruitment brokers offer workers access to housing and social security provided by employers. This is highly valuable for impoverished workers since it offers them at least a minimum level of subsistence in the absence of state social protection. Recruitment brokers also serve as information networks that inform workers of informal providers of social services, such as credit or medical access, which are particularly valuable for migrant labour.[26] In the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century, housing and social services were often provided directly by the *jobber*. *Jobbers*, or their wives, were commonly local landlords or proprietors of social spaces frequented by workers, such as liquor stores and gymkhanas. Holding this social position, and with responsibility for paying wages, meant that *jobbers* frequently advanced money to workers and acted as local credit providers.[27] Access to these social services was beneficial for workers in itself, particularly for casual migrants who were less likely to have a social network with whom they could live or borrow money. It was particularly economically advantageous for a worker to take out loans with the *jobber* since it was then in the *jobber's* interest to employ them in order to see a repayment of the debt. As such, becoming indebted to the *jobber* was one strategy for workers to improve their employment security.

The informality of the labour market and *jobbers'* control of recruitment made them a particularly valuable figure for workers to approach, particularly for casual or migrant labour who frequently sought reemployment. It was also vital in cities such as Ahmedabad, Gujarat where a relatively low migrant population meant that recruitment was organised through kinship networks as a 'closed shop', which perpetuated migrants' exclusion.[28] The absence of formal institutions which

[24] See appendix 9.1 for a transcript of the discussion between Martje Theuws and Jennifer Beckwith. Discussion about Research Conducted by SOMO on the Sumangali Scheme. Telephone Interview, 15 April 2015.
[25] See appendix 9.3 for a translation of a factory recruitment advertisement distributed in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu during April and May 2015, provided by Social Awareness and Voluntary Education (SAVE).
[26] Alessandra Mezzandri and Ravi Srivastava, "Surveying Informalised Labour Conditions in India's Organised Garment Sector." Development Viewpoint. London: Centre for Development Policy and Research, July 2014.
[27] Subho Basu, *Does Class Matter?*, 2004: 54.
[28] Since the migrant population was lower in Ahmedabad compared with Bombay, the organisation of labour through closed social networks was more prevalent. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial*

protect the social and economic welfare of labour is a contextual backdrop in which intermediaries have continued to operate over the past century. As such, it has remained profitable for workers to engage intermediaries as an alternative source of informal protection.

Within this context, however, the position of intermediaries has declined between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century, altering the labour relationship between intermediaries and workers. As controllers of recruitment, providers of social services and overseers on the 'shop-floor', *jobbers* had widespread influence over the workforce; *jobbers* had the capacity to coerce labour under each of these three functions, with authority to demand recruitment bribes and high rent, dismiss workers and withhold their wages, and impose physical discipline. Yet the threats which *jobbers* wielded to control the workforce were balanced with incentives, which suggests that the relationship was not exclusively coercive. The *jobbers'* relationship with workers embodied reciprocity as their influence was dependent upon their ability to establish a loyal workforce by serving workers' social and economic interests.[29] Therefore, the hierarchical relationship between *jobbers* and workers was also one of protection; *jobbers* served the needs of labour and represented the workforce before the establishment of trade unions, both in offering social services and in negotiating with employers on its behalf.[30] The labour relationship between *jobbers* and workers was therefore highly ambivalent; the position of *jobbers* to coerce labour also reinforced their influence to dispense patronage. *Jobbers* frequently recruited workers they favoured, leniently administered wage deductions, and offered protection from police harassment.[31]

The position of recruitment brokers in the twenty-first-century does not exhibit an equivalent degree of patronage.[32] This is primarily because the hierarchical relationship between labour and recruitment brokers has dissipated as intermediaries are largely drawn from the same social milieu as workers.[33] Recruitment brokers are characterised as 'mostly jobless young men' who do not wield the same socioeconomic influence as *jobbers*.[34] It also results from wider industrial changes in the

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Capitalism in India, 2002: 102; Jan Breman, *Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996: 17.

[29] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 144.

[30] Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965: 36; Michael Anderson, "The Illusion of Free Labour in India 1857." In *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955*, edited by Douglas Hay and Paul Craven, 422–54, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004: 427.

[31] Subho Basu, *Does Class Matter?*, 2004: 66; Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965: 142–3.

[32] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar cautions against exaggerating the position of *jobbers* in the early-twentieth-century since their influence was dependent upon associations with other intermediaries, the skill level of the workforce and the size and profitability of the factory. Yet in spite of these qualifications, Chandavarkar shows that the influence of the *jobber* system declined due to industrial changes over the twentieth-century. See "The Decline and Fall of the Jobber System", 2008: 117–20.

[33] Jan Breman, *Footloose Labour*, 1996: 97; Isabelle Guérin, "Bonded Labour, Agrarian Changes and Capitalism", 2013: 406; Jan Breman "The Study of Labour in Post-Colonial India–The Informal Sector", 1999: 422; David Picherit, "'Workers, Trust Us!' Labour Middlemen and the Rise of the Lower Caste", 1999: 277; and Ravi Srivastava, "Conceptualising Continuity and Chance in Emerging Forms of Labour Bondage in India." In *India's Unfree Workforce: Of Bondage Old and New*, edited by Jan Breman, Isabelle Guérin, and Aseem Prakash, 129–46. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009: 136.

[34] Every Child characterises brokers as 'mostly jobless young men with contacts in mills or [who] are relatives of girls employed in mills'. The impression that recruiters are drawn from low socioeconomic backgrounds is

organisation of labour and production. Contemporary brokers are generally solely responsible for recruitment and typically do not fulfil other functions in organising labour on the 'shop-floor'; brokers supply labour to the factory, they do not discipline labour inside it.[35] The transition of textile production from large-scale factories to small-scale workshops has increased the number of petty intermediaries whose capacity to provide patronage has declined as their influence over workers has narrowed.

This restricted function at the worksite parallels their role in social provision; recruitment brokers facilitate workers' housing and social protection, rather than providing it directly. Brokers are therefore less influential than *jobbers* within the wider community which has lowered their position in relation to the employer. That brokers hold a lower socioeconomic position than occupied by *jobbers* is evident since it is not uncommon for brokers to be indebted.[36] During periods of labour scarcity, brokers are required to increase the generosity of recruitment terms, often incurring immense financial risk to cover a shortfall in the payment received from the employer to offer higher advances in order to recruit workers and receive their commission.[37] The position of intermediaries in both the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century was not static but determined by interactions with other intermediaries, the spatial organisation of industry vis-à-vis competitors and markets, and the bargaining position of the workers recruited. Nevertheless, with broad overview, the position of intermediaries has declined over the period because the social hierarchy between brokers and workers has eroded, large-scale industry has dismantled, and their role in organising labour has specialised in recruitment.

These changes in labour intermediation point to broader changes in the industrial organisation of textile production between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century. These require a brief outline in order to situate changes in labour coercion within the wider industrial context. The turn of the twentieth-century marked the pinnacle of factory produced textiles in India. The establishment of vertically integrated factories in the late-nineteenth-century introduced large-scale, mechanised production. In 1860, fewer than 2,000 workers were employed in cotton factories in the formal sector, and within less than one century this had burgeoned to 800,000.[38] By the 1990s, approximately 4,000,000 people produced cotton textiles on power-loom machines.[39] Employment in mechanised production remained relatively low as a proportion of the total number of workers in textiles, which

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consistent with the view presented across the NGO reports consulted. Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 22.

[35] Other types of intermediaries do exist within the contemporary industry, for example in coordinating sub-contraction (see footnote 183), however the combined functionality of *jobbers* as recruiters, overseers, discipliners and providers of social services is not typical of present-day intermediaries. Today, labour recruitment is generally carried out by a different individual to the supervisor at the factory.

[36] Geert De Neve, *The Everyday Politics of Labour: Working Lives in India's Informal Economy*. Delhi: Social Science Press, 2005: 200.

[37] Jan Breman, *Footloose Labour*, 1996: 95.

[38] S. D. Mehta, *The Cotton Mills of India*, 1954: 1.

[39] Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India 1857-1947*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006: 202.

suggests that handicraft techniques in the informal sector persisted in Indian textile manufacture in spite of large-scale factories.[40]

In the formal sector, on which this study concentrates, mechanised textile production changed from large-scale vertically integrated sites, encompassing weaving, spinning and processing operations, to specialised sites which fragmented each stage of textile production into separate units in industrial clusters.[41] By the late-twentieth-century the overall trend of large-scale factories reversed as markets, labour and capital became increasingly accessible and facilitated the proliferation of small-scale mechanised textile workshops.[42] This trend towards industrial fragmentation is evident from the decline in the proportion of textile workers employed in vertically integrated factories. In 1921, millworkers represented 42% of the textile workforce; by 1981 this had reduced by almost two-thirds to 16%. This decline does not reflect overall decline in textile production since as a share of industrial employment the textile industry represented 26% in 1921 and increased to 30% in 1981.[43] The majority small-scale workshops emerged in the informal sector, whilst informal practices of labour organisation have penetrated the formal sector. Therefore to establish a rigid dichotomy between the formal and informal organisation of production in correspondence with India's historic and contemporary textile industry is highly problematic.[44] It also grossly oversimplifies the extent of interaction between the two sectors through sub-contraction in the twenty-first-century, and underestimates continuity in informally organised production during the twentieth-century.

The formalisation of regulation against coercive labour in national and international employment legislation is another contextual change over the past one-hundred years. Yet despite the strengthening of employment regulation, its enforcement remains limited. This is because the coverage of formal law is piecemeal in relation to small-scale, non-mechanised and home-worker sites of production in the informal sector which constitutes the majority of textile employment.[45] It also results from the Indian state's lack of resources to investigate, regulate and prosecute malpractice in the formal sector, in combination with recruitment strategies among employers which evade regulation altogether.

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[40] The historiography on Indian textile production is divided over the extent to which handloom weaving continued into the twentieth-century. However, since this study focuses on factory produced textiles in the formal sector, the total amount of handmade production is not of crucial importance. For the debate on de-industrialisation see Amiya Bagchi, "De-industrialisation in India in the Nineteenth-Century: Some Theoretical Implications." *Journal of Development Studies* 12, no. 2, (1976); David A. Washbrook, "Progress and Problems: South Asian Economic and Social History, 1720–1860." *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1988): 57–96; Tirthankar Roy, *Rethinking Economic Change in India: Land and Labour*. Abington: Routledge, 2005: 103–8.

[41] Pamela Cawthorne, "Of Networks and Markets: The Rise and Rise of a South Indian Town, the Example of Tiruppur's Cotton Knitwear Industry." *World Development* 23, no. 1 (1995): 43–56.

[42] Tirthankar Roy, "The Long Globalization and Textile Producers in India." In *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650-2000*, edited by Lex Heerma van Voss, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk and Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, 253–273. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010: 271–3.

[43] Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India*, 2006: 225.

[44] Ravi Srivastava, "Conceptualising Continuity and Chance in Emerging Forms of Labour Bondage in India." 2009: 129–46.

[45] The Indian Government suggests that one-third of employment laws are applicable to 'some segments of workers' in the informal sector. Government of India, *Report on Conditions of Work*, 2007: 155.

3. FEMINISATION

Female participation in employment is linked with educational improvement, social equality and economic development.[46] Yet the contemporary development literature shows that the feminisation of the labour force, a two-fold process which increases both the proportion of female workers and the proportion of unskilled jobs traditionally occupied by women, is an employment strategy which lowers the cost of labour.[47] This process has accelerated in the Indian textile industry since the mid-twentieth-century, particularly in South India. However in long-term perspective the proportion of women employed in the textile industry has continued to be higher than India's total female employment in the early-twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries.

Figures released in May 2015 show that women compose 57% of the textile workforce,[48] significantly higher than total female employment in India which stood at 29% in 2012.[49] Studies which document the feminisation of labour in textiles show a substantial increase in female employment in the period after Independence.[50] In 1950 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) calculated that women composed 19% of the textile industry.[51] Low female employment in the mid-twentieth-century resulted from the introduction of Factory Acts which prohibited women from working nightshifts and entitled them to statutory maternity leave, making male migrants a cheaper source of labour.[52] In long-term perspective, however, high female employment in textiles is not a contemporary phenomenon: the 1921 census shows that women represented approximately 40% of the textile workforce.[53] This is particularly high relative to the total proportion of women employed in

[46] United Nations, "Benefits of Economic Empowerment," April 2015; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship*. Paris: OECD, 2012.

[47] Guy Standing, "Global Feminization Through Flexible Labor: A Theme Revisited",1999: 583–602; Amarjit Kaur, "Economic Globalisation, Trade Liberalisation and Labour Intensive Export Manufactures: An Asian Perspective." In *Women Workers in Industrialising Asia: Costed, Not Valued*, edited by Amarjit Kaur, 37–58. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

[48] According to the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry, 20 million women are employed in the industry. Bivas Chaudhuri and A. K. Panigrahi, "Gender Bias in Indian Industry." *The Journal of Industrial Statistics* 2, no. 1 (2013): 112; Piyush Mishra, "More Women Join Textile Industry in Gujarat." *The Times of India*, 22 May 2015.

[49] This compares with 81% of total male employment in 2012. A substantial increase in female employment in the textile industry is reflected across the manufacturing sector. This has seen a 20% increase in women's employment between 1994 and 2012, despite female participation in the labour force decreasing from 43% to 29% over the same period. International Labour Organisation (ILO), *Global Employment Trends for Women*, authored by Evangelia Bourmpoula. Geneva: ILO, 2012: 15 and 31.

[50] Alessandra Mezzandri, "Reflections on Globalisation and Labour Standards in the Indian Garment Industry: Codes of Conduct Versus 'Codes of Practice' Imposed by the Firm." *Global Labour Journal* 3, no. 1 (2012): 42.

[51] Padmini Sengupta, "Women in the International Labour Organisation and the Labour Code." From *Women Workers of India*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1960. In *Female Labour in India*, edited by Usha Sharma, 9–18. Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2006: 17.

[52] The decline of female employment in the textile industry in the mid-twentieth-century was greater than the slight decline in women's total labour force participation which stood at 23% in 1951. This shows the effect of the 1948 Factory Acts in increasing the cost of female labour, whose low employment in this period was a short-term slump, rather than the long-term trend. Tirthankar Roy, *The Economic History of India*, 2006: 242 and 283.

[53] The 1921 census shows that 2,455,000 men and 1,575,000 women (nearest 1,000) were employed in the textile industry. The census does not document the number of children employed, probably because the age

India which stood at 26% in the same year.[54] Thus, disproportionately high female employment in the textile industry has continued in the early-twentieth-century and the present-day.

The most significant trend with regards to increase in women's textile employment is its regional focus in South India. Throughout the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century, women represented approximately 20% of Bombay's textile workforce.[55] Women represent a similar proportion in the Northern States today, as men compose approximately 80% of textile employment.[56] The process of labour feminisation is therefore highly concentrated in South India; in Tamil Nadu, women represent 84% of the textile workforce.[57] Accordingly, this chapter focuses attention on the Sumangali Scheme, a systematised method of contemporary recruitment in South Indian spinning mills which advances labour feminisation. Alongside an increase in female employment, the chapter argues that qualitative changes in methods of recruitment and decline in the age of female employment have weakened women's bargaining position within the workforce. It shows that contemporary recruitment through the Scheme exacerbates female exploitation by exclusively targeting young girls from low socioeconomic backgrounds under terms which increase their dependency on employers.

The Sumangali Scheme was established in the 1990s to supply labour to export-oriented spinning mills in South India. Its specific industrial and geographical character means that evidence of its practice cannot be extrapolated to India's nationwide textile industry. That said, its inclusion is important for two reasons: firstly, the Sumangali Scheme has received a barrage of critical attention from the global media, ILO, human rights organisations and local NGOs.[58] Secondly, the Scheme facilitates the supply of labour to the formal factory sector and is therefore as methodologically consistent as possible with historical evidence. However, since the contemporary material has been supplied by NGOs which unanimously condemn the Scheme, discrepancy between the sources of this evidence is a limitation. The Sumangali Scheme recruits young, low-caste females for a three-year period of 'apprenticeship' employment, the majority of whom live in hostel accommodation managed by the factory at the production site. Those recruited are between 14 and 21 years old, although

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range of children as legally defined changed over the preceding decade. Nevertheless, Morris D. Morris suggests that children represented no more than 4.5% of the textile workforce in the twentieth-century. Therefore, approximately 191,000 children would bring the total workforce to 4,221,000, with women representing 37.3%. These figures include employment in the jute, leather and woollen industries in order to provide an optimal comparison with contemporary figures which include the spinning, garment and apparel industry. Government of India, "Occupation", *Census of India, Volume I*, 1921: 375; Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965: 70.

[54] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 94.

[55] Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965: 66.

[56] The proportion of male workers in North India was more than 80% of total employment in Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. FWF, *India Country Study*, 2012: 12.

[57] Female employment in Karnataka, South India, is also high with women representing 79% of the workforce. *Ibid*., 2012: 12.

[58] N. Mani and N. Krishnan, "Understand the Labourer's Problems under the Sumangali Thittam Scheme", 2014: 118–22; Robin Pagnamenta, "The Cotton in Your Clothes May Be Made by Girls Aged 11, Paid £6 a Month." *The Times*. 15 November 2014; P. Sudhakar, "Girl Workers Physically, Sexually Exploited, Reveals Survey." *The Hindu*. 1 April 2015.

younger girls have commonly been reported.[59] It operates through intermediaries promising social and welfare provision, regular wages and a lump sum payment upon the Scheme's completion, which are unfulfilled after recruitment. In Tamil, 'Sumangali' means a 'happily married woman'.[60] As such, the lump sum is presented as a dowry which, despite official outlaw of the practice in 1961, remains an essential custom among the rural communities from which the girls are drawn. Thus, lump sum payments, 'false promises', and apprenticeship contracts are the principal characteristics of the Scheme. This provides the framework for historical comparison, before which attention is given to the types of females targeted during recruitment and the role of intermediaries.

Workers from the lowest-castes have composed a significant proportion of the textile workforce throughout the period under study. The 1890 Factory Commission characterised approximately half of the workers it interviewed as 'lumpen'—destitute individuals, beggars and former members of the criminal tribes.[61] Yet since its sample included just 92 workers, the Commission's findings are limited. A broader statistical survey of four textile centres in Madras in the 1920s shows that Dalits constituted a greater proportion of the textile workforce than in the wider urban population. In Coimbatore, 20% of millworkers were untouchables while the caste composed 12% of the city's population.[62] Thus the textile industry absorbed a substantial share of workers from the lowest socioeconomic groups during the early-twentieth-century. This composition continues among the present-day workforce of South India, indeed, the proportion of low-caste workers has increased in the twenty-first-century as a result of the Sumangali Scheme which exclusively recruits low-caste girls. Research conducted by the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) found that 60% of Sumangali workers came from Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and 40% from Other Backward Castes.[63] The low-caste character of the workforce greatly increases the likelihood that the workers' families are indebted. This forms a significant motivation in the girls' recruitment. An investigation by the charity Every Child sampled Sumangali workers in five districts across Tamil Nadu and found that every girl's family was indebted, on average by one-third of the family's yearly income.[64] In combination, the low-caste and indebted character of the girls targeted under the Sumangali Scheme makes the lump sum promised during recruitment a highly attractive offer.

As well as targeting chronically impoverished families, the recruitment process capitalises upon periods when labour is acutely vulnerable. Rural communities are targeted during the rainy season when job opportunities in agriculture, brick kilns and construction sites are scarce. Last year it was reported that textile factories in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, concentrated recruitment on the central

[59] A study conducted by Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum found that 18% of girls interviewed were younger than 14 when recruited. *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 52.
[60] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Captured by Cotton*, 2011: 6.
[61] Ranajit Das Gupta, "Factory Labour in Eastern India", 1976: 311–2.
[62] Eamon Murphy, *Unions in Conflict: A Comparative Study of Four South Indian Textile Centres 1918-1939*. Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1981: 43.
[63] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 31.
[64] Since Every Child investigated Dalit communities, it is important to highlight that this amount of family debt is probably higher than for workers from Other Backward Castes. All of the literature regarding the Sumangali Scheme corroborates the indebted position of workers and their families, although the amount is typically unspecified. Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 55.

Indian states which suffered crop failure.[65] The types of girls typically recruited have a low educational standard. The recruitment process is intensified during the school holiday period since, as disclosed by one factory manager, 'school dropouts are just the kind of human resource companies want to utilise'.[66] More than half of the girls interviewed by Every Child were illiterate, and in almost 90% of cases investigated by SOMO, girls were either given blank documents presented as employment contracts or were unable to sign the papers because of illiteracy.[67] While Indian law stipulates that education is compulsory up to 14 years, it is rarely enforced during recruitment. This suggests that the uneducated and unskilled nature of the girls recruited is valuable to employers in order to promote malleable workforces who have little awareness of their labour rights. The overall profile of girls recruited under the Sumangali Scheme suggests that they are particularly vulnerable sources of labour being drawn from low-caste indebted families, typically with little education and from impoverished rural areas.

The Sumangali Scheme is facilitated through intermediaries who are paid on commission by the factories per recruit. Brokers are typically employed to supply labour from particular catchment areas, although other employees and extended family members or neighbours are also engaged in recruitment. The amount of commission received by brokers varies considerably depending upon the size, location and output market of the factory and its demand for labour. The sheer paucity of research on the process of recruitment makes it difficult to ascertain the typical amount paid, although NGO reports suggest that it ranges between Rs.1,000 and Rs.2,000 per recruit (equivalent to between €14 and €28). The amount appears to depend upon whether spinning factories supply the domestic or export market, with incentives for brokers substantially less at factories which supply the North American and European market.[68] Paying brokers a low rate is a strategy for export-oriented employers to reduce expenditure on labour recruitment in order to maintain competitiveness with other Asian textile producers, such as Bangladesh and Cambodia, which have burgeoned in the last decade.

Another method to lower the cost of recruitment is to incentivise existing employees to recruit cousins or neighbours since they are typically paid less commission. In collaboration with the Fair Labour Association, Solidaridad found that some factories have introduced incentive schemes which offer employees Rs.500, approximately €7, for each new recruit and a gold coin upon securing five.[69] The relatives of these employees act as sub-brokers outside the mill and approach extended family and friends in order for the employee to obtain their payment which is later put towards the family

[65] Gokul Vannan, "Dindigul Mills 'Harvest' Child Workers in Crop Flop Areas." *The New Indian Express*. 4 July 2014.
[66] Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls Employed under the "Sumangali Thittam"*, 2010: 22.
[67] *Ibid*., 2010: 32; Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 31.
[68] In 2012, Solidaridad and Fair Labour Association investigated spinning factories which supply the domestic market and documented brokers receiving Rs.2,000 per recruit, and a monthly retainer of Rs.700. In 2014, SOMO investigated export-oriented spinning factories and uncovered brokers receiving Rs.1,000 per recruit, and an additional payment of Rs.1,000 for every recruit which remained in employment after the first six months. Solidaridad and Fair Labour Association, *Understanding the Characteristics of the Sumangali Scheme*, 2012: 17; Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Captured by Cotton*, 2011: 9 and *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 37.
[69] Solidaridad and Fair Labour Association, *Understanding the Characteristics of the Sumangali Scheme*, 2012: 17.

income. The parents of the newly recruited girl are typically unaware of the financial gain received by the existing employees and generally accept the recommendation of sub-brokers considered part of the family's kinship network. This is consistent with evidence of recruitment in the brick kiln industry which shows that labour brokerage systems are more effective when mobilised through trust and social capital.[70] The Sumangali Scheme therefore seeks to involve families and extended kin to endorse girls' recruitment. Brokers typically approach the family, rather than the individual, whose parents are equally susceptible to the false promises offered during recruitment. These brokers frequently live in the villages from which the girls are drawn, or otherwise have strong kinship connections with the catchment areas in which they operate. This gives them an intimate understanding of the financial position of local families, which affords brokers a degree of social influence and enables them to target indebted households. Factory bus drivers often act as brokers which gives them a high degree of mobility in the local area.[71] The convergence of kinship networks, local knowledge and social influence demonstrates that the Sumangali Scheme operates with a high degree of informality. This makes it difficult to mitigate workers' exploitation since its practices evade the reach of state regulation.

Two methods are commonly employed by brokers during recruitment; the first, giving gifts and the second, extending advances, are particularly significant in view of the indebted position of the families targeted. Firstly, SOMO found that the practice of offering gifts such as clothes or household items to debt-burdened families was widespread.[72] While gifts do not demand repayment, this practice forges a dependency relationship between brokers and families since reciprocity is implicit in gift-giving. Families accept gifts because of their poverty, yet their indebtedness makes them unable to return gifts of monetary value which may encourage reciprocity to be given in other forms. Families may feel more compelled to accept the recruitment terms of the Sumangali Scheme having accepted brokers' gifts. In this way, offering gifts to indebted families operates as a bribe by inducing them to acquiesce to the broker through social obligation.[73] Secondly, evidence provided by Social Awareness and Voluntary Education (SAVE), an NGO operating in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, shows that brokers advance a portion of the lump sum promised under the Sumangali Scheme during recruitment which is subsequently deducted from workers' wages. Typically, the amount represents four months of the average family income. SAVE uncovered eleven cases of the practice in Tiruppur during April 2015 alone.[74] Extending advances exacerbates the indebted position of impoverished low-caste families. It also establishes a coercive relationship between the broker and family since the obligation of monetary repayment is predicated on a threat: if the debt is unpaid, the family will be sanctioned by

[70] Augendra Bhukuth, Jérôme Ballet and Isabelle Guérin, "Social Capital and the Brokerage System: The Formation of Debt Bondage in South India." *Journal of Economic Studies* 34, no. 4 (September 2007): 311–23.
[71] This is remarkably analogous with recruitment in Madras during the late-nineteenth-century for which local cart drivers were hired to tour villages during periods of labour shortage to pick up individuals looking for work. See Eamon Murphy, *Unions in Conflict*, 1981: 34; Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Maid in India*, 2012: 18.
[72] See appendix 9.1, Martje Theuws and Jennifer Beckwith. Discussion about Research Conducted by SOMO on the Sumangali Scheme. Telephone Interview, 15 April 2015.
[73] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, translated by W. D. Halls. London: Routledge, 1990: 7.
[74] See appendix 9.2 for a transcript of the discussion between A. Viyakula Mary, from SAVE, and Jennifer Beckwith. Discussion about the Operation of the Sumangali Scheme in Tiruppur. Skype Inverview, 5 May 2015.

the broker.[75] Extending advances also changes the nature of the labour relationship under the Sumangali Scheme: instead of being compelled to work with the offer of a lump sum, workers are obliged to work under the threat of debt repayment. This serves to immediately bind workers to the factory since their autonomy to exit the labour relationship is constrained.

The practice of extending advances during recruitment is also used in Tamil Nadu's power-loom sector, although the debt relationship is held directly between the employer and worker.[76] Nevertheless it is important to include because the system of advance does not have the same coercive effect as under the Sumangali Scheme. The majority of power-loom employers in northern Tamil Nadu do not expect workers to repay advances, therefore workers' obligation towards the employer is not prominent within the debt relationship.[77] For the worker, advances represent a large injection of capital which they would not have otherwise been able to obtain. For the employer, extending advances also serves to bind labour to the site of production as under the Sumangali Scheme, yet its effect is less coercive since workers do not face an equivalent threat for unpaid debts. This demonstrates that the practice of extending advances is not in itself coercive, rather that coercion arises from the wider consequences of indebtedness which restricts workers' autonomy and reduces their bargaining position.[78]

The practice of brokers extending advances under the Sumangali Scheme is particularly coercive since the full lump sum is rarely paid to the worker upon completing the Scheme. This means that girls are obligated to work in order to repay the debt *and* continue to receive a lower wage-rate in order to repay the interest accrued. The girls rarely recover their loss of wages since employers often withhold the lump sum. Ultimately, workers lose out on the lump sum whilst factories recoup the advance. In 2014 the lump sum amount typically ranged between Rs.30,000 and Rs.50,000 (approximately €500 and €800), although SAVE has provided evidence of a recruitment advertisement distributed in Tiruppur during April and May 2015 which promises a lump sum of Rs.85,000, equivalent to in excess of €1,200.[79] Brokers present the lump sum as an opportunity for girls to save for a dowry, indeed the Sumangali Scheme is also known as the 'marriage assistance scheme' as it exclusively recruits pre-marital females. The combination of impoverished, low-caste,

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[75] The presence of an active threat is foundational to theories of coercion. This distinguishes coercive propositions from those deemed to be offers. For classical interpretations see Michael Gorr, "Toward a Theory of Coercion." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 16, no. 3 (September 1986): 383–405 and James Pennock Roland and John William Chapman, eds. *Coercion*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972, especially the essay by Michael D. Bayles entitled 'A Concept of Coercion', 16–29.

[76] Geert De Neve conducted anthropological fieldwork in Komarapalayam, Bhavani, Poongodi, Chinnaraj and Mannarpalayam between 1995 and 2000. These towns stretch between the industrial centres of Salem and Coimbatore in northern Tamil Nadu. *The Everyday Politics of Labour*, 2005: 178.

[77] Since employers do not expect advances to be repaid, workers do not accrue interest on the debt. As one employer interviewed by Geert De Neve remarked, 'I will probably never see the money itself back, so how could I expect to get interest on it?'. This suggests that the purpose of extending advances in the power-loom sector is to stabilise the labour force, rather than for employers to profit from interest on debt. *Ibid*, 2005: 182.
This contrasts with Tamil Nadu's gem-cutting industry in which Karin Kapadia shows that high advances given during recruitment resulted in workers' low wages as a result of interest deductions. In this case, there was a 'hidden profitability' of employers to recruit workers with high advances. "The Profitability of Bonded Labour: The Gem-cutting Industry in Rural South India." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 22, no. 3 (1995): 446–83.

[78] Isabelle Guérin, "Bonded Labour, Agrarian Changes and Capitalism", 2013: 411.

[79] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 44; See appendix 9.3 for a translation of a Sumangali Scheme recruitment poster circulating in Tiruppur during April and May 2015 provided by SAVE.

indebted and uneducated girls means that the prospect of marriage is highly desirable, and the Sumangali Scheme often represents their only means to pay for it. The recruitment process therefore capitalises upon wider societal gender inequality which is implicit in befalling the bride's family to provide a dowry. This characteristic of the lump sum means that it embodies more than a financial reward for the girls. That more than two-thirds of girls do not receive the lump sum demonstrates the widespread use of this false promise which is particularly coercive considering its social and economic implications.[80] This expectation of eventual economic reward is exploited by employers as a means to stabilise the workforce by binding labour to the factory site. In essence, at the stage of recruitment lump sums exploit the poverty of workers and gendered social expectations; during employment, lump sums reduce workers' autonomy to seek alternative employment and severely depreciate the amount of remuneration workers expect to receive if unfulfilled.

False promises are coercive because they offer the worker a benefit in order to influence their decision which would have likely been different had they known that the promise would later be unfulfilled. The Sumangali Scheme presents numerous other false promises regarding the terms of work which are later reneged during employment. With respect to binding labour, a particularly coercive practice obliges girls to work days in arrears in order to repay an unwarranted 'debt' of absenteeism. Although workers are promised a weekly rest day and ten to fifteen days holiday, many girls have reported being denied absence for illness or family emergencies. In cases where leave is taken, one month of work is added to a worker's employment period for every day of absence.[81] This results in girls serving an employment period closer to four years than three, without receiving wages for the extra months worked or a larger lump sum, if indeed it is paid at all. By imposing economic sanctions for absence, employers stabilise the workforce by restricting workers' freedom of movement. This is also achieved by factories withholding workers' wages for periods of between three and twelve months which prevents them from seeking alternative employment. Workers continue to work for the same factory under the threat that they will lose the wages owed altogether if they cease employment.

Employers' failure to regularly pay workers' monthly wages was condemned in the early-twentieth-century by The Kamgar Hitwardhak, a forerunner of a Bombay trade union. In 1917 it wrote to the Secretary of State highlighting the plight of workers who 'are forced to accept this coercion rather than lose their slender earnings'.[82] Two differences, however, can be seen between the two periods with respect to this practice: firstly, the period over which wages are withheld has increased in the present-day and secondly, rather than extended during recruitment, workers in the twentieth-century sought advances as a means to endure delays in wage payments. The 1921 census reported that wages were typically delayed by six weeks, forcing workers to obtain advances from *jobbers* against the security of their earned wages at a rate of 37.5% interest.[83] The issue was again

[80] SOMO found that although displayed in recruitment advertisements and verbally agreed by brokers, the promise of lump sum was not included in any document presented as workers' employment contract. Martje Theuws, and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 45.
[81] Solidaridad and Fair Labour Association, *Understanding the Characteristics of the Sumangali Scheme*, 2012: 18.
[82] S. D. Punekar and R. Varickayil, *Labour Movement In India: Documents*, 1990: 64.
[83] Government of India, "Occupation", *Census of India, Volume I*, 1921: 274.

taken up by the 1931 Commission on Labour which recommended that mills transferred to a system of weekly wage payments to prevent the need for workers to borrow from intermediaries.[84] While the practice of withholding wages shows continuity, its coercive effect has changed. In the early-twentieth-century, unpaid wages compelled workers to become indebted; in the twenty-first-century it serves to bind workers to the factory site as girls are unable to pay for travel to return to their families if leave is granted. Workers' autonomy is greatly decreased in both periods, although today it is less detrimental to workers' economic position.

Tom Brass, a theorist on unfree labour, argues that causing workers' indebtedness through withheld wages is a particularly coercive employment strategy because it forces workers to *involuntarily* accept debt.[85] This implies that workers who assumed debt for withheld wages in the early-twentieth-century were subject to greater coercion than families who accept advances under the Sumangali Scheme. Yet determining the coerciveness of debts on the basis of workers' choice is problematic for two reasons: firstly, it assumes that voluntarily indebted workers today choose to exit a free labour market, rather than recognising the effect of poverty in compelling workers' to accept a *succession* of bonded labour relations. Secondly, the presumption of choice overlooks the likelihood that workers enter bonded labour relations because of their inability to access other forms of credit.[86] Ultimately, the effect of debt in both periods serves to greatly reduce workers' autonomy.

In addition to economic benefits, the Sumangali Scheme includes false promises of social and welfare provision. The prospect of pursuing education is a major recruitment incentive for girls who seek education but whose families are unable to support them after the age of fourteen when free state schooling ends. Workers are promised an eight-hour working day, after which they have access to study facilities and training courses such as computer and tailoring classes free of charge.[87] Yet numerous workers' testimonials report that nothing was done by factories to support their education, despite having the assurance of brokers that it would.[88] This is consistent with the regularly documented working days in excess of twelve hours which would make the continuation of education unviable.

Education also formed part of workforces' social and welfare provision in the early-twentieth-century, although the success of its implementation differed between factories. At the Buckingham and Carnatic Mill in Madras, one of the largest in India, workers were given access to theatre groups,

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[84] J. R. Clynes, *Royal Commission on Labour in India*, 1931: 241.

[85] Tom Brass makes a distinction between involuntary and voluntary debt. Voluntary debt is typically used for non-recurrent expenditures such as medical treatment or life-rituals. Brass argues that this is the least coercive form of debt because workers choose to accept it. *Towards a Comparative Political Economy of Unfree Labour: Case Studies and Debates*. London: Frank Class Publishers, 1999: 11–12.

[86] Garance Genicot offers a compelling argument that bonded labour relations persist because workers are often only able to access credit by taking out debt with employers or brokers since their labour power is their only means to guarantee repayment. "Bonded Labor and Serfdom: A Paradox of Voluntary Choice." *Journal of Development Economics* 67, (2002): 383–405. See footnote 251 for more detail.

[87] SOMO uncovered a recruitment advertisement circulated in 2014 for a factory in Dindigual which stated that 'the management support half of the payment of those who want to learn 10th and 12th grade, BA, BCom, [and] MA graduation through postal'. Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 31. The recruitment advertisement provided by SAVE, see appendix 9.3, promises that 'if any women wants to study, it will be arranged with specialised [*sic*] reduced cost'.

[88] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 39.

orchestras, sports teams and a reading room. It also established an onsite factory school in 1906 to educate workers' children which, within a decade, supplied labour to the factory. This suggests that the *jobber* exerted less influence in the recruitment process than was typical at other factory sites. It also suggests a particularly low rate of labour turnover as the industrial workforce was composed of multiple generations of settled families. A major reason for this was the high degree of social and welfare provision, which included housing, pension and insurance schemes. While this was advantageous for the worker, providing education and welfare also benefited the employer as a strategy to increase workers' productivity. Decent housing fostered a robust workforce and minimising labour turnover through employment benefits increased workers' skill acquisition. In turn, a more efficient workforce increased the mill's productivity.[89] As such, offering social and welfare provision was a means by which factories stabilised the workforce to increase output.

The Buckingham and Carnatic Mill, however, appears to be an exception in early-twentieth-century factory education according to the 1908 Factory Labour Commission. It reported that the majority of mills provided nominal education for the purpose of keeping children at the factory site, providing *jobbers* with a reserve workforce which they could utilise according to production needs. Since the Factory Acts prohibited children from working in excess of six hours, factory schools served as a guise to legitimately retain children whilst extracting the most from their labour. The Commission concluded that factory schools were holding-houses for casual labour, and recommended that they were closed and relocated under charitable management outside factory compounds.[90] As such, the purpose of workforce education in the early-twentieth-century differed between factories, and was mainly used as a tactic to evade official employment regulation.

In the same way, factories which operate the Sumangali Scheme vindicate the recruitment of girls with an educational standard below the legal requirement by professing that education is continued at the factory. In so doing, factories shirk their responsibility to ensure that brokers obtain certification of workers' education during the recruitment process.[91] Despite the vast educational advances arising from Indian development, education at factories is presented as a substitute for state education to workers from the lowest socioeconomic groups. This suggests that an underlying continuity between the early-twentieth-century and the present is that factories exploit the poverty of its workforce with the promise of education for whom it would otherwise be unattainable. The purpose of this false promise, however, appears to operate differently between the two periods; whereas early-twentieth-century factory schools were a means to bind labour to the production site, today, education is used as an incentive to attract labour to the production site.

The false promise of comfortable and well provisioned accommodation is another incentive offered during recruitment. Workers are assured of regular, quality meals, decent living conditions, entertainment and leisure activities, medical facilities and transport services to enable visits to family.

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[89] The 1908 Factory Labour Commission and 1931 Commission on Labour hailed the Buckingham and Carnatic Mill as a model employer because of the benefits it provided to workers. Eamon Murphy is more sceptical of the company's altruistic motives, arguing that social and welfare provision was a vicarious method to discipline the workforce. *Unions in Conflict*, 1981: 14.
[90] William T. Morison, *Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission, Volume I*, 1908: 54.
[91] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 32.

Factory hostels often offer workers the prospect of improving their living conditions, and reduces the household cost of them living at home. It is therefore a compelling motivation for recruitment, yet in reality workers do not receive the living conditions promised. Every Child uncovered that 88% had no bed or mat to sleep on and 65% went without basic medical facilities.[92] The control over workers extends to supervision of private telephone calls which prevents girls from divulging the reality of their living situation to parents.[93] Workers' freedom of movement is profoundly curtailed under the Sumangali Scheme. Factory sites are heavily guarded with high barbed walls and prominent surveillance which is justified by employers as complying with the wishes of parents who fear that girls will have opportunity to elope or conduct unsuitable liaisons that jeopardise their future marriage prospects. Yet the disproportionateness of these restrictions are exemplified by a Dalit community which SOMO found petitioning outside a factory for the release of their daughters upon discovering that they were forcibly locked in their hostel dormitories.[94]

By restricting workers' freedom of movement, factories are able to maintain optimal control of the workforce. The majority of factories release workers to the local market under mandatory supervision every month. Between these excursions, workers are completely reliant on the factory for their food, clothing and toiletry needs. This lack of independence was highlighted in testimonies collected by Every Child, in which girls spoke of their humiliation upon being given inadequate sanitary provision during menstruation.[95] At approximately one-quarter of the factories, girls remain within the factory compound throughout their employment period since shopping amenities are provided onsite with goods sold at prices higher than market conditions.[96] The practice of not giving workers' purchasing choice was commonly used at British cotton mills during the Industrial Revolution under the 'truck system', which forced workers to purchase goods at prices set by their employer.[97] The system was outlawed in the late-nineteenth-century. Today, factory shops at Indian mills are managed by contracted companies who pay a licence fee to the employer to operate on the site. In both periods the effect of restricting workers' economic independence was a coercive strategy to depreciate their take-home wages.

Imposing physical restrictions on workers' movements was atypical at textile factories during the twentieth-century which suggests that workers' autonomy has substantially decreased under the Sumangali Scheme. It is striking that Sumangali workers are referred to as 'camp coolies', a term evocative of indentured labourers who worked on colonial plantations during British rule. The rarity of physically binding labour to production sites during this period required its enforcement under the Criminal Tribes Act, a punitive measure introduced in the late-nineteenth-century to reform itinerant

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[92] Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 66.
[93] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Maid in India*, 2012: 24.
[94] The girls were working two or three years in excess of the three-year employment period. The parents' campaign to release their daughters has been unsuccessful to date. See appendix 9.1, Martje Theuws and Jennifer Beckwith, Telephone Interview, 15 April 2015.
[95] Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 66 and 69.
[96] See appendix 9.2, A. Viyakula Mary and Jennifer Beckwith, Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.
[97] See George W. Hilton, *The Truck System Including a History of the British Truck Act's 1465-1960*. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1960.

labourers. The Act allowed factories to recruit labour from communities declared 'habitually criminal', confine them to the factory site (with threat of imprisonment if breached) and utilise their labour.[98] In Madras during the early-twentieth-century women were employed by the Indian Leaf Tobacco Company to weave baskets and mats. In 1913 the company appealed to the Madras Presidency for exception from the Factory Acts in order to impose a twenty-hour working day, which, the management argued, produced a 'less troublesome' and 'more pliable' workforce.[99] Within textiles, the Criminal Tribes Act was implemented at the Muir Cotton Mills in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh until its repeal after Independence.[100] The Act's significance was that it legalised the forcible binding of impoverished, low-caste and marginalised communities who were paid substantially less than the wages of regular workers. Criminal tribes therefore represented a cheap source of factory labour whose capacity to work could be vigorously exploited since they received no formal employment protection. That workers were historically deemed *criminal* in order for it to be permissible to restrict their freedom of movement demonstrates the coerciveness of the Sumangali Scheme which, albeit for a fixed duration, has a similar affect of severely curtailing workers' autonomy. Underlying this is a deeper continuity regarding the type of labour which factories use to physically bind workers, who continue to be drawn from the most vulnerable sources of labour as a means to lower their cost.

Women recruited under the Sumangali Scheme are a particularly cheap source of labour because they are hired as apprentices. This means that factories are not obligated to pay the legal minimum wage given to regular workers. The particularity of the Sumangali Scheme to Tamil Nadu may be explained by an exemption in the state's law which allows the period of apprenticeship to last three years whereas it is restricted to one-year across the rest of India.[101] SOMO's research shows that workers receive 38% less in take-home wages than the legal minimum, even with full payment of the lump sum and no penalty work days added to the employment period. In total, apprentices receive even less than regular workers since factories are also not obligated to give statutory employment benefits such as pension, insurance or maternity provision. Every Child found that only 12% of the workers it sampled received their employer's contribution to the Employee Provident Fund, and just 2% to the Employee State Insurance Scheme.[102] SOMO's research highlighted workers' lack of

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[98] The Criminal Tribes Act deemed individuals 'habitually criminal' who lived within an itinerant community officially declared criminal. As such, criminal status was conferred upon individuals at birth and used as a legal method to criminalise specific race communities. See Meena Radhakrishna, *Dishonoured by History: "Criminal Tribes" and British Colonial Policy*. Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 2001.

[99] Meena Radhakrishna, "Colonial Construction of a 'Criminal Tribe': The Itinerant Trading Communities of the Madras Presidency." In *Mapping Histories: Essays Presented to Ravinder* Kumar, edited by Neera Chandhoke, 126–60. London: Anthem Press, 2000: 146.

[100] Chitra Joshi, *Lost Worlds: Indian Labour and Its Forgotten Histories*. London: Permanent Black, 2003: 75.

[101] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Captured by Cotton*, 2011: 12.

[102] It is a statutory requirement for employers in the formal sector to provide the Employee Provident Fund. It enables employees to save a small percentage of their monthly wage, which is topped-up by employers, to be used in cases of workers who are temporarily or permanently unable to work, or in cases of retirement. The Employee Insurance Scheme covers workers' medical expenses for work-related accidents and maternity benefits for female employees. Employers contribute approximately 4% of workers' wages to both funds. Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 58.

The physical demands of labour and operation of heavy machinery increases the importance of insurance coverage for workers employed in textile factories. While the Anthology of Sumangali Cases compiled by Tirppur People's Forum includes workers' especially disturbing experiences, it is striking that two-thirds of those documented include cases in which girls claimed, and were denied, expenses for medical treatment. In one-fifth

information regarding their social security entitlements, the majority of whom thought that the lump sum was an accumulation of state contributions.[103] This suggests that factories exploit the predominantly illiterate and uninformed position of female workers to deliberately use misinformation to reduce their bargaining position.

Factories' preference for Dalit women is also a strategy to cheapen the cost of the workforce since their families consistently receive less compensation in cases of workplace accident or death compared with the amount given to Other Backward Castes.[104] This suggests that factories exploit workers from the lowest socioeconomic groups in order to lower the cost of labour. The same effect is achieved through factories exclusively recruiting pre-marital women since it allows employers to avoid the cost of maternity benefits altogether.[105] In one case uncovered by Solidaridad, a worker who married after being employed for three years and three months was obligated to work an additional six months on account of nine-days absenteeism during her employment period. She returned to complete the six months after the marriage only for the factory to refuse her reinstatement stating that it was 'no longer interested in employing her'.[106] The worker did not receive her lump sum nor additional wages for the three extra months worked. While this single piece of anecdotal evidence does not prove that women likely to claim maternity benefit are systematically dismissed, it suggests that employers diminish their responsibility to support the cost of female's reproductive labour by lowering the age at which workers are recruited.

Decline in the age of female workers is the crucial dynamic underpinning the feminisation of labour in the Indian textile industry. Throughout the late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century the workforce was predominantly composed of married or widowed women. The 1890 Indian Factory Commission sampled labour from Bombay, Ahmedabad, Kanpur and Calcutta and found that fewer than one in ten female workers were unmarried.[107] Since the age of marriage has increased over the past century, age is a better indicator to assess demographic change in the female workforce. A study of Bombay cotton mills in the late-1950s found that the average age of female workers was 46 years.[108] This compares with an average age range of 16-25 in Tamil Nadu today, which has significantly decreased as a result of the Sumangali Scheme since 60% of girls who participate start working between the ages of fifteen and eighteen.[109] Workers' youth makes them easier to discipline, particularly since the majority live outside of their family support network. Workforce control is also predicated on the expectation that women provide a compliant and docile workforce which is more

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of cases, women lost their fingers due to insufficient training or protective equipment in operating the machines; and in 10% of cases women's breathing ailments resulted in death. Insurance was not given to any of the workers documented, nor to their families. TPF, "Anthology of Sumangali Case-Studies 2010-2011", 2011.

[103] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 45.

[104] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Captured by Cotton*, 2011: 10.

[105] Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 37. This was also highlighted in conversation with SOMO, see appendix 9.1, Martje Theuws and Jennifer Beckwith, Telephone Interview, 15 April 2015.

[106] Solidaridad and Fair Labour Association, *Understanding the Characteristics of the Sumangali Scheme*, 2012: 14.

[107] Baniprasanna Misra, "Factory Labour during the Early Years of Industrialization",1975: 210.

[108] G. K. Thakker, *Labour Problems of Textile Industry: A Study of the Labour Problems of the Cotton Mill Industry in Bombay*. Bombay: Vora & Co. Publishers, 1962: 12.

[109] FIDH, *Behind the Showroom*, 2012: 20. See also appendix 9.2, A. Viyakula Mary and Jennifer Beckwith, Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.

likely to show deference towards male management.[110] As the financial director at one of the factories SOMO investigated candidly explained, 'with girls it is easier to maintain discipline'.[111]

Factories' ability to maintain control over a young female workforce is a major economic benefit of the Sumangali Scheme for employers. The predominance of workers in supervised onsite hostel accommodation enables factories to impose overtime and nightshifts, wholly in breach of the employment terms falsely promised by brokers during recruitment, and mitigates absenteeism and lateness. The control of workers at factory sites also limits workforce unionisation, which is particularly stigmatised among female employees. The current proportion of Indian workers affiliated with trade unions is 4%, a substantial decline from unionisation in 1938 when one-third of the total factory workforce participated.[112] This included a high degree of female involvement in trade union activity, with strike records from Coimbatore, Madras during 1937 showing that women participated at every demonstration. For strikes in which a gender breakdown is given, women composed, on average, half of the agitators and in one case, even outnumbered the men.[113]

While this evidence cannot be extrapolated across India, it is in stark contrast to the position of female workers interviewed by SOMO, the majority of whom thought that women were excluded from trade union participation. When asked if they would consider involvement, all of the workers feared managerial punishment or dismissal and deemed it impossible because of their restricted movement outside the compound.[114] High female participation in trade unions during the twentieth-century suggests that gender cannot be the sole explanation for low unionisation today. Crucially, the recruitment of pre-marital girls contributes to the short-term nature of employment since it is expected that women will relocate with their husbands after marriage, or cease employment altogether.[115] This creates a high labour turnover which is exacerbated by girls' recruitment on fixed-term apprenticeship contracts. The short-term and insecure nature of employment reduces workers' stake in the textile industry and willingness to pursue long-term employment interests through collective action. This is further discussed in chapter four.

Women's short-term apprenticeship employment under the Sumangali Scheme deviates from the employment trajectory that operated in Tamil Nadu's cotton mills during the twentieth-century. Workers were typically recruited as apprentices for six months, seasonal workers for one-year and workers who substituted regular workers, known as *badlis*, for three years, before gaining permanent employment.[116] The limited duration of employment under the Sumangali Scheme prevents women

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[110] Amarjit Kaur, "Economic Globalisation, Trade Liberalisation and Labour Intensive Export Manufactures", 2004: 57.
[111] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Captured by Cotton*, 2011: 8.
[112] FWF, *India Country Study*, 2012: 13. The 4% rate of union participation across India is consistent with the level of unionisation in Tamil Nadu which SAVE estimates at between 3% and 4%. See appendix 9.2, A. Viyakula Mary and Jennifer Beckwith, Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.
[113] Eamon Murphy, *Unions in Conflict*, 1981: 219.
[114] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 53.
[115] SAVE highlighted that pre-marital women represent a short-term, casual source of labour because of an implicit social expectation that women's employment depends upon their husband's work. See appendix 9.2, A. Viyakula Mary and Jennifer Beckwith, Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.
[116] Every Child and Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum, *A Study to Understand the Situation of Arunthathiyar Girls*, 2010: 37.

from developing industry-specific skills. This is exacerbated by the organisation of labour, whereby factories implement a system of rotating employment which assigns women to each department for between two and three months. The temporary nature of their work keeps women in an unskilled position by hindering the acquisition of specialism in particular stages of the production process. This contrasts with the organisation of labour in the early-twentieth-century when women dominated specific sectors. During this period, 95% of those employed in the winding and reeling departments in Bombay's cotton mills were women,[117] and the 1911 census reported that across India 657 women were employed as spinners per 1,000 men.[118] Accordingly, women's proficiency in specific sectors meant that employment was determined by expertise to a greater extent than is demanded today. This is supported by evidence presented to the 1908 Indian Factory Labour Commission in which the manager of Coimbatore Spinning and Weaving Company Mills described filling employment positions through the specific recruitment of 'carders', 'winders', or 'spinners'.[119]

That said, as preparatory processes in textile production, these positions were categorised as unskilled. Skilled roles included mechanical positions and jobs in the warping and weaving process, of which women constituted just one in twelve workers in 1921.[120] The employment of children as carders, which involved separating raw cotton fibres to produce yarn, and winders, who fed yarn into machines which produced warps for weaving, suggests that the roles were unskilled. Yet it was also profitable for factories to categorise these roles as unskilled because workers were paid on time-rate rather than piece-rate, which typically applied to skilled positions. This meant that unskilled roles were subject to gendered wage differentials, whereas skilled occupations gave women the same earning potential as men since remuneration was based on workers' output. Among unskilled workers, or *mazdoors*, men received Rs.50 per month in 1954 compared with women who received Rs.38 for performing the same task.[121] By recruiting a high proportion of women in unskilled roles, employers lowered the cost of labour by using cheaper workers to complete the same function. It also prevented women from earning the same as men which kept females in a lower labour position and reinforced their employment in unskilled occupations.

The short-term apprenticeship status of women under the Sumangali Scheme has intensified the process of deskilling female labour. This can be demonstrated through changes in the gender composition of factories' managerial positions. In the twentieth-century it was customary for women with over twenty years experience in the industry to be promoted to *naikins*, a position which was equivalent to male *jobbers*.[122] The 1931 census gives a gender breakdown of cotton mill owners, managers and supervisors which shows that 208 women occupied such positions alongside 1,608 men, representing 11.5% of the total.[123] While recent censuses do not provide an equivalent breakdown, NGO reports consistently suggest that a similar gender composition of managerial positions is not evident within the contemporary industry. Instead, a clear gender division exists

[117] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 222.
[118] The 1921 census states that 642 women were employed in spinning per 1,000 men, a decline from 657 in the preceding decade. Government of India, "Occupation", *Census of India, Volume I*, 1921: 274.
[119] William T. Morison, *Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission, Volume II*, 1908: 321.
[120] Government of India, "Occupation", *Census of India, Volume I*, 1921: 268.
[121] S. D. Mehta, *The Cotton Mills of India*, 1954: 265.
[122] Janet Harvey Kelman, *Labour in India*, 1923: 109.
[123] Government of India, "Occupation." *Census of India, Volume I*, 1931: 375.

between young female workers and male managerial staff.[124] This, alongside the absence of protection from an older female workforce, has contributed to an increase in reports of sexual and physical abuse among Sumangali Scheme workers.[125]

The predominance of women in unskilled employment is consistent with the position of female labour in Tamil Nadu's power-loom industry. This suggests that a wider process of labour feminisation has occurred in South India which cannot wholly be attributed to the Sumangali Scheme.[126] A study of Komarapalayam in 2000, a town in the north of the state, showed that no women held managerial or technical positions, and just 9% of weavers were female. 86% of women worked as winders alongside a handful of girls, for whom the only requirement was that they were tall enough to load hanks of yarn into the winding machine.[127] As well as a predominance of gender stereotypes surrounding female incomprehension of technical machines (including amongst the women themselves), the major inhibitor to female participation in skilled weaving roles was the organisation of production. This demanded that power-looms were continuously operated for twelve hours per day which restricted women who combined wage-labour with domestic roles. As such, the overwhelming majority of the female weavers were childless.[128] This suggests that while the declining age of female recruitment under the Sumangali Scheme increases workers' vulnerability to coercion, the continued use of women as a cheap source of labour is underpinned by a fundamental gender inequality: women's need to combine wage-labour with domestic responsibilities perpetuates their recruitment in unskilled roles which keeps females in low-wage, low-status positions within the labour force. This is discussed in chapter six.

To conclude, women's high employment in the textile industry relative to their total labour force participation is a long-term trend between the turn of the twentieth-century and today. Similarly low rates of female employment in the North in the two periods suggests that labour feminisation is primarily the result of substantial increase in female employment in South India. In Tamil Nadu women represent 84% of the workforce, while in the Northern States 80% of textile workers are male.[129] This shows that there is significant regional variation in the gender composition of textile workers, with labour feminisation in South India largely a result of the Sumangali Scheme. The position of South Indian women is generally considered preferable to Northern women because of their greater employment opportunities.[130] This study highlights that such assumptions should be qualified since the position of women within labour relationships suggests that the *quality* of female employment opportunities does not necessarily improve their living and working conditions.

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[124] A particularly poignant account was given by Martje Theuws from SOMO of her experience of factory visits where she witnessed male supervisors using their dominant physical presence to intimidate female workers who were forced to remain seated behind their workbenches during inspections and when being reprimanded. See appendix 9.1, Martje Theuws and Jennifer Beckwith, Telephone Interview, 15 April 2015

[125] TPF, "Anthology of Sumangali Case-Studies 2010-2011", 2011: 21 and 25.

[126] Other factors which have affected labour feminisation in South India are discussed in chapter four. These include the casualisation of female labour through increase in short-term and subcontracted labour, see footnotes 179 and 183 in particular.

[127] Geert De Neve, *The Everyday Politics of Labour*, 2005: 97.

[128] *Ibid*., 2005: 99.

[129] See footnote 56. FWF, *India Country Study*, 2012: 12.

[130] Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, *An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions*. London: Penguin Group, 2013: 309.

The major change between female employment at the turn of the twentieth-century and today is the lower age of recruitment. The recruitment of pre-marital females on apprenticeship contracts under the Sumangali Scheme absolves employers from paying the wages of regular workers or statutory benefits including maternity leave. These employment terms serve to cheapen the cost of female labour. The predominance of women in unskilled roles and gendered wage differentials are long-term trends in female employment which exploit women as a cheap source of labour. Yet this process appears to have intensified under the Scheme's exclusive recruitment of young, low-caste and uneducated females because it exploits their vulnerability to accept the false promises offered by brokers. Although the impoverished and typically indebted position of workers suggests that employment opportunities are beneficial, the systematic deception of female labour is a coercive strategy since it removes workers' autonomy when entering the labour relationship. In not fulfilling these promises factories lower the cost of labour by binding workers to the production site whilst minimally expending on their living conditions and retaining their lump sums. The deceptive element of recruitment in combination with controlled hostel accommodation and economic sanctions imposed for absences, serves to greatly restrict workers' freedom of movement. This is the most striking change in women's labour position between the twentieth-century and today. The characteristics of poverty, debt and unskilled employment which reduced the autonomy of female labour in the twentieth-century are similarly exploited today. The addition of deception and physical restrictions on workers' mobility suggests that the Sumangali Scheme has worsened the position of female labour.

4. CASUALISATION

The textile industry represents 17.6% of informal employment in India.[131] This comprises workers without protection from employment legislation in both the formal and informal sector.[132] In the formal sector, informal workers are defined as casual labour; employees without entitlement to statutory employment benefits as a result of employment on fixed-term contracts as apprentices or subcontracted labour. The process of labour casualisation increases the proportion of these types of workers. In 2007, casual labour represented 47% of the total workforce in India's formal textile industry.[133] The development literature attributes labour casualisation to late-twentieth-century globalisation.[134] Yet without long-term perspective, the implication that factory textile production was accordingly formal and regulated in the early-twentieth-century is highly misleading.

Instead, the textile industry was organised by a dual labour market in which a core of permanent employees were supplemented by a periphery of casual labour. These workers constituted about 20% of the workforce throughout the twentieth-century.[135] The erosion of the dual labour market gives a compelling explanation for the increase of casual workers employed today. While casual workers were limited to an informal subsection of the workforce in the twentieth-century, current recruitment strategies increasingly replace permanent employees with casual workers in order to lower the cost of labour. As such, this chapter gives support to the argument of increasing labour casualisation, whilst seeking to add qualification by highlighting that casual workers were also integral to the textile labour market in the early-twentieth-century. The chapter discusses the dual labour market in the twentieth-century before investigating three strategies adopted by factories today to increase the proportion of casually employed workers; apprenticeship contracts, workers' early dismissal and subcontracted labour. In so doing, it demonstrates that while employment law has strengthened over the past century, factories pursue casualisation by evading formal regulations. The effect of short-term employment has weakened the position of labour by dissolving the patronage relations which existed between workers and *jobbers* and substantially increased job insecurity.

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[131] Jessica Sincavage, Carl Haub and O. P. Sharma, "Labor Costs in India's Organized Manufacturing Sector." *Monthly Labor Review* 133, no. 5 (May 2010): 5.

[132] Government of India, *Report on Conditions of Work*, 2007: 4.
The Indian Government estimates that informal employment across all occupational sectors in the informal sector represents 86% of Indian workers. This increases to a total of 92% of the workforce in informal employment when both the informal *and* formal sector are combined. *Ibid*., 2007: 3.

[133] This is consistent with a 2014 study of the formal textile industry in Delhi which found that 51% of the workforce were casually employed, 73% by a broker. Only 2% of workers had a labour contract and the majority were employed on a short-term basis: 60% of the workforce were employed for less than one year, and of those recruited by a broker, 60% were employed for less than six months. Alessandra Mezzandri and Ravi Srivastava, "Surveying Informalised Labour Conditions in India's Organised Garment Sector", 2014: 2.

[134] Dae-oup Chang characterises labour casualisation in the formal sector as the 'informalisation of the formal'. Drawing evidence from across Asia's manufacturing industries, Chang argues that factory wage-labour has been replaced by casual labour through globalised manufacturing. These workers are employed in the formal sector, but the precariousness of their employment position and their lack of employment benefits makes them *de facto* informal labour. "Informalising Labour in Asia's Global Factory", 2009: 170.

[135] D. Mazumdar, "Labour Supply in Early Industrialization: The Case of the Bombay Textile Industry." *The Economic History Review* 26, no. 3 (January 1973): 491.

Casual workers in the dual labour market were organised by the *badli* system; the term *badli* means substitute worker. The system developed in the late-nineteenth-century to supply casual labour to factories and persisted throughout the twentieth-century despite the introduction of decasualisation strategies in the 1930s and state intervention in the 1950s.[136] The *badli* system operated on a daily basis as men and women presented themselves at factory gates at the beginning of each shift in order to offer their labour as replacements for absent workers. *Badlis* were employed by *jobbers* according to that day's vacancies. The highly precarious nature of their employment made *badlis* highly dependent upon the *jobber's* favour to secure work. In return, *jobbers* extracted bribes or other favours from *badlis* with the threat of giving employment to the most acquiescent workers. A study from 1923 estimated that bribes enabled *jobbers* to inflate their income by four or five times their basic wage-rate.[137] *Badlis* also accepted other conditions such as 'violence-bargains' to participate in *jobbers'* gangs, provided free labour to work *jobbers'* land, or offered their daughters to perform sexual favours as *jobbers* were often involved in sideline prostitution services.[138]

Until 1930 *badlis* were not listed on factories' employment registers, so obtaining accurate figures of the number employed during the early-twentieth-century is problematic. Similarly, indentifying who *badlis* were is challenging since they evade precise historical record. This typically characterises *badlis* as unskilled, migrant, agricultural labourers.[139] Yet to suggest that all unskilled workers were *badlis* is to grossly oversimplify the complexities of the dual labour market. The 1931 national census reported that alongside 5,000,000 workers in organised industrial labour, a further 3,500,000 labourers daily attended registered factories.[140] Since textiles constituted approximately 25% of industry, of which cotton represented about half, it is reasonable to estimate that approximately 437,500 labourers were employed as *badlis* in cotton mills during the early-twentieth-century.[141] By contrast, the 1921 census posits that the number of unskilled workers in India's cotton mills was 1,829,000.[142] While there is a ten year discrepancy between these figures, the number of unskilled workers would have vastly exceeded the estimation of *badli* workers in both decades. This shows that casual labour was not the default employment status of unskilled workers; in other words, employment in unskilled work did not preclude labourers the security of permanent contract in the early-twentieth-century.

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[136] Ralph C. James, "Labor Problem in Indian Manufacturing." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 74, no. 1 (1960): 107.

[137] In one case from Bombay, perquisites were found to account for Rs.200 or Rs.300 per month in addition to the *jobber's* Rs.50 monthly wage. Janet Harvey Kelman, *Labour in India*, 1923: 109.

[138] *Jobbers* are often presented as occupying an unscrupulous position in society, for example, owning liquor stores, operating credit and pawning services and organising workers' fights at gymkhanas. See Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 197; Subho Basu, *Does Class Matter?*, 2004: 54; Ralph C. James, "Labor Problem in Indian Manufacturing", 1960: 102; Eamon Murphy, *Unions in Conflict*, 1981: 35.

[139] William T. Morison, *Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission, Volume I*, 1908: 22; Government of India, "Occupation." *Census of India, Volume I*, 1921: 275 and J. R. Clynes, *Royal Commission on Labour in India*, 1931: 11–3.

[140] Government of India, "Occupation." *Census of India, Volume I*, 1931: 285.

[141] This concurs with Ralph C. James' estimation that at least 400,000 workers were *badlis* in the mid-twentieth-century. "Labor Problem in Indian Manufacturing", 1960: 102.

[142] Government of India, "Occupation", *Census of India, Volume I*, 1921: 267.

The *badli* system established a large pool of casual reserve labour which was defended by Mill Owners' Associations as necessary to accommodate high labour absenteeism within the industry. To avoid slumps in production, it was economic to maintain a flexible reserve of labour to fill shortages in the workforce. This explanation was heavily bound within colonial presumptions of the essentially migrant and agrarian character of India's industrial workforce which typified workers as frequently absconding back to their villages. Yet the investigation of workers' surveys from early-twentieth-century Factory Commissions suggests that the retention of strong agricultural links among the workforce has been exaggerated.[143] Approximately half of the permanent workforce maintained rural connections with their place of origin.[144] Among these workers, annual periods of absence were usually between ten and fifteen days taken during the harvest or festival season in April and November. This is consistent with an average rate of absenteeism of between 10% and 12% during the 1920s across India's textile factories.[145]

Over the same decade, the proportion of *badlis* employed exceeded 20% which suggests that the rate of absenteeism was substantially less than the percentage of casual workers recruited: more casual workers were employed than were needed to fill the short-term vacancies of absent permanent workers.[146] Indeed, the employment of *badlis* was often rarely short-term; the 1931 Commission on Labour reported that a sizable portion subsisted as *badlis* for the majority of their working lives.[147] Whilst the *badli* system no longer operates in cotton textile production, a study of Calcutta's jute industry in the late-1990s found that it was not uncommon for workers to be employed as *badlis* for in excess of thirty years.[148] This undermines the argument that the *badli* system was the most effective means of providing short-term employment and rather suggests that it legitimised keeping workers in a precarious employment position.

The average *badli* earned 35% less than permanent employees, therefore maintaining casual workers at approximately one-fifth of the workforce lowered the cost of the labour.[149] Employers were prevented from completely substituting permanent employees with casual labour since the efficiency of casual workers was usually lower. However the wage differential between casual and permanent workers made it profitable to maintain a casual reserve workforce, particularly during periods when permanent labour was scarce, since the wage increase needed to attract permanent workers was probably greater than the wage differential between permanent and casual labour.[150] Conversely,

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[143] For particularly compelling arguments that the agrarian character of India's industrial workforce has been overemphasised see Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002; Ranajit Das Gupta, "Factory Labour in Eastern India", 1976; Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965.

[144] See footnote 18.

[145] Ten to fifteen days absenteeism over a sixty-day period constitutes a total workforce absence of between 16% and 25%. Applied to approximately half of the workforce, absenteeism during April and November would range between 8% and 12.5%. A yearly average of between 10% and 12% absenteeism is therefore reasonable.

[146] D. Mazumdar, "Labour Supply in Early Industrialization", 1973: 491.

[147] J. R. Clynes, *Royal Commission on Labour in India*, 1931: 13.

[148] Arjan De Haan, "The Badli System in Industrial Labour Recruitment: Managers' and Workers' Strategies in Calcutta's Jute Industry." In Jonathan Parry, Jan Breman, and Karin Kapadia, eds. *The Worlds of Indian Industrial Labour*. 271–301, Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999: 290.

[149] Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965: 150.

[150] D. Mazumdar, "Labour Supply in Early Industrialization", 1973: 492.

during periods of high permanent employment, the wage-rate of *badlis* was lowered to reduce the labour supply. This prevented decline in the wages of permanent workers, a strategy which *jobbers* promoted in the early-twentieth-century to stabilise the workforce.[151] In this instance, the low wage position of *badlis* strengthened permanent workers' employment security and, in maintaining the loyalty of permanent employees, the *jobber* reinforced his control.

The prime characteristics of the dual labour market were a clear distinction between *badli* and permanent workers, and a vast discrepancy in their level of employment security. The requisite for casual workers to seek daily reemployment under the *badli* system made workers highly vulnerable to *jobbers'* coercion who greatly profited from their role in directing recruitment. It was in an attempt to diminish *jobbers'* stranglehold on recruitment that strategies for labour decasualisation were introduced. Decasualisation is important to discuss because its ultimate failure shows the persistence of *jobbers* in recruitment and the centrality of casual labour in the textile industry throughout the twentieth-century. It was initiated by the Mill Owners' Associations through the '*Badli* Control System' in the 1930s and again with state support through the 'Decasualisation Scheme' in the 1950s. The timing related to wider labour unrest and trade union activity which Mill Owners and the state sought to mitigate by imposing formal labour recruitment. This also provided an opportunity to quash the outmoded *jobber* system which Mill Owners had opposed throughout the preceding century.[152] Decasualisation strategies imposed quotas on the number of permanent and casual workers in industrial enterprises, replaced the *jobber* with labour officers in recruitment and introduced rights for casual workers, including guaranteeing a minimum of 220 working days per year and employer's contribution to the Employee Provident Fund. Instead of presenting themselves at multiple factory gates, workers had to register with one factory and employment was only given among this group. To coordinate the process, a Labour Bureau was established in each district.

However, short-term production and labour demands meant that workers who turned up at factory gates were still more valuable than those officially registered.[153] Despite repeated intervention from the Bombay Mill Owners' Association (BMOA), just 28 out of 68 cotton mills in the city had appointed a labour officer by 1940.[154] The formal system was not sufficiently flexible to supply labour according to immediate production needs, particularly during the harvest and festival seasons when

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A wage decrease of 35% for *badlis* relative to permanent employees should be considered against the high elasticity of permanent millworkers' wages, particularly due to the high demand for textiles during the war. Between 1914–1921, cotton mill wages increased by 87% in Bombay and by 122% in Ahmedabad. Even after normal demand resumed and wages declined, there was considerable variation in wage-rates between the highly unionised cities of Bombay and Ahmedabad, and cities such as Sholapur and Baroda with low workforce unionisation. In 1929, the wages of permanent workers in Sholapur were two-thirds less than in Bombay. Therefore, it was probably particularly profitable to hire casual labour in Bombay, for example, since permanent employees were expensive. Bishnupriya Gupta, "Wages, Unions, and Labour Productivity : Evidence from Indian Cotton Mills." *Economic History Review* 64, no. 1 (2011): 16 and 35.

[151] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "The Decline and Fall of the Jobber System", 2008: 153.

[152] For the relationship between *jobbers* and trade unions see Dick Kooiman, "Jobbers and the Emergence of Trade Unions in Bombay City." *International Review of Social History* 22, no. 3 (1977): 313–28. In particular, pages 318–21 for a discussion of decasualisation strategies. See also Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "The Decline and Fall of the Jobber System", 2008: 207 onwards.

[153] Jan Breman, *The Making and Unmaking of an Industrial Working Class: Sliding Down Labour Hierarchy in Ahmedabad, India*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004: 121.

[154] Dick Kooiman, "Jobbers and the Emergence of Trade Unions in Bombay City", 1977: 320.

labour was scarce.[155] And since its application was left to factory managers who had little direct involvement in labour organisation, the role of *jobbers* in recruitment continued to be tacitly recognised.

The economic benefits of the *jobber* system, alongside its institutional rootedness, meant that in practice formal regulation was subverted. A Government review of decasualisation in Cawnpore (Kanpur), Uttar Pradesh between 1938 and 1944 found that only one in three workers who registered with the Labour Bureau were placed in employment. The perceived ineffectiveness of formal regulation served to restore workers' reliance on the *jobber* system and over the same period the number of workers who registered declined by 32%.[156] Even among those registered, decasualisation failed to improve the employment security of casual workers.[157] In 1955, 11,733 registered *badlis* in Bengal's jute industry worked for less than one month.[158] Since the prevalence of the *jobber* system was comparable in the cotton and jute industries, it is reasonable to suggest that formal regulation was similarly ineffective in guaranteeing workers regular employment in cotton textiles. The effect on *badlis* was continued reliance on the *jobber* for employment which increased their vulnerability to coercive demands. Without effective formal regulation, casual workers had no protection against *jobbers* extracting ever higher payment for recruitment. Casual workers were particularly vulnerable to coercion since the daily nature of the *badli* system made their employment security extremely precarious.

The erosion of the dual labour market in the late-twentieth-century caused the employment security of permanent workers to decline. In today's industry, labour casualisation occurs in roles historically occupied by long-term permanent workers since short-term employment is characteristic of the majority of the workforce. The nature of casual labour has changed from daily employment to short-term employment ranging from a few months to a few years. Therefore, while the frequency with which casual labour seeks reemployment has decreased, the proportion of workers in precarious employment has more than doubled.[159] Such a substantial increase in casual employment demonstrates a process of labour casualisation. This is evident from comparison of workers' average length of employment between the mid-twentieth-century and today. A Government investigation from 1946 shows that not only was a greater proportion of the workforce employed as permanent employees, workers' length of service was substantially longer than today. This suggests that contrary to Mill Owners' concerns of high labour absenteeism, the workforce was actually typified by a high degree of labour stability in the twentieth-century. This is borne out by the 1946 regional reports for Madras and Madura, which show that at the Buckingham and Carnatic Mill in Madras city, labour

[155] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "The Decline and Fall of the Jobber System", 2008: 270.
[156] S. R. Deshpande, *Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour*, 1946: 166.
[157] Workers contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Labour Bureau by subverting the system of formal registration. Chitra Joshi collected testimonials of ex-millworkers in Kanpur and found that workers often registered with the Bureau only to sell their employment cards in the *bazzar*. This completely undermined the formal regulation of the labour market since workers who registered with the Bureau were not the same as those placed in employment. In one testimonial, Joshi interviewed a low-caste Kacchi migrant who bought an employment card registered to a Brahmin, after which he abandoned his low-caste status. *Lost Worlds: Indian Labour and Its Forgotten Histories*, 2003: 70.
[158] Arjan De Haan, "The Badli System in Industrial Labour Recruitment", 1999: 292.
[159] See footnote 133.

turnover was just 5%, and 67% of workers held service for over ten years.[160] Similarly, at the Madura Mills, more than one-third of workers held service for over ten years and fewer than 10% were employed for less than one year. The overall labour turnover was 2%.[161] This can be explained by the high level of welfare provided by both factories, which included entitlement to housing after five years employment and to a pension after thirty.[162] The social security offered by factories and the labour commitment given by the workers created a mutually reinforcing dynamic which stabilised the workforce.

Yet workers' length of service cannot simply be correlated with welfare provision since labour turnover was also low at factories without social security benefits. At the Meenakshi Mills in Madurai, for example, 70% of workers were employed on permanent contracts and absenteeism was a mere 7% in the mid-twentieth-century.[163] By contrast, in today's industry, workers are typically employed for less than five years. In 2005, an investigation of garment workers in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, found that 18% of workers were in employment for less than one year, and just 9% were employed for more than three.[164] The operation of the Sumangali Scheme is one explanation for short-term employment in Tiruppur. However, a high rate of labour turnover is consistent with Tamil Nadu's power-loom industry which does not recruit under the Scheme. From a sample of 300 workers in Komarapalayam, a town north of Tiruppur, 36% of workers were employed for less than one year and just 12% for more than six.[165]

The vast decrease in workers' length of service in the same region over the past fifty years can be explained in part by a methodological discrepancy between the 1946 Government investigation and present-day statistics on labour turnover. All the factories officially investigated in the mid-twentieth-century employed over one hundred people and were hence deemed formal operations under the Factory Acts. By comparison, contemporary statistics include enterprises which employ as few as ten people, both in the formal and informal sector. This divergence is not just methodological, it also demonstrates change in the organisation of production. In the early- and mid-twentieth-century, the Government prioritised large-scale factory production in the textile industry, whereas from the l990s, the Government promoted deregulated labour markets and small-scale production to accord with industrial informalisation.[166] This means that a greater number of textile workers are recruited by brokers for small-scale factories, or even directly by the employer, which has weakened the

[160] S. R. Deshpande, *Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour*, 1946: 42.
[161] *Ibid*, 1946: 46.
[162] Welfare provision extended beyond housing at the Madura Mills. Medical assistance included free hospital treatment for workers, anti-natal clinics and childcare facilities. A Savings Fund was established in the late-1930s (in addition to a Provident Fund and Insurance Scheme), into which the factory matched the contribution paid by the worker. In 1944 it was estimated that the Madura Mills had expended Rs.100,000 on the Fund since its creation. Pensions were provided to workers with over thirty years employment. *Ibid*, 1946: 51.
[163] *Ibid*, 1946: 52.
[164] Social Action and Voluntary Education (SAVE), "Need Assessment Study on Living Working Conditions of Migrant Workers and Their Vulnerability to AIDS." Tiruppur: SAVE, 2005: 20.
[165] Geert De Neve, *The Everyday Politics of Labour*, 2005: 197.
[166] Jens Lerche, "A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour? Unfree Labour, Neo-Liberal Globalization and the International Labour Organization." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 7, no. 4 (2007): 444. For the effect of deregulation on a textile community see Jan Breman *The Making and Unmaking of an Industrial Working Class*, 2004: 143–5.

hierarchical labour relationship which existed in the early-twentieth-century between the factory management, *jobber*s and workers.

Today it is more common for employers to organise labour at informal, small-scale factories, as the recruitment process of Tamil Nadu's power-loom industry demonstrates. An investigation of Komarapalayam is particularly significant because it shows a high labour turnover in spite of employers routinely extending advances during recruitment in an attempt to stabilise the workforce.[167] The failure of the system of advance to mitigate short-term employment demonstrates that the customary dependency relationship created through indebtedness which mutually guaranteed employers a stable labour supply and ensured workers' employment security has eroded.[168] This correlates with the 'neo-bondage' thesis forwarded by Jan Breman which argues that the patronage and protection characteristics of caste-based bonded labour relations subsided after the 1970s to be replaced by informal labour relations in which workers are bound by debt.[169] These labour relations are less personal because of workers' shorter employment duration, are economic in character, and easier to evade because the social hierarchy between employers and workers has loosened. Crucially, the erosion of social hierarchy means that dependency labour relationships are now determined more broadly by workers' lower socioeconomic position. As a result, the worker is not bound to one employer per se, rather workers' poverty causes them to incur debts with a succession of employers which binds them in a cycle of indebted labour relationships.[170] Casual workers are particularly vulnerable to indebted labour relations because the short-term nature of their employment typically means that they earn a low wage and have no social security benefit which places them in a position of great economic precariousness. This is compounded by the vulnerable social groups from which casual workers are frequently drawn which increases their likelihood of becoming indebted.

The short-term and impersonal nature of labour relationships probably exacerbates the insecurity of workers' employment since it offers less recourse to capitalise upon long-term personal relationships for recruitment. This suggests that current labour relations are devoid of the reciprocity which bound *jobbers* and workers in the early-twentieth-century. While their extortive demands mean that the patronage role of *jobbers* should not be overemphasised, the informality of the *jobber* system allowed workers to leverage employment through personal relationships. Workers with amiable relations gained the *jobbers'* favour in recruitment, as well as social security benefits such as housing and protection from police harassment. This suggests that through sustained access to the *jobbers'* social influence, casual workers could gain a measure of economic security. *Jobbers'* patronage was not, however, boundless as workers incurred an economic cost. A dualism was embodied within

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[167] See footnotes 74 and 77 for a comparison of the system of advances under the Sumangali Scheme and in the power-loom industry.

[168] The practice of giving advances has been conceptualised as an informalised permutation of the *hali* system, a method of labour bondage which existed in the nineteenth-century. This created dependency relationships between upper-caste landlords and lower-caste agrarian labourers who repaid loans by working on the creditor's land. Augendra Bhukuth, Jérôme Ballet and Isabelle Guérin, "Social Capital and the Brokerage System", 2007: 321 [Footnote].

[169] For Jan Breman's original fieldwork on agricultural labour in Gujarat, see *Patronage and Exploitation: Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat, India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

[170] Ravi Srivastava, "Conceptualising Continuity and Chance in Emerging Forms of Labour Bondage in India", 2009: 135.

patronage since its protection was underpinned by a threat. As favour was given to some workers but not others, *jobbers'* patronage was predicated on the idea of exclusion. This sustained an implicit threat within the relationship since it underlined that the *jobber* could withdraw their favour.[171] Workers' fear of jeopardising *jobbers'* patronage acted as a form of control since it engendered their compliance and reinforced hierarchy within the relationship. This dynamic may explain why workers were willing to pay for patronage in order to establish reciprocity within the relationship in order to mitigate the threat of withdrawal. By paying the *jobber,* workers signified their allegiance whilst holding *jobbers* under an obligation to provide their assistance. As such, recruitment payments were not bribes but *dasturi*, a customary payment which marked a client-patron relationship.[172] The BMOA formally prohibited *dasturi* in 1921, yet its practice continued well into the mid-twentieth-century.[173] A plausible explanation for its persistence is that workers accepted the practice because they benefited from the protection implicit in the transaction.

The protection of *jobbers* also controlled labour turnover since it promoted workers' loyalty to a particular factory. A study of Bombay millworkers conducted in 1930 uncovered that 48% of workers spent their entire employment duration at one mill and a further 22% only changed employers once. Among those who moved factories, the pursuit of wage increase only accounted for 21% of workers which suggests that patronage relations were more significant in the organisation of labour than workers' economic motivations.[174] This is consistent with evidence that in cases of disagreement between *jobbers* and factory managers, workers often ceased employment and left the factory with the *jobber*. Their ability to maintain a posse of workers perpetuated *jobbers'* influence since employers were dependent upon their patronage network for the supply of casual labour. The authority of the *jobber* in the early-twentieth-century meant that their protection gave casual labour a degree of employment security and access to social services; accordingly the decline of the *jobber* system does not necessarily signify that the position of workers has improved.[175]

By increasing the proportion of the workforce employed as apprentices or subcontracted workers, contemporary recruitment strategies have lowered the position of labour. The Sumangali Scheme is a case in point; the legal minimum wage does not pertain to apprentices which enables employers to cheapen the cost of labour by employing workers on minimal wage-rates. Apprentice workers in Bangalore's garment sector (Karnataka) are paid Rs.800 per month, less than half the minimum wage.[176] Following their one-year apprenticeship period, workers only nominally gain

[171] Gillian Hart makes the argument that patronage relationships are a form of social control because they embody an underlying threat. This theory was formulated for agrarian labour relations but it is also applicable to the *jobber* system. "Interlocking Transactions: Obstacles, Precursors or Instruments of Agrarian Capitalism?" *Journal of Development Economics* 23 (1986): 177–203.
[172] Richard Newman, "Social Factors in the Recruitment of the Bombay Millhands", 1977: 280; Dick Kooiman, *Bombay Textile Labour: Managers, Trade Unionists and Officials, 1918-1939*. Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1989: 23; Michael Anderson, "The Illusion of Free Labour in India 1857", 2004: 427.
[173] Dick Kooiman, *Bombay Textile Labour,* 1989: 26.
[174] Richard Newman, "Social Factors in the Recruitment of the Bombay Millhands", 1977: 283.
[175] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "The Decline and Fall of the Jobber System", 2008: 208–10.
[176] Alessandra Mezzandri, "Reflections on Globalisation and Labour Standards in the Indian Garment Industry", 2012: 52.

'permanent' employment.[177] In practice, workers' contracts are subject to a five-year 'deadline', after which employers are obliged to pay workers employment bonuses, including gratuity equivalent to fifteen days work for every year the worker has been employed. Fieldwork conducted in 2010 by the development economist Alessandra Mezzandri, uncovered that factories encourage workers to relocate to subsidiary production units under new 'permanent' contracts or force workers to seek reemployment following arbitrary dismissal. The average labour turnover of the factories investigated was 26%. Employers attribute workers' break in service to voluntary 'marriage-related' leave.[178] Similar to the workforce gender composition of Tamil Nadu, 90% of workers in Bangalore's textile industry are female which suggests that the casualisation of labour operates in tandem with its feminisation.

This is supported by Government estimates that across India 54% of female casual workers in the manufacturing sector receive pay below the minimum wage, compared with 30% of the total number of casual workers.[179] The gendered aspect of casualisation suggests that recruitment strategies target female workers who are more willing to accept terms of casual employment.[180] The *de facto* early dismissal of permanent workers in Bangalore's garment sector demonstrates that employers exploit short-term employment in order to evade their responsibility towards labour. This practice constitutes labour coercion since it deprives workers of their employment entitlements. It also fundamentally violates workers' right of employment protection as sanctioned by statutory regulation against unfair dismissal.[181] Employers are rarely held accountable for violating employees' terms of contract since workers are typically poorly informed of their employment rights, and nonetheless economically unable to prosecute employers. This is compounded by the negligible presence of trade unions in the industry.

Sub-contraction is another strategy by which employers casualise labour by evading the need to pay workers employment benefits. Two types of sub-contraction operate within the textile industry which have proliferated since the 1990s: out-contraction and in-contraction. Firstly, 'out-contraction' exists between factories which specialise at a particular stage of the production process. In garment production, for example, the main manufacturer which completes the cutting and sewing process may subcontract the garment to another employer at a different factory to complete a specialised process such as dyeing or embroidery. Out-contraction typically occurs in urbanised 'textile clusters' as a result of low transportation costs between production sites. It also determines the nature of production as textile clusters typically engage in multi-stage manufacture, such as garment production involving many embellishment processes. In the South Indian textile cluster of Tiruppur, it is estimated that

[177] Indian employment law limits periods of apprenticeship to one-year in every state except Tamil Nadu where it is legal for three-years. See footnote 101.
[178] Alessandra Mezzandri, "Reflections on Globalisation and Labour Standards in the Indian Garment Industry", 2012: 53.
[179] Karan Anup and Sakthivel Selvaraj, *Trends in Earning and Wages in India: Increasing Wage Differentials in a Segmented Labour Market*. International Labour Organisation Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series. Delhi: ILO, May 2008: 27.
[180] Kamala Kanta Mohapatra, "Women Workers in Informal Sector in India: Understanding the Occupational Vulnerability." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2, no. 21 (November 2012): 197–207.
[181] Government of India, *Report on Conditions of Work*, 2007: 5.

between 50% and 75% of employers have engaged in out-contraction.[182] The arrangement cheapens the cost of labour for the main manufacturer since workers' contracts are held with the subcontracted employer. As such, the main manufacturer obtains workers' labour without paying for their protection or maintenance. It also outsources the cost of workforce supervision and circumvents the need for the main manufacturer to expend on capital investment or workforce training at its production site. Formal sector manufacturers often further lower the cost of labour by out-contracting production to small-scale factories in the informal sector.[183] This enables employers to avoid sub-contraction with factories which formally employ their workers and thus have high labour costs. These workers are unprotected by formal employment regulation and do not receive employment benefits. As such, out-contraction with the informal sector allows employers to evade their legal responsibility towards labour engaged in their production process.

The second type of subcontracted relationship is 'in-contraction' which typically occurs at large-scale export-oriented factories. Employers subcontract the organisation of labour to intermediaries, or *thekedaars*, which recruit, transport and employ a group of workers for short-term employment at the factory. This system is prevalent in Delhi's garment sector and is used to increase factories' output as deadlines for major export orders approach. Workers' contracts are held directly with the *thekedaar* and, as such, they are informally employed without entitlement to employment benefits. Workers are typically rural migrants from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh contracted by a *thekedaar* for between two and nine months.[184] In 2010, an investigation of Delhi's garment sector revealed that 80% of workers at factories which engage in in-contraction are casually employed contract labour. The yearly turnover of labour at these factories is 60%.[185] In-contraction lowers factories' labour costs since the employer harnesses workers' labour whilst evading the cost of formal employment. It also devolves the cost of workers' recruitment and transportation to intermediaries. In-contraction provides employers with a highly flexible workforce which can be dismissed according to the short-term demands of production without entitlement to a period of notice or severance pay. This flexibility results in considerable labour turnover which greatly lowers workers' employment security. Workers' informal employment with *thekedaars* renders them without employment protection or benefits. It also means that workers are paid less than labour employed directly by the factory since *thekedaars'* siphon off a significant portion of the contract fee as intermediation costs. The average contract worker receives less than Rs.2,000 per month, compared with a factory worker who earns between Rs.3,000 and Rs.8,000.[186] The more fundamental vulnerability of contract workers is that their wage-rate is not protected by a legal minimum wage since their contracts are informally held with intermediaries.

Employers subcontract labour as a strategy to increase the proportion of workers casually employed within their production process. This is achieved in two ways: firstly, workers' contracts are

[182] Pamela Cawthorne, "Of Networks and Markets: The Rise and Rise of a South Indian Town", 1995: 54.
[183] Alessandra Mezzandri, "The Rise of Neo-Liberal Globalisation and the 'New Old' Social Regulation of Labour: A Case of Delhi Garment Sector." *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics* 51, no. 4 (2008): 604–18.
[184] Government of India, *Report on Conditions of Work*, 2007: 37.
[185] Alessandra Mezzandri, "Reflections on Globalisation and Labour Standards in the Indian Garment Industry", 2012: 48.
[186] *Ibid.*, 2012: 48.

not held by the main manufacturer and as such, employers evade the cost of paying for workers' employment benefits. Secondly, the employer contracts labour on a short-term basis to complete a particular production order. Workers' employment is therefore highly precarious since it is dependent upon the volatile production demands of the main manufacturer. In combination, these characteristics serve to establish a highly flexible workforce which greatly decreases workers' employment security. In-contraction demonstrates the continued significance of intermediaries in the recruitment of casual labour. Their role in searching for, recruiting and transporting migrant labour is analogous with the function *jobbers* held during the late-nineteenth-century in mobilising migrant labour for the establishment of an urban workforce in the early stages of industrialisation. *Thekedaars* do not, however, exert equivalent hegemony over workers since unlike *jobbers*, contemporary intermediaries do not also control labour on the 'shop-floor'. Nevertheless, the persistence of intermediaries in casual recruitment leaves workers highly vulnerable to coercion since the informality of their employment provides no protection against intermediaries reneging on the terms of recruitment. This vulnerability is compounded by the low socioeconomic status of contract labour who are typically low-caste, migrant, or female workers.[187]

To conclude, labour casualisation in the formal sector increases the proportion of workers on short-term contracts without employment entitlements. Over the past century, casual labour has increased from approximately 20% to almost 50% of the workforce. This has resulted from the erosion of the dual labour market and employers' exploitation of employment strategies which provide a legal loophole to evade formal employment. The key significance of labour casualisation is that it removes employers' obligation to pay workers statutory employment benefits. Employers use three strategies to casualise labour: workers are employed as apprentices, subjected to early dismissal or hired as subcontracted labour. Casual employment creates a large flexible workforce which can be harnessed during peaks in production and disposed during periods of slack. The precariousness of workers' employment and their lack of protection greatly increases employment insecurity. In the early-twentieth-century, establishing a patronage relationship with the *jobber* gave casual labour a form of employment protection. Whilst the *jobber* system was extractive, *badli* workers could leverage employment by capitalising upon *jobbers'* patronage. Today, short-term employment has weakened workers' relationships with intermediaries, eroding the protective characteristics of labour relationships. The precarious position of casual labour suggests that workers' vulnerability to coercion has not ceased with the demise of hierarchical labour relationships. Whilst workers' short-term employment has reduced the duration of each labour relationship, employment insecurity and workers' chronic poverty compels them to establish a succession of dependency relationships.

[187] In Ahmedabad, for example, the workforce composition at factories which engage in contract work is 60% female and 90% Dalit labour. Jan Breman, *The Making and Unmaking of an Industrial Working Class*, 2004: 122.

5. MIGRANTISATION

The employment of migrant labour in the Indian textile industry is a long-term continuity between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first- centuries. In the early stages of industrial development, *jobbers* established migration routes from the rural hinterlands of Bombay and Calcutta to supply labour to the expanding textile industry. In Bengal's cotton industry, a local workforce had been displaced by migrant labour by 1897;[188] and in Bombay, locals composed 20% of the textile workforce at the end of the nineteenth-century.[189] A challenge with regard to assessing long-term migratory patterns is the fragmentary nature of statistical evidence. The 1921 and 1931 censuses' migratory reports do not specify the number of migrants who travelled either with, or as, dependents. Conversely, while the occupational reports give a breakdown of employees' dependents, they do not specify what proportion were migrants.[190] The challenge is compounded by a methodological discrepancy in what constituted 'migrant labour' at the turn of the twentieth-century and in the present. Historically, migrants were workers whose place of employment was not the same as their place of birth, which included a substantial portion of short-distance migration. Today, migrants are typically workers who undergo long-distance migration for employment; indeed, the statistical data on migrant labour in the textile industry focuses on interstate migration.[191]

Because of the paucity of statistical data, the argument presented in this chapter is conjectural. It is based on correspondences between the Bombay Mill Owners' Association (BMOA) during 1880 and 1889 which suggest that employers prioritised family, as opposed to individual migration, as a means to establish a permanent workforce.[192] This chapter argues that family migration is conspicuously absent in contemporary recruitment strategies. Instead, employers promote workers to migrate as individuals for the purpose of seasonal, short-term and casual employment. This suggests that migrants' recruitment is linked to the organisation of the labour market; whilst family migration was foundational to workforce stabilisation in the dual labour market, individual migration is integral to contemporary developments towards labour casualisation. The chapter discusses the relationship between migration and the labour market, as well as the socioeconomic characteristics of migrants which makes them a cheap source of labour. It argues that the chief cause of migrants' vulnerability to coercion is their increased dependency on labour relationships for housing and social services.

The migration of whole families was promoted by the BMOA as a recruitment strategy to reduce labour absenteeism and establish a permanent workforce during the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century. Yet scrutinising its correspondences suggests that family migration had more to do with depreciating wage-rates than reducing absenteeism. Tata and Sons, the largest employer in Bombay, spearheaded the recruitment initiative urging that 'agents must strive to secure the transfer of

[188] Ranajit Das Gupta, "Factory Labour in Eastern India", 1976: 301.
[189] Baniprasanna Misra, "Factory Labour during the Early Years of Industrialization", 1975: 210.
[190] Government of India, "Birthplace and Migration", *Census of India, Volume I*, 1921: 62–79 and "Distribution and Movement of the Population", *Census of India, Volume I*, 1931: 2–43.
[191] Rameez Abbas and Divya Varma, "Internal Labor Migration in India Raises Integration Challenges for Migrants." *Migration Policy Institute*. March 2014; FWF, *India Country Study*, 2012: 12.
[192] S. D. Punekar and R. Varickayil, *Labour Movement In India*, 1990: 86–93.

a whole family consisting, say, of a husband, wife and two or three children'.[193] The strategy sought to reduce absenteeism since workers who lived with their families would have less need to return to their place of origin. Recruitment agents targeted rural communities in the North Western Provinces, indeed, the correspondences show that recruitment campaigns were increased in its famine affected areas.[194] The average labourers' wage in these states was between Rs.5 and Rs.6 per month, less than half of the typical amount earned by Bombay millworkers. In a letter to the BMOA's Secretary, the Swadeshi Mills suggested that this wage differential would increase competition with local workers and drive Bombay wages down 'to something like normal, if not economic limits'.[195] Factory agents also targeted recruitment in famine affected areas in Bombay's hinterland during 1918 and 1919 to increase family migration to the city.[196] Migrants thus provided a cheap source of labour because the subsistence agricultural wage in rural areas, the 'reserve-price', was substantially lower than wages in urban industrial areas. By increasing the proportion of migrant workers, employers exploited this wage differential to drive textile wages towards the reserve-price.[197] This meant that wages were lowered to accord with the wage-rate paid in recruitment catchment areas, rather than maintained at the local rate. In effect, rural migrants, particularly from famine affected areas, still earned more as textile workers than agricultural labourers, although their wage was set lower than local market conditions.

As well as migrants' low socioeconomic status, family migration provided a cheap source of labour through the recruitment of child workers. Children were employed in the preparatory processes of textile production; as carders who separated raw cotton fibres, or doffers who replaced the bobbins which fed the looms, or in clearing processes such as collecting cotton spoils from underneath the machines. Children were a cheap source of labour because their wage-rate was half that of an unskilled adult worker.[198] It was also easier to maintain discipline among child workers, and their smallness enabled them to manoeuvre around the looms with greater speed.

The total proportion of migrants in Bombay was very high throughout the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century, not falling below 70% in any census during the period.[199] In spite of volatility in Bombay's migrant population as a whole, migrant workers in the textile industry appeared to stabilise by the end of the early-twentieth-century. Between 1911 and 1931, the percentage of millworkers born in Bombay increased from 11% to 26%, at a consistently higher proportion than the city's total inhabitants.[200] There are two possible explanations for this apparent stabilisation: either the proportion of locally recruited workers increased, or the migrant population settled to become

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[193] *Ibid*., 1990: 89.
[194] The targeting of recruitment in famine affected areas marks a continuity with methods adopted by the Sumangali Scheme, see footnote 65. The practice is exploitative because it capitalises upon the desperate condition of labour, yet it also provides alternative employment when agricultural work is scarce.
[195] S. D. Punekar and R. Varickayil, *Labour Movement In India*, 1990: 91.
[196] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 160.
[197] Lalita Chakravarty, "Emergence of an Industrial Labour Force in a Dual Economy, British India, 1880-1920." *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 15, no. 3 (1978): 302.
[198] S. D. Punekar and R. Varickayil, *Labour Movement In India*, 1990: 90.
[199] The incredibly high number of migrants recorded in the censuses can in part be explained by the broad criteria of measurement which included short-distance migration from Bombay's hinterlands. Dick Kooiman, *Bombay Textile Labour*, 1989: 13.
[200] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 149.

permanent workers. The second explanation is probably more likely given that the overwhelming proportion of migrants in Bombay limited the pool of local labour from which to recruit. Thus the migrant population *became* local, in part the result of recruitment strategies which promoted family migration. It is plausible to attribute this stabilisation to recruitment since it appears particular to the textile workforce, as compared with other industrial occupations.[201] The textile industry paid comparatively higher wages than other sectors in the early-twentieth-century which enabled workers to migrate with, and support, dependents. Indeed, the high wage differential between temporary and permanent workers may have been a strategy to encourage family migration. The higher wages available for permanent workers covered the cost of migrating the whole family, and compensated for the loss of seasonal income peaks expected by agricultural labourers.

The suggestion that family migrants characterised the permanent textile workforce is supported by budget surveys collected by the Bombay Labour Office in 1921 which record almost four times as many family budgets as it did for single men.[202] These budgets should be treated with caution, however, since they also show that 26% of workers remitted part of their wages.[203] Yet since the amount of remittance is not detailed, these findings do not contradict the probability of a high proportion of family migration. It is reasonable to expect that families would remit part of their wages to extended kin, especially since rural households were usually large and migration was typically undertaken by the core family unit.[204] Recruitment strategies which promoted family migration were probably integral to the dual labour market which depended upon a stable, permanent workforce: individual short-term migrants were absorbed as casual labour by the *badli* system, whilst long-term family migrants established themselves within the permanent workforce.[205] Although this is a crude simplification, it highlights that the high proportion of permanent workers in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century necessitated stable migration. Though lacking statistical verification, this was probably achieved through a higher proportion of family migration than is accommodated by the labour casualisation strategies of the contemporary industry.

Migratory routes and the subordinate position of migrant workers are two continuities which characterise migrant labour between the turn of the twentieth-century and today. Interstate migrants recruited under the Sumangali Scheme travel over 2,500km from Bihar and Orissa to Tamil Nadu,[206] marking a similarity with the North Western origin of long-distance migrants in the early-twentieth-

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[201] The perennial nature of textile production provides another explanation for the stability of its workforce. Employment in less stable industries included ship-building. *Ibid*., 2002: 149.
[202] D. Mazumdar, "Labour Supply in Early Industrialization", 1973: 487.
[203] Richard Newman, "Social Factors in the Recruitment of the Bombay Millhands", 1977: 286.
[204] Wage remittance from a core to an extended family is also credible considering that permanent millworkers earned four or five times more than agricultural labourers. In 1930, the monthly wage of permanent millworkers was approximately Rs.160. Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization: Indian Weaving in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993: 38.
[205] This argument is made by D. Mazumdar who advocates that the organisation of the dual labour market accorded with a workers' individual or family migration status. "Labour Supply in Early Industrialization", 1973: 477–96.
There are problems with this conception, however, owing to the large number of individual migrants in Bombay's textile industry which probably outnumbered the proportion of *badlis* at 20% of the workforce. For the most compelling critique of Mazumdar, see Richard Newman, "Social Factors in the Recruitment of the Bombay Millhands", 1977: 286 onwards.
[206] Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 36.

century. The majority of long-distance migrants travelled from the United Provinces to Bombay,[207] and migration from Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai (Maharashtra) continues to be the most populous today.[208] Long-distance migration increases workers' dependency on labour relationships as the likelihood of migrants having alternative social connections diminishes. This is particularly acute for individual migrants who do not have the security of travelling within a family unit. SAVE estimates that fewer than 15% of migrants travel to Tiruppur as part of a family.[209] The Sumangali Scheme has increased migration among young workers, which further increases their vulnerability to coercion. This is similarly applicable to male workers in Surat's textile industry (Gujarat) who are overwhelmingly individual migrants from Orissa and Uttar Pradesh between the ages of 15 and 25.[210]

The subordinate labour position of individual migrants shows continuity between the early-twentieth-century and today as migrants are disproportionately employed in the least skilled and least lucrative jobs. In Bombay during the early-twentieth-century, over half the preparatory processes in textile production were filled by North Indian migrants;[211] and in Bengal's cotton mills in 1921, just 6% of migrants from Bihar occupied skilled positions compared with 36% of workers who originated from Bengal.[212] The lack of formal training in the textile industry probably served to keep agricultural migrants in low-skilled positions. Employers delegated workforce training to the *jobber*—yet their appointment was typically based on their connections in recruitment, rather than expertise in textile production. *Jobbers* were not inclined to impart training since a skilled workforce weakened their authority.[213] Mechanised textile production in India did not replace labour, yet it replaced the imperative for workers to acquire skills.[214] Accordingly, a relatively low proportion of the workforce was recruited for skilled positions. The industry relied on a small transfer of skilled workers from traditional weaving communities to factory employment, many of whom were local to Bombay and Calcutta as long established textile trading cities. Methods of training the industrial workforce did not reflect changes in the methods of industrial production, rather factories continued to rely upon traditional, informal networks of artisan skill.[215] Agricultural migrants did not have the same occupational pedigree as labour from local weaving communities and the lack of formal on-the-job training kept them in an unskilled position.

The lack of kinship connections among migrant workers is another explanation for their disproportionate underemployment in skilled jobs. The informality of recruitment in the early-twentieth-century meant that *jobbers* were more likely to give employment to workers with social

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[207] In 1931, 12% of migrants to Bombay originated from the United Provinces, and the remainder came from the city's south western hinterlands in Ratnagiri (Konkan) approximately 350km away. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 161.
[208] Rameez Abbas and Divya Varma, "Internal Labor Migration in India Raises Integration Challenges for Migrants", 2014.
[209] See appendix 9.2, A. Viyakula Mary, and Jennifer Beckwith, Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.
[210] Jan Breman, *Footloose Labour*, 1996: 49.
[211] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India*, 2002: 221.
[212] Ranajit Das Gupta, "Factory Labour in Eastern India", 1976: 301.
[213] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "The Decline and Fall of the Jobber System", 2008: 153.
[214] Tirthankar Roy, "Labour-Intensity and Industrialization in Colonial India." In *Labour Intensive Industrialization in Global History*, edited by Gareth Austin and Kaoru Sugihara, 107–21. Abington: Routledge, 2013: 114.
[215] *Ibid.*, 2013: 111.

recommendation.[216] This disadvantaged migrants since it was common for *jobbers* to recruit from among workers' social circles in order to gain a minimum assurance of their reliability. Among the millworkers in Bengal's cotton industry, the greater the distance between migrants' state of origin and the factory site, the greater the likelihood of their employment in unskilled occupations. As such, the proportion of unskilled workers from Uttar Pradesh and Orissa was higher than the proportion of unskilled workers from Bihar, the state which bordered Bengal.[217] This suggests that migrants' kinship networks decreased the greater the distance they migrated, which probably reduced their likelihood of having a social contact in Calcutta who would provide a recommendation to the *jobber* for their recruitment. Migrants' lack of social connections made them more reliant on hierarchical labour relationships. Similar to casual *badlis*, this meant that migrants were particularly vulnerable to the extractive demands of *jobbers* to gain recruitment. The ability for *jobbers* to extort from migrants was particularly acute because of their dependency on labour relations for housing and social services. Yet like for *badlis*, the *jobber* system also provided migrants with the opportunity to secure patronage. While it reduced their autonomy to seek better terms of employment, this was particularly valuable for migrants since it increased their job security without necessitating that they severed their rural links and permanently integrated into the industrial workforce to gain recurrent employment.[218]

The mobilisation of employees' social network persists in recruitment today.[219] It is particularly prevalent at small-scale power-loom factories which cannot afford multiple intermediaries to act as recruitment brokers.[220] The lack of a personal contact inside the factory continues to disadvantage migrants' prospects of securing employment. The more significant change is that the depersonalised nature of hierarchical labour relationships means that the insecurity of migrants' employment has probably increased. Ultimately, their itinerant status is likely to keep migrant workers in a low socioeconomic position because a lack of social connections increases the difficulty of securing recruitment, particularly in better paid, skilled jobs.

Migrants' lack of social connections also makes them more dependent on labour relationships for housing and social security which increases their vulnerability to coercion. Today, 70% of the workforce in Tamil Nadu's power-loom industry is composed of migrants who are typically given accommodation at the factory site. While physical restrictions are not placed on workers' movements as under the Sumangali Scheme, an investigation of power-loom factories in Mannarpalayam uncovered that employers use intimidation and violence against workers who are late or absent. Workers are unable to evade imposed overtime or nightshifts since they live under constant employer supervision.[221] Although workers lose their autonomy by living at the factory site, the prospect of guaranteed accommodation is attractive for migrants who are overwhelmingly drawn from the lowest

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[216] Richard Newman, "Social Factors in the Recruitment of the Bombay Millhands", 1977: 288–98 and "The Recruitment of an Industrial Labour Force through Intermediaries: A Comparative Study of the Textile Industry." In *Arrested Development in India*, edited by Clive Dewey, 347–63. Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1988: 359–60.
[217] Ranajit Das Gupta, "Factory Labour in Eastern India", 1976: 301.
[218] Richard Newman, "Social Factors in the Recruitment of the Bombay Millhands", 1977: 281.
[219] For an explanation of how employees' social network cheapens the cost of recruitment, see footnote 69.
[220] Geert De Neve, *The Everyday Politics of Labour*, 2005: 108.
[221] Grace Carswell and Geert De Neve, "From Field to Factory: Tracing Transformations in Bonded Labour in the Tiruppur Region, Tamil Nadu." *Economy and Society* 42, no. 3 (August 2013): 447.

socioeconomic groups. In Mannarpalayam, for instance, over half of the workforce is Dalit and another third are from Other Backward Castes.[222] The living conditions of power-loom factory accommodation includes gas, electricity and televisions which far exceeds the amenities which workers would otherwise be able to afford. Power-loom workers therefore relinquish their autonomy because factory accommodation provides an improvement in their living conditions. This suggests that labour relationships are less coercive if workers' material situation improves. It also suggests that poverty and the attractiveness of guaranteed social provision underlies migrants' willingness to enter into dependency labour relations. A similar dynamic underpins false promises made in recruitment under the Sumangali Scheme; yet since factory accommodation at spinning mills appears qualitatively worse than at power-looms workshops, labour relations under the Scheme are probably more coercive.

In the early-twentieth-century, *jobbers* exploited migrants' lack of alternative accommodation by charging exorbitant rates for degraded living conditions. Workers' were typically charged between Rs.12 and Rs.15 per month, equivalent to three-quarters of an unskilled workers' wage in 1923, for 'only a corner of a room ten feet by ten feet' in a *chawl*, or tenement building.[223] At the largest factories, housing was provided directly by the employer, however this did not preclude migrants' vulnerability to coercion. While factory accommodation was generally less expensive and better maintained than private *chawls*, migrants had no protection against eviction in cases of temporary absence and were consequently bound to the factory site.[224] This suggests that employers used housing provision to establish a stable, permanent workforce by compelling migrants to abandon their itinerant status with the threat of withdrawing social security.

The organisation of factory housing shows a priority towards accommodating families, lending support to the argument that early-twentieth-century recruitment strategies promoted family migration. At the Madura Mill, for example, accommodation was reserved for married workers and families in which at least two members worked at the factory. Each family had a separate kitchen and an onsite crèche was provided.[225] This suggests that alongside decent wages, employers sought to attract migrants as permanent workers by providing amenities and social security which supported dependents. The predominance of young, individual migrants in the contemporary textile industry has removed the need for employers to provide equivalent facilities at its onsite accommodation.[226]

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[222] *Ibid*., 2013: 442.

[223] Janet Harvey Kelman, *Labour in India*, 1923: 96. Numerous historical reports give harrowing accounts of the degraded living conditions of textile workers. Also see Karl Schrader and Franz Josef Furtwängler, "Working India: Its Future and Its Struggle", 1928: 36–7 and William T. Morison, *Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission, Volume I*, 1908: 22.

[224] A German Trade Union report from 1928 observed that 'once the workers move into company housing they are generally cut off from kinship and tribal connections that they have maintained from their native village...the key point is that the move into company housing makes them terribly dependent on their employer...in Madras we heard bitter complaints of how dismissed workers and their few belongings...were brutally thrown out of their company housing, even in their absence'. Karl Schrader and Franz Josef Furtwängler, "Working India: Its Future and Its Struggle", 1928: 36.

[225] S. R. Deshpande, *Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour*, 1946: 50.

[226] At factories which operate the Sumangali Scheme, workers sleep in dormitories occupied by as many as forty people. The recruitment of pre-marital girls removes the need for factories to provide childcare facilities. Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 56.

To conclude, the high proportion of migrants employed in the textile workforce is a continuity between the turn of the twentieth-century and the present. This chapter suggested that the type of migrants promoted by recruitment strategies has changed over the period to accord with changes in the organisation of the labour market. In the early-twentieth-century, family migration stabilised the workforce by preventing absenteeism, which established a core of permanent workers under the dual labour market. Today, individual migration supplies a large, flexible and highly mobile workforce which underpins casual labour recruitment. The typically lower socioeconomic position of migrant, as opposed to local labour, is a continuity that underlies this change and results from poverty in their place of origin which is an ongoing driving force of migration. Migrants' lack of kinship connections to provide social security at their destination increases their dependency on labour relationships. The position of migrants appears to have worsened over the past one-hundred years because their youth and lone status increases migrants' vulnerability to coercion.

6. EXPLANATIONS

The preceding chapters discussed three types of labour recruitment which composed the Indian textile workforce between the turn of the twentieth-century and the present. The employment of female, casual and migrant workers is a long-term strategy to lower the cost of labour for employers. Within this continuity, the chapters showed that the recruitment of each type of labour has undergone change. In South India the proportion of the female workforce has increased and the age of recruitment declined. The proportion of workers casually employed as apprentices or subcontracted labour has increased in the formal sector, and the preference for short-term, flexible employment has increased factories' promotion of individual migrant labour. The feminisation, casualisation and migrantisation of the workforce are three processes of labour informalisation. This chapter seeks to explain these processes of continuity and change. Firstly, it considers why female, casual and migrant workers are cheap sources of labour. Secondly, it discusses the persistence of intermediaries in recruitment. Thirdly, it discusses causes for the overall trend towards informalisation, with particular focus on the growth of globalised textile production in the late-twentieth-century. Fourthly, it assesses causes of long-term labour coercion and concludes that India's poverty, labour-intensive textile production and absence of trade unions explain its continuity.

The unskilled and low-wage employment position women occupy combines to make females a cheap source of labour, although is unclear whether women's lesser skill causes lower wages, or whether women's lower employment position perpetuates their lesser skill. Explanations can be grouped into three categories; the quality of female labour, gendered bias in the labour market and women's proclivity for unskilled labour.[227] The first explanation suggests that the lower quality of female labour causes women to be less productive workers, which results in their lower remuneration. This stems from women's comparative lack of education which compels them to enter the labour market in unskilled positions.[228] The average years of schooling for casual workers from rural areas employed in the formal sector is 5.3 for men, and 4 for women. Among Scheduled Castes, men receive twice as much schooling as women.[229] The second explanation emphasises bias in the labour market which makes it more economic to employ females because of gendered wage differentials. In 2013, women earned 39% less than men for unskilled roles in manufacturing industries.[230] The

[227] This framework has been adapted from a critique of female's low labour position relative to their labour force participation by Barbara Harriss-White and Gooptu Nandini. The authors explain women's low-wage status through patriarchy: household patriarchy dictates women's domestic responsibilities, social patriarchy affords women a low social status and patriarchal discrimination in the market remunerates women less than men for the same job. "Mapping India's World of Unorganized Labour." *Socialist Register* 37 (2001): 114–115 [Notes].

[228] It is a noteworthy paradox of the Indian labour market that female participation is lowest amongst the most educated women which suggests that the social return of educating women is low. It also suggests that the majority of women enter the labour market because of poverty rather than training or skill. Yasodha Shanmugasundaram, *Women Employment in India*. Madras: Institute for Advanced Studies and Research, 1993: 12 and 35.

[229] In the informal sector, the average years of schooling for men is 3.6 years and just 1.5 for women. Government of India, *Report on Conditions of Work*, 2007: 17–19.

[230] Biju Varkkey and Rupa Korde, *Gender Pay Gap in the Formal Sector, 2006-2013: Preliminary Evidences from Paycheck India Data*. Wage Indicator Data Report. Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management, September 2013: 29.

cheapness of female labour in unskilled positions creates a mutually reinforcing dynamic whereby women remain poorly educated and employed in low-skilled occupations. The third explanation suggests that women's obligation to combine wage-labour with domestic duties informs their proclivity for unskilled occupations. Women with domestic responsibilities are more likely to seek jobs with less demanding hours which are typically unskilled, particularly during periods of reproduction in order to continue flexible working in the absence of formal maternity leave. Flexible positions such as subcontracted jobs are usually low paid and highly precarious. A combination of all three explanations at least partially explains women's perpetual employment in unskilled textile jobs in South India: the social status ascribed to women, affirmed by their lack of education, low wage-status and reproductive role, presumes their employment in unskilled jobs. In effect, jobs are conferred with a sex-status and since textile production is overwhelmingly composed of unskilled roles it is expedient to employ females.

It is cheaper for factories to employ casual workers in unskilled roles since employers are not obliged to provide statutory social security benefits. In essence, the formal regulation which protects regular workers does not cover casual labour which means that employers typically do not pay maternity leave or contribute to insurance or pension schemes.[231] In the formal sector, the regulatory framework to enforce employers' contribution to the Employee's Provident Fund is fragmentary, which is compounded by casual workers' overwhelming lack of awareness of their social protection entitlements. Subcontracted labour is particularly cheap since factories have no responsibility towards workers as their contracts are typically held with an intermediary. This is profitable because India's plentiful supply of labour, particularly unskilled, increases the disposability of the casual workforce. Short-term employment lowers the cost of labour since it provides factories with a flexible workforce. Workers' productivity can be harnessed during periods of intense production whilst not costing the employer during periods of slack.[232] The perpetual short-term nature of their employment means that casual workers do not accrue employment benefits given to regular workers, such as holiday pay and gratuity bonuses. It also prevents an upward employment trajectory since workers often do not gain industry specific skills. This is compounded by a predominance of unskilled jobs in the industry, especially in assembly-line production used by export-oriented factories. The unskilled and short-term nature of their work sustains the low-wages of casual workers which, in combination with their lack of employment benefits, makes their employment substantially cheaper for employers.

Employers exploit wage differentials between recruitment catchment areas and production sites which make migrants a cheap source of labour. This difference occurs between states, or between rural and urban areas within one state. Migrants are motivated by the income differential which they can earn within the same sector in a different region to their place of origin. This differential is even greater between occupational sectors; thus an unskilled agricultural worker is able to earn more as an unskilled manufacturing worker. Factories which employ a high proportion of

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[231] Yu-Wei Hu and Fiona Stewart, *Pension Coverage and Informal Sector Workers: International Experiences*. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Working Papers on Insurance and Private Pensions. Paris: OECD, 2009: 19.

[232] Guy Standing, "Global Feminization Through Flexible Labor", 1999: 584 and P. Neethi, "Globalization Lived Locally: Investigating Kerala's Local Labour Control Regimes." *Development and Change* 43, no. 6 (2012): 1240.

migrant workers can use the low incomes of agricultural workers to drive wages down towards a subsistence baseline.[233] In effect, wages are lowered in accordance with the rate paid in catchment areas, rather than maintained at the local wage-rate. India's extremely low agricultural wage and the prevalence of Northern migrants from impoverished rural states make this a particularly effective strategy.[234] In Tiruppur, 80% of textile factories exclusively recruit migrant labour, of which the majority of long-distance migrants originate from Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa.[235] In 2012, an unskilled male from these states earned one-third less than an equivalent unskilled worker in Tamil Nadu.[236]

Yet even if migrants receive a higher income at their destination, their economic position may not improve since the 'hidden costs' associated with being a migrant worker absorb the wage differential. These costs include paying for transportation costs to the factory site, housing—often at an inflated price—and wage remittance services. Since the majority of workers employed under the Sumangali Scheme are minors, they are prevented from remitting wages through the formal channels. Families employ intermediaries to transfer workers' wages, for which they are paid a small portion of the wage.[237] Migrants are probably uninformed of such hidden costs during recruitment.[238] In the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century migrants often paid the same *jobber* for their transportation to the factory and their recruitment, since they invariably started work as *badlis*. In so doing, the cost of searching for, transporting and controlling labour was borne by the workforce: in effect, labour paid for the creation of the labour market.[239] The high travel costs for migrants to return to their place of origin reduces the likelihood of absenteeism which maximises their productivity, and accommodating migrants at factory sites increases their supervision by employers.

Workers consistently migrate across routes established by kinship communities which have forged particular connections with groups of intermediaries linked to specific regions and industries.[240] These intermediaries can control migrant workforces by leveraging the threat that one

[233] Lalita Chakravarty, "Emergence of an Industrial Labour Force in a Dual Economy", 1978: 302.
[234] Between 1915 and 2001, the average daily wage of an agricultural labourer doubled from Rs.3.1 to Rs.6.8. Over the same period, GDP per capita increased three-fold, suggesting that Indian agricultural wages have not increased in line with economic growth. Clio Infra. "Labourers' Real Wages, India, 1915-2001." and "GDP per capita, India, 1600-2010." *Reconstructing Global Inequality Datasets*, 2013.
[235] The remaining 20% of factories in Tiruppur do not recruiting migrant labour because of insufficient space to provide onsite housing. See appendix 9.2, A. Viyakula Mary and Jennifer Beckwith, Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.
[236] In 2012, the Indian Labour Bureau calculated that the average wage of an unskilled male worker in Tamil Nadu was Rs.223.54 per month compared with Rs.166.00 in Andhra Pradesh, Rs.139.62 in Bihar and Rs.14.72 in Orissa. The average wage of these three states is Rs.150.11, equating with 67% of the Tamil Nadu wage. The average wage of an unskilled female worker in Tamil Nadu was Rs.159.76, which is 29% less than the male rate. Government of India, *Wage Rates in Rural India*. Rural Labour Enquiry. Chandigarh: Indian Labour Bureau, September 2012.
[237] See appendix 9.2, A. Viyakula Mary and Jennifer Beckwith, Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.
[238] SOMO found that workers were not informed of the amount deducted from their wages for accommodation and food during recruitment. This is because workers are often given blank documents presented as formal contracts. During employment, wage deductions are typically not recorded in workers' pay checks. Martje Theuws and Pauline Overeem, *Flawed Fabrics*, 2014: 38.
[239] Lalita Chakravarty, "Emergence of an Industrial Labour Force in a Dual Economy", 1978: 303.
[240] For insight into the organisation of migrant labour see Jan Breman, *Footloose Labour*, 1996 and David Picherit, "Migrant Labourers' Struggles Between Village and Urban Migration Sites: Labour Standards, Rural Development and Politics in South India." *Global Labour Journal* 3, no. 1 (2012): 143–62.

workers' poor discipline will result in them ending recruitment with the whole migrant community. Migrant networks generally protect workers by enhancing their social contacts with access to housing and social services. Yet migrants' allegiance towards their kinship networks also operates as an informal method of social regulation which intermediaries can exploit to exert control. While the establishment of migrant networks over numerous years makes it unlikely that intermediaries would actually dissolve recruitment connections, workers' may be misinformed about the labour supply from other migrant networks to bolster the threat.[241]

The persistence of intermediaries is linked to the informal organisation of the labour market, particularly in recruitment. In the late-nineteenth-century, *jobbers* reduced the cost of establishing a labour market since the recruitment and transportation of labour was informally achieved through social connections rather than formally attained by textile enterprises. *Jobbers* were particularly indispensible in the early stages of industrialisation due to the scarcity of local labour.[242] Their role in the mass mobilisation of migrant labour continued through the early-twentieth-century to supply large-scale factories. The deregulation of the labour market in the late-twentieth-century did not erode the unstructured nature of the labour market which remains highly dependent on social structures, particularly gender and caste.[243] In fact, the retrenchment of large-scale factory production following market liberalisation in the 1990s has enabled intermediaries to occupy a new role in recruitment by organising subcontracted labour. This long-term overview shows that the role of intermediaries has adapted over the past century, yet remained highly dependent upon its ability to supply labour to factories through informal networks.

The persistence of labour intermediation can be explained by path-dependency, which argues that initial occurrences are more important than later ones in development trajectories because they affect the inaugural developments of institutions. Once an institution starts to develop along a particular path, the cost of changing its progression increases.[244] The initial institution of the *jobber* system in the early stages of industrialisation established the informal organisation of the labour market. This was particularly significant because it had a disproportionate effect on perpetuating informality in the subsequent development of the labour market: even after the decline of the *jobber* system, its informal framework persisted.[245] *Jobbers* have been described as 'the midwives of India's industrialisation',[246] and their initial indispensability entrenched their position which had a self-reinforcing effect: the more established *jobbers* became, the more costly it was to seek an alternative

[241] The supply of misinformation is particularly convincing since intermediaries who work in the same district often operate in groups. See David Picherit for an investigation of how intermediaries control migrants in the construction industry through social regulation; "Migrant Labourers' Struggles Between Village and Urban Migration Sites", 2012: 143–62.
[242] Morris D. Morris, *The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India*, 1965: 132–134.
[243] Barbara Harriss-White and Gooptu Nandini, "Mapping India's World of Unorganized Labour", 2001: 91.
[244] Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004: 18 and 21.
[245] For a path-dependency argument which emphasises factory managers' unwillingness to assume responsibility for organising labour see Tirthankar Roy, "Sardars, Jobbers, Kanganies: The Labour Contractor and Indian Economic History." *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 5 (September 2008): 995–6.
[246] Jan Breman, "The Study of Labour in Post-Colonial India–The Formal Sector." In Jonathan Parry, Jan Breman, and Karin Kapadia, eds. *The Worlds of Indian Industrial Labour*. 1–42, Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999: 13.

method of recruitment because the risk of a new method failing became too high for employers to bear as their dependence on the *jobber* system increased. As such, the thwarted establishment of the Labour Bureau under the Decasualisation Scheme in the mid-twentieth-century, failed because of tacit acceptance of the *jobber* by factory management.[247] The risk of insufficient labour supply, and the consequential decline in production, was too costly for management to cease their reliance on the *jobber*.

Yet while path-dependence may explain why intermediaries have persisted, it does not explain the underlying advantage of informal labour markets. The informality of recruitment enables employers to devolve the cost of recruiting and supervising labour.[248] Although factories pay intermediaries, a portion of their income is subsidised by payments extracted from the workforce. In this way, the cost of retaining the intermediary is partially sustained by the workforce rather than wholly paid for by the employer. This was particularly the case in the early-twentieth-century as a *jobbers'* base wage-rate could be inflated up to five times through workforce bribes and extractions. To have replaced *jobbers* with labour officers would have meant employers bearing a greater proportion of intermediation costs. Labour officers would probably have expected a generous wage, somewhat comparable to that of *jobbers*, without the prerogative to supplement it with bribes and extractions according to their position as representatives of a legitimate formal institution. It is possible that even if workers retained a higher proportion of their wage by avoiding recruitment bribes, employers would depreciate wage-rates in order to cover the cost of formal recruitment. Even so, the establishment of a formal institution may not have eradicated bribery in practice, especially in view of the persistence of informal recruitment practices.

Part of employers devolving the cost of recruitment to intermediaries includes divesting risk. Intermediaries provide a legal buffer between employers and employment regulation which enables factories to harness workers' labour without assuming responsibility for its protection: employers are neither accountable for the false promises brokers make under the Sumangali Scheme, nor the employment terms of subcontracted labour. By outsourcing recruitment to intermediaries, Indian employment law provides a loophole for employers to evade it altogether since contract labour regulations do not apply to intermediaries who employ fewer than twenty workers.[249] Employers simply engage multiple intermediaries to supply labour, whose workers are completely unprotected by employment legislation. The informality of intermediaries exacerbates the state's ineffectiveness to enforce employment laws. In fact, numerous development economists argue that the state's complicity in the informal organisation of labour to the formal sector is a deliberate attempt to turn a blind eye to factories' evasion of employment law.[250] In so doing, the state retains the investment of global export-oriented textile producers by maintaining India's competitive advantage in the low cost of labour.

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[247] See footnote 152 for a full discussion on the failure of the Decasualisation Scheme.

[248] The cheap cost of policing the workforce is an argument for labour coercion through intermediaries. See, Yoram Barzel, "An Economic Analysis of Slavery." *Journal of Law and Economics* 20, no. 1 (April 1977): 87–110.

[249] See the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970. Government of India, *Report on Conditions of Work*, 2007: 37.

[250] In particular, see Alessandra Mezzandri, "Globalisation, Informalisation and the State in the Indian Garment Industry", 2010: 491–521. For other criticism of the Indian state's deregulation of labour markets see Jens

Employers' unwillingness to abandon the *jobber* system and the state's acceptance of informal labour markets, however, only provide top-down explanations for the persistence of intermediaries. Bottom-up explanations which explain why workers remain reliant on intermediaries are also crucial. Throughout the past century, intermediaries have provided workers with some form of social protection, often in the absence of state welfare. The *jobber* system offered an informal means for workers to secure housing, credit, protection from the police and access to social networks, services which were of central importance for workers, particularly migrants, to integrate themselves into the urban industrial workforce. Especially as a *badli* or a migrant worker, the patronage of a *jobber* could determine a worker's employment security and ultimate fortune in textile employment. The trend towards labour informalisation has depersonalised the relationship between intermediaries and workers, yet it ultimately remains advantageous for labour to enter into dependency relationships. Informal arrangements with intermediaries or employers may be the only means for workers to access credit, especially if their existing indebtedness deters credit agencies.[251] In Tamil Nadu's power-loom and spinning industry, housing is typically provided by employers; yet the value of intermediaries continues in their ability to facilitate workers' access to accommodation through labour relationships. Workers may bear a lack of autonomy and be subject to coercion from surveillance, harsh supervision or excessive working hours since onsite factory housing provides at least a minimum level of subsistence. This suggests that workers' ongoing poverty and indebtedness are fundamental to the persistence of dependency labour relationships. Workers' impoverishment is made acute by India's lack of formal welfare which is indicative of the state's under-resourced capacity to protect labour, both in its meagre enforcement of employment legislation and provision of social services. There is no nation-wide public housing scheme in India, which is compounded by local councils' failure to raise taxes to extend other public services.[252] As a result, labour relations, facilitated by intermediaries, fill the vacuum of formal social protection.

Indeed, an investigation of Delhi's formal garment sector conducted last year revealed that employers continue to provide social services, even if workers are entitled to state protection. In order to access social entitlements in urban areas, workers require identity cards; yet just 10% of workers had the necessary card to formally register for state social protection.[253] 20% of workers relied on cards issued by their employer for identification, and almost 40% of workers had no form of identification whatsoever which excluded them from social protection *and* employment benefits as they had an informal status both in their residence and workplace. This means that workers who

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Lerche, "A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour?", 2007: 425–52; and Barbara Harriss-White and Gooptu Nandini, "Mapping India's World of Unorganized Labour", 2001: 89–119.

[251] Garance Genicot highlights that workers often voluntarily choose bonded labour relationships in the absence of access to alternative sources of credit. Genicot argues that breaking the persistence of labour bondage requires that governments promote local credit institutions in order to offer workers a credit alternative. "Bonded Labor and Serfdom: A Paradox of Voluntary Choice", 2002: 383–405.

[252] Barbara Harriss-White and Gooptu Nandini, "Mapping India's World of Unorganized Labour", 2001: 105. Recent schemes to improve workers' housing rely on private capital: the World Bank announced a 'low-income housing finance project' last year which gives low-income households access to private credit loans in order to purchase, build or upgrade their properties. This will not assist workers who are not credit worthy or formally registered for state social protection. World Bank, "India Low-Income Housing Finance", *World Bank Projects and Operations*, 2013.

[253] Workers who subsist below the poverty line are entitled to Government issued PDS (Public Distribution System) cards. The PDS primarily gives workers access to subsidised food, but it also offers free social security.

require medical care, for instance, rely on their employer or intermediaries for money or recommendation to approach unregistered practitioners.[254] It is striking that these findings apply to *formal* sector workers, and gives some indication of the challenges which cause workers to be reliant on dependency labour relationships in the informal sector.

The continued reliance on intermediaries and employers for social protection is, paradoxically, an ongoing source of workers' coercion. The poverty or migrant status of workers puts them in a very weak position to bargain for labour or living conditions other than those imposed by the factory; in effect, they are at their employers' mercy. Of course, the asymmetric nature of dependency relationships is not new: any patronage given by the *jobber* was predicated on the prior extraction of payment, and the workers who needed it most were typically those worst paid and most vulnerable as *badli* or migrant workers. Yet the collective bargaining position of the workforce appears to have worsened through an increase in the employment of workers from the lowest socioeconomic groups, particularly young females. It has also declined as a result of labour casualisation and increasing employment insecurity during a period when the supply of unskilled labour remains relatively high.[255] Workers' diminishing employment protection is compounded by the absence of trade unions. Strategies which promote the recruitment of young females and individual migrants also suggest that the labour position of particular groups of workers has especially declined.

The process of labour feminisation, casualisation and migrantisation constitute a trend towards the informalisation of labour. Whilst bottom-up explanations of workers' continued reliance on informal means of social protection gives the most compelling account of *continuity* in informal labour relationships, explanations for the *acceleration* of informalisation must consider the top-down effect of growth in global textile markets. The informality of the textile labour market, both in terms of the low-wage, unskilled and flexible workforce and the informal means by which it is recruited, underpins cheap labour which is India's main source of competitive advantage. India's large population creates a low land-labour ratio which makes labour plentiful and cheap, and therefore highly disposable. In societies with a low land-labour ratio, employers do not compete for labour which removes their incentive to improve workers' position and drives wage-rates towards the price of subsistence.[256] India's plentiful supply of cheap labour underpins the profitability of casual employment and labour-intensive methods of production.

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[254] Alessandra Mezzandri and Ravi Srivastava, *Surveying Informalised Labour Conditions in India's Organised Garment Sector*, 2014: 1–2.

[255] The decline in workers' position may have resulted from the relative increase in labour supply to textile centres over the past one-hundred years through urbanisation and increase in labour's mobility. At the turn of the twentieth-century, the decent wage-rates of permanent workers was likely a recruitment strategy to entice the workforce to urban centres owing to cities' comparative under population during the early stages of industrialisation. Today, the high flow of labour to urban textile centres removes the need for employers to offer high terms of employment.

[256] Evsey Domar employs land-labour ratio as the prime factor which determines whether societies develop bonded or free labour markets. According to his theory, workers are expensive in societies with a high land-labour ratio which encourages landlords to establish institutions to bond labour in order to drive down labour costs. Labour costs are also driven down in societies with a low land-labour ratio since the workforce is highly disposable and employers have no need to improve wages to attract labour. "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis." *The Journal of Economic History* 30, no. 1 (March 1970): 18–32.

The cheapness of labour relative to its global competitors is a long-term characteristic of Indian manufacturing. In the early-twentieth-century, the Indian textile industry paid its workers 6.5 times less than in Britain.[257] India's cheap labour in all sectors capped the wage-rate offered in the textile industry and initiated a labour-intensive route towards development.[258] A surplus of unskilled labour in the textile industry caused the development of the *badli* system. It also meant that factories were overmanned; two Indian weavers operated one loom, compared with one British weaver who operated two. In assessing the development of global textile production, Gregory Clark argues that India's low wages caused the inefficiency of its workforce.[259] This created a productivity trap whereby high employment did not yield high output, but a surplus of labour made it cost effective to retain a large, unskilled, flexible workforce to boost production output.

The logic of labour-intensive textile production in India is therefore not new. Yet three changes appear to have occurred over the past century which have deepened India's reliance on informal labour markets to maintain its competitive advantage; the decline of large-scale factories, the erosion of the dual labour market and the growth of textile competitors in Asia. Firstly, in the formal sector, the transition from large- to small-scale production is evident in South India from the dismantlement of vertically integrated factories to specialised spinning enterprises which operate the Sumangali Scheme and weaving production in power-loom workshops. This occurred gradually from the mid-twentieth-century onwards as new textile centres sprang up outside metropolitan cities where land was cheap. Factory 'clustering' prompted units to specialise in particular stages of the manufacturing process and establish production networks through subcontracting.[260] This decreased the capital investment required to establish production units and allowed their number to proliferate. This coincided with an increasingly mobile workforce which provided a plentiful supply of cheap labour to the new units.[261] The foundations of decentralised production in India enabled the accelerated transfer of manufacture to small-scale factories with low capital investment and a high labour concentration from the 1990s onwards.

The second change engendered by globalisation was the erosion of the dual labour market.[262] Sub-contraction increased the volatility of textile production by increasing interdependence between producers. This increased the cost of employing permanent workers since employers' risked paying for labour during periods of slack. Increased reliance on labour-intensive production also caused employers to reduce permanent workers in order to lower their expenditure on employment benefits

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[257] Gregory Clark, "Why Isn't the Whole World Developed? Lessons from the Cotton Mills." *The Journal of Economic History* 47, no. 1 (March 1987): 144.

[258] The labour-intensive development trajectory is also described as the 'low route to development'. In India, this has not engendered development because of poor state investment in education and workforce training. China is the prime example of a successful labour-intensive path to development in Asia. See Jens Lerche, "A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour?", 2007: 443.

[259] An excerpt from a factory investigation in the late-1920s explained that millworkers were reluctant to operate more machines because of the high supply of labour. The workers stated that 'there are so many men who want work and cannot get it that it would be unfair if they were to attend to more machines'. In Gregory Clark, "Why Isn't the Whole World Developed?", 1987: 168.

[260] The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation identifies textile 'clustering' in Tiruppur, Chennai and Bangalore in South India, also Delhi, Jaipur and Ludhiana in the North, as well in the hinterlands of as old centres, Mumbai and Calcutta. UNDIO, "List of Indian SME Clusters," 2003.

[261] Tirthankar Roy, *Rethinking Economic Change in India*, 2005: 114.

[262] See footnote 136 for a full discussion of the dual labour market.

and maximise the number of workers they paid as casual labour. The establishment of global production networks has increased the need for a flexible workforce to respond to fluctuations in labour demand affected by international supply chains. Global production has enabled export-companies to establish manufacturing units across Asia according to each country's competitive advantage in labour, land, resources and proximity to markets. This has increased the interdependence of Asian producers which causes demand shocks to have ramifications for other manufacturers throughout the supply chain. Thus global supply chains have increased Indian textile producers' vulnerability to external shocks which magnifies the expediency of a flexible workforce. The growth of global markets has also increased India's reliance on the buoyancy of North American and European markets for demand and capital investment. Volatility in these economies directly impacts India's textile production since North America and Europe represent 70% of India's export market.[263] North American and European export-companies also represent a significant share of employers in the Indian textile industry which makes production heavily reliant on foreign rather than domestic investment. The volatility of capital flows from foreign investment decreases the stability of production and employment in India's textile industry.[264]

The third effect of globalisation is growth in competition from other Asian textile markets. In the early-twentieth-century, India's primary textile competitor in Asia was China, which was nonetheless chiefly involved in the silk trade rather than cotton production.[265] The increasing use of synthetic fibres in textile manufacture in the late-twentieth-century removed the need for production units to be located in raw cotton producing countries. Today, India faces competition from countries such as Bangladesh and Cambodia. In the 1990s, labour costs were particularly low in these countries owing to the underdevelopment of their manufacturing sectors. India's decentralised method of production at small-scale units was particularly profitable with the onset of global competition because it enabled export-companies to establish international production networks to complete different stages of textile production in different countries. The production of raw cotton in India minimised transportation costs to its spinning mills, whilst extremely labour-intensive processes such as beading could be completed in countries such as Bangladesh with even lower wages than India.[266] This compelled India to drive down its wage-rates to compete with the cheapest Asian producers.[267] The labour-intensive nature of textile production means that global employers can easily relocate factories to countries with cheaper labour without much loss of capital, sustaining the pressure on

[263] Vijaya Ramachandran, "Export Competitiveness and the Market for Textiles." Center for International Development. Harvard: Harvard University, July 2001: 2.
[264] Dani Rodrik, "The Debate over Globalization: How to Move Forward By Looking Backward." Washington: Institute for International Economics, April 1998 and "The Past, Present, and Future of Economic Growth." Munich: Global Citizen Foundation, June 2013: 25–35.
[265] Robert Cliver, "China." In *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650-2000*, edited by Lex Heerma van Voss, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk and Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, 103–140. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010: 112.
[266] For information on global textile supply chains see, Martje Theuws, Pauline Overeem and M. Peppercamp, *Time for Transparency*, 2013.
[267] Of the five largest garment producers, India's wage-rate is middling: China and Indonesia pay a higher monthly wage than India, and Cambodia and Bangladesh pay less. The wage-rate in Bangladesh is particularly low, 54% the amount paid in India and 28% the amount paid in China. Bangladesh, $91.45; India, $169.67; China, $324.90 per month. Jeroen Merk, *Living Wage in Asia, 2014*. Amsterdam: Clean Clothes Campaign and Asia Floor Wage Alliance, 2014: 23.

Indian suppliers to minimise wage-rates to remain competitive.[268] Accordingly, the state's deregulation of labour markets eased employment protection which removed wage-rate controls and enabled employers to increase employment on flexible and short-term contracts. While Indian wages in the early-twentieth-century were low compared to its global competitors, the income of permanent textile workers was high compared to the average Indian wage.[269] Today, wages in textiles have not increased in line with India's economic growth; the average textile worker earns one-third less than India's living wage, which is calculated as the amount required to support one worker and two dependents in basic nutritional, housing, healthcare and education needs.[270] This suggests that workers are in a comparatively worse financial situation than those employed in the industry in the early-twentieth-century.[271]

The decline of large-scale factories, erosion of the dual labour market and increase in Asian competition suggest that the expansion of globalised production has worsened the position of labour by increasing the dependence on low-wage, labour-intensive production in Indian textile manufacturing. This has vastly increased the utility of employing a flexible, unskilled and casual workforce without employment protection. Labour casualisation has been facilitated by demographic changes in employment resulting from the recruitment of young, individual, low-caste migrant and female workers. As such, the feminisation and migrantisation of labour has provided the type of workers which are particularly vulnerable to subjugation in casual employment. The female, casual and migrant profile of labour, as well as their low-caste, young age and lone status, suggests that recruitment targets workers from the lowest socioeconomic groups. Workers' low socioeconomic status appears to correspond with their increased vulnerability to coercion, which suggests that factories' preference for recruiting 'vulnerable' labour is a strategy to reduce wage-rates and the cost of workforce control.[272] Factories recruit labour from low socioeconomic groups as a means to employ a compliant workforce which is less prone to absenteeism or strikes in order to maintain high output. Textile employment offers a comparatively 'high' standard of occupation for low-caste workers; all jobs related to sanitation, for example, are carried out by people from Scheduled Castes.[273] This

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[268] Alessandra Mezzandri, "Globalisation, Informalisation and the State in the Indian Garment Industry", 2010: 504.

[269] Tirthankar Roy, *Artisans and Industrialization: Indian Weaving in the Twentieth Century*, 1993: 38; For Indian wage-rates in early-twentieth-century see Robert C. Allen, "India in the Great Divergence." In *The New Comparative Economic History: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey G. Williamson*, edited by Timothy J. Hatton, Kevin H. O'Rourke and Alan M. Taylor, 9–32. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.

[270] In 2014, India's living wage was €195.30, approximately equivalent to $216.60 per month. In the same year, the average garment worker earned $169.67 . Jeroen Merk, *Living Wage in Asia*, 2014: 31.
The low wage position of textile workers has predominantly affected female and migrant labour who are overwhelmingly employed in the unskilled sector. See Barry Reilly and Puja Vasudeva Dutta, *The Gender Pay Gap and Trade Liberalisation: Evidence for India*. Poverty Research Unit at Sussex (PRUS) Working Paper No. 32. Sussex: PRUS, July 2005.

[271] Wages in the textile industry have lagged behind wages in other growth sectors of the economy. The average wage of formal workers in the service sector is three times higher than in manufacturing. In 2005, the average textile worker earned Rs.107.54 per day, compared with Rs.350.07 for service sector workers. One explanation for why textile wages have remained low is because skilled workers have transferred into the service sector. The unskilled status of the textile workforce has been exacerbated by the labour-intensive assembly-line method of production. Karan Anup and Sakthivel Selvaraj, *Trends in Earning and Wages in India*, 2008: 10.

[272] Andrew Crane, "Modern Slavery as a Management Practice: Exploring the Conditions and Capabilities for Human Exploitation." *Academy of Management Review* 38, no. 1 (2013): 55–6.

[273] Barbara Harriss-White and Gooptu Nandini, "Mapping India's World of Unorganized Labour", 2001: 106.

suggests that the exploitation of workers' low socioeconomic status in the textile industry needs to be considered as part of the wider poverty and inequality of Indian society. This does not justify the exploitation of these workers, rather it highlights that employment is intrinsically ascribed with social status in India; a characteristic of local labour markets upon which global textile producers have capitalised.

The exploitation of social inequalities such as age, gender and caste in the recruitment of casual and unskilled labour creates hierarchy and fragmentation within the workforce. This is a long-term characteristic of the textile workforce as attested by the separation between permanent and casual workers under the dual labour market in the early-twentieth-century. Yet following the deregulation of labour markets, the position of labour within the industry has become vastly heterogeneous in terms of wages, contract duration, hours and perquisites.[274] The casualisation of labour has increased workforce fragmentation by accentuating the disparity between the workers with employment benefits, and those without. The feminisation of labour has reduced the share of female workers who receive maternity benefit by lowering the age of women's recruitment, and, together with the migrantisation of labour, increased the amount of short- and fixed-term employment which prevents workers from receiving gratuity bonuses or pension savings. Thus recruitment strategies have recast employment benefits as a 'privilege' for a narrow proportion of the workforce rather than a labour right.

There is an immediate economic advantage for employers in minimising employment benefits to lower labour costs. There also appears to be a latent economic advantage whereby labour fragmentation maintains the low bargaining position of the workforce by preventing collective action. Trade union participation has plummeted from one-third to 4% of the workforce over the past century.[275] This can be explained, firstly, by the increase in casual or short-term workers who have insufficient stake in the textile industry to engage in collective action, or fear that involvement is detrimental to future employment. Secondly, the effect of narrowing employment benefits also appears to demobilise permanent and regular workers since they are unwilling to participate in action which jeopardises their 'privilege'. Thirdly, the recruitment of vulnerable types of labour, particularly young, low-caste girls, diminishes union participation since these workers lack the social approval or knowledge of their labour rights to engage in collective action. This suggests that by fragmenting workers' employment status and targeting workers' with low socioeconomic status, employers effect deep structural divisions within the workforce which prevents unionisation. The decline of labour protection over the past one-hundred years, both from the erosion of patronage in labour relationships and demise of trade unions, has probably increased workers' vulnerability to coercion by reducing labour's collective bargaining position.

To conclude, the labour-intensive methods of textile production, the poverty of Indian workers and the state, and the absence of trade unions appear to be the three most significant factors explaining continuity in labour coercion. Labour-intensive manufacture has been exacerbated by the

[274] *Ibid.*, 2001: 93.
[275] This reflects the share of the workforce engaged in trade unions in the formal sector. It does not reflect the informal sector in which trade unions are nonexistent.

increased demand in globalised production for a high volume of output to be completed in a short period of time. This method of production is cost-effective because of India's plentiful supply of cheap labour due to its large, predominantly agricultural population. The key to the workforce's low position is poverty which compels labour to work in a labour-intensive industry for poor remuneration. Migrants from India's poor rural Northern States fuel the labour supply because textile employment is probably equivalent, if not preferable, to other forms of harsh employment. The poverty of the Indian state means that it is ill-prepared to finance public social security programmes to protect the vast number of impoverished workers. It is also unable to enforce employment laws, inspect factories or educate the workforce of their employment entitlements. The lack of state involvement in the labour market perpetuates its informality which enables employers to evade formal employment or subvert employment legislation altogether. This serves to lower the cost of labour for the employer and keeps workers in a poor economic position. Workers' limited awareness of their labour rights, their poverty and fear of dismissal for involvement has undermined trade union participation. Workers' low engagement in collective action in the textile industry is compounded by the state's inability to protect trade unions. Without labour protection, the mutually reinforcing dynamic of workers' low socioeconomic and low labour position continues.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Labour recruitment in the Indian textile industry has undergone two key changes between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century. The first is growth in the proportion of workers recruited from the lowest socioeconomic groups which has reduced the collective bargaining position of the workforce. The second is growth in the proportion of workers recruited as casual labour which has increased the precariousness of employment. These two changes have increased the degree of coercion exerted upon labour. Chapters three to five argued that demographic changes in the employment of female, casual and migrant workers, and growth in the proportion at which they are recruited, has lowered the socioeconomic position of labour increasing its vulnerability to coercion. Chapter six argued that the labour-intensive methods of textile production, the poverty of India's workers and its state, and the absence of trade union protection explain continuity in labour coercion.

The importance of this study is that these changes are situated within long-term continuities which suggest that the use of labour recruitment to increase labour coercion has accelerated with the expansion of globalised production, but is not a contemporary phenomenon. The study draws out three continuities in labour recruitment which underlie the context from which change has occurred: firstly, female, casual and migrant labour were integral to the textile workforce in the early-twentieth-century, albeit employed at lower proportions. Secondly, the persistence of informal recruitment through intermediaries suggests that labour markets continue to be local, in spite of an influx of global capital.[276] Thirdly, the informality of labour markets is perpetuated by the continued *de facto* lack of state regulation. This results from its insufficient resources to enforce employment legislation and its unwillingness to deter investment from global employers. The development from the twentieth-century's dual labour market to today's flexible workforce shows that recruitment strategies have changed in accordance with the organisation of textile production, whilst these three underlying characteristics of Indian employment have continued to facilitate labour coercion.

To conceptualise long-term change in labour coercion, a comparison of workers' position of relative security shows how its *form* has changed. In the early-twentieth-century, workers had greater security because a larger proportion of the workforce was permanently employed. For casual workers, the patronage characteristics of the *jobber* system could be leveraged to secure employment and social protection. This does not, however, conceal the fundamental coerciveness of the relationship, both in terms of the money *jobbers* extracted and the threats wielded against disfavoured workers. Yet the *jobber* system embodied reciprocity since the *jobbers'* position was dependent on his effectiveness in fostering a loyal workforce. Workers' precarious employment in the twenty-first-century, which still leaves them vulnerable to extraction, does not suggest that their position has improved with the decline of hierarchical labour relationships. Workers' poverty and its effect on restricting access to credit and social services continues to bind workers' in dependency labour relationships, and the increasing recruitment of workers from the lowest socioeconomic groups is likely to perpetuate this dynamic.

[276] Alessandra Mezzandri, "The Rise of Neo-Liberal Globalisation and the 'New Old' Social Regulation of Labour", 2008: 604.

Differences between labour relationships in workers' level of autonomy suggest that instances of coercion should be differentiated in order to provide meaningful qualitative assessment of labour's position. Otherwise, simply identifying 'coercive relationships' serves to collapse all instances into the catch-all category of 'unfree labour'.[277] Instead, it is more compelling to consider labour relations in a continuum from the least harsh, in which workers are deprived of employment benefits or paid below minimum wage,[278] to the most harsh, in which workers are physically restricted from leaving the production site or economically restricted from exiting the labour relationship through debt.[279] The former constitutes exploited labour while the latter represents bonded labour. As such, the labour conditions of workers held at onsite accommodation or recruited through advances under the Sumangali Scheme, appear qualitatively worse than instances of workers employed as casual short-term or subcontracted labour because of the girls' fundamental lack of autonomy. Fieldwork from Tamil Nadu's power-loom industry shows the ambivalent effect of binding labour through advances which are too large for workers to repay, but nevertheless too large for employers to dismiss.[280] Workers have created a paradoxical situation whereby they are too expensive to be disposed of, but too indebted to ever become free which affords them a degree of employment security. This, alongside the apparent superiority of their living conditions, suggests that power-loom workers are in a *less worse* position than girls employed under the Sumangali Scheme.

Nevertheless, the limited number of investigations into the power-loom industry in comparison with the international attention afforded to the Sumangali Scheme is a methodological discrepancy embodied in this study which warrants caution. The labour conditions in power-loom factories across India cannot be generalised, therefore asserting the preferable position of workers in this sector is specific to a comparison within Tamil Nadu. Equally, the most shocking individual abuses uncovered under the Sumangali Scheme cannot be extrapolated across all the spinning factories which operate the Scheme.[281] Yet the consistent use of 'false promises' gives this method of recruitment a particular perniciousness. The deception, in conjunction with the systematic targeting of impoverished, uneducated females and the exploitation of their marriage expectations, serves to

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[277] This is a major criticism of Tom Brass by Jairus Banaji. Both scholars accord with the Marxist perspective that all wage-labour is coerced since workers are subject to economic coercion under capitalism. Yet Banaji argues that in constructing a binary distinction between free and unfree labour, Brass overlooks coercion under capitalism by (falsely) equating free labour with free-wage labour. All other forms of wage- or non-wage labour are undifferentiated forms of unfree labour which, Banaji argues, undermines the meaningfulness of 'free' and 'unfree' labour categorisations altogether. See Jairus Banaji, "The Fictions of Free Labour: Contract, Coercion, and So-Called Unfree Labour." *Historical Materialism* 11, no. 3 (2003): 69–95.

[278] Wages paid below the legal minimum is consistent with the definition of coerced labour from the Indian Government and the ILO. Yet low wages do not constitute bonded labour unlike cases of workers' debt or physical restrictions on workers' movement. Low wages are a form of economic coercion, but do not preclude workers selling their labour power to an alternative employer. Tom Brass, *Towards a Comparative Political Economy of Unfree Labour*, 1999: 12.

[279] Applying a model of continuum to assess coercive labour relationships follows the framework Isabelle Guérin uses to characterise labour bondage in Tamil Nadu. This ranges from milder forms of bondage for brick kiln workers and sugar cane cutters to harsher forms of bondage at rice mills where workers live at the production site. "Bonded Labour, Agrarian Changes and Capitalism: Emerging Patterns in South India", 2013: 405–23.

[280] Geert De Neve, *The Everyday Politics of Labour*, 2005: 182.

[281] This study has sought to mitigate this problem by drawing evidence from a number of reports from research organisations and NGOs, rather than relying on media sources.

greatly limit workers' freedom of choice in accepting recruitment, which, arguably, is the ultimate affront to their autonomy.

The feminisation, casualisation and migrantisation of labour form a triad which constitute a broader process of labour informalisation in the textile industry. This relationship, particularly with regard to labour feminisation, is specific to South India, although evidence from the garment sector in Delhi suggests that increasing labour casualisation is evident across India. The textile workforce in other South Asian countries is in close alignment with this three-fold process of informalisation which suggests that the link between recruiting workers with a low socioeconomic position and labour coercion can be extrapolated to other labour-intensive manufacturing economies. In Bangladesh, for example, 85% of workers in the garment sector are female and their average age is 23.6 years.[282] Bangladesh has the lowest wage-rate of textile production in the world, and it seems probable that this results from the intense process of labour feminisation within its workforce. The informalisation of labour markets does not appear particular to the textile industry: for example, in the production of electronics in Kerala, South India, the organisation of labour across small-scale production units is, somewhat surprisingly, coordinated by intermediaries from local religious organisations.[283] A similar trend of informal labour markets and casual employment is also evident in Taiwan's electronics industry.[284] Thus informality in the supply of labour to the 'global factory' appears characteristic of labour-intensive production in Asian manufacturing industries which depend on cheap labour to produce for the export market.[285] This implies that globalisation has accelerated the lowering of labour costs through recruitment strategies, which suggests that labour coercion is more acute at manufacturing sites which supply the export market.

Ascertaining whether labour coercion is indeed more prevalent or more severe at export-oriented factories compared with those which supply the domestic market, provides a fruitful avenue for further research. This study has drawn evidence from the spinning and garment sector which supplies North American and European markets, and weaving production in the power-loom industry which supplies Middle Eastern markets. It has not gained insight into recruitment strategies at production units which solely supply textiles to Indian consumers, which includes a substantial proportion of handicraft and home-based labour. Establishing whether forms of coercion are dependent on the production market will ascertain whether labour coercion is intrinsic to labour-intensive textile production, or is a consequence of global supply chains in export-oriented production.

This study concludes that coercive labour relationships have continued in the Indian textile industry between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century precisely because their form has changed in accordance with developments in the organisation of production and global competition.

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[282] Mehedi Hasan Sikdar and Sujahangir Kabir Sarkar, "Socio-Economic Conditions of the Female Garment Workers in the Capital City of Bangladesh." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 4, no. 3 (February 2014): 173–4.

[283] P. Neethi, "Globalization Lived Locally: Investigating Kerala's Local Labour Control Regimes", 2012: 1239–63.

[284] Dae-oup Chang, "Informalising Labour in Asia's Global Factory", 2009: 161–79.

[285] Dae-oup Chang employs the term 'the global factory' to argue that South Asian countries have become the world's manufacturers because casual employment and low labour costs make products cheap. *Ibid*., 2009: 163.

The implication that coercion adapts and reformulates according to its context poses a pessimistic prediction for the demise of coercive labour relationships in the Indian textile industry over the next one-hundred years. One source of optimism may be to position the current trend of labour-intensive production and labour coercion as a corollary of India's industrial development. After all, harsh labour conditions were characteristic of the British textile industry during the late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century and appear generally to manifest as 'growing pains' of industrialising economies.[286] Indian industrialisation, however, appears to have deviated from that undertaken by Britain.[287] In fact, the route to industrialisation pursued by European and Asian economies appears to have diverged owing to differences in demography, natural resources and institutions. In contrast to the model of European capital-intensive development, Kaoru Sugihara advances labour-intensive industrialisation as an alternative path to economic development. This route has been adopted in Asia partly because of the region's plentiful supply of labour.[288] Instead of the replacement of labour with technology (as in European resource rich, labour poor economies), labour-intensive industrialisation engenders economic development by improving the quality of labour to raise its productivity. This is achieved through education, workforce training and incremental improvements in workers' standard of living. Thus labour-intensive production brings about economic development through an upsurge in the position of labour.[289]

Yet, this study suggests that the conditions needed to engender labour's upsurge have not been established in the Indian textile industry. There appears to be an appreciable absence of education and training among a workforce who are uninformed of their labour rights and fulfil unskilled occupations; and improvements in standards of living are hindered by workers' indebtedness and reliance on labour relationships for housing and social services. Indeed, the disparity between India's social and economic development has accelerated since the mid-twentieth-century: while per capita income is improving, India is falling behind its South Asian counterparts in social development.[290] As a share of GDP, manufacturing exports in China and India are comparable, yet the sharp rise in real wages experienced by Chinese workers is not matched in India.[291] Neither are improvements in

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[286] Alan Fowler, "Great Britain: Textile Workers in the Lancashire Cotton and Yorkshire Woolen Industries." In *The Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650-2000*, edited by Lex Heerma van Voss, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk and Els Hiemstra-Kuperus, 231–52. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010: 236.

[287] The political economist Dani Rodrik argues that long-term economic growth patterns show that developing countries such as India and China are deindustrialising because industrial output is failing to keep pace with population growth. This has been exacerbated by globalisation which has increased the flow of capital from industrialised to commodity producing countries. "The Past, Present, and Future of Economic Growth", 2013: 27.

[288] Kaoru Sugihara suggests that India's past development trajectory may be a variant of the labour-intensive model since colonial intervention in industrialisation and the socialist economic model after Independence maintained the importance of large-scale industry for longer than in other Asian countries. Sugihara therefore argues that labour-intensive production in India was accommodated within large-scale industry. *Labour-Intensive Industrialisation in Global History*. Kyoto Working Papers on Area Studies, no. 1. Kyoto: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, April 2007: 39.

[289] Gareth Austin and Kaoru Sugihara eds., *Labour-Intensive Industrialization in Global History*. Abington: Routledge, 2013.

[290] Social development in India is the second worst in South Asia, marginally ahead of Pakistan. The six South Asian countries are; India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

[291] See footnote 267 for a comparison of real wages in China and India's textile industry. For a wage comparison between the two countries in the manufacturing sector see Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, *An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions*, 2013: 31.

workforce productivity as the quality of Indian labour in standards of education, nutrition and sanitation drastically lags behind those of Chinese workers.[292] This accords with differences in the two countries' public expenditure on education, health and infrastructure. In effect, the labour-intensive route to development achieved by China through improvement in the position of labour does not appear in motion in India.

This suggests that harsh labour conditions are likely to continue in the Indian textile industry. Not only is this coercive towards workers in the short-term, according to the theory of labour-intensive development sustaining labour's low position also prohibits economic development in the long-term. The social improvement of Chinese workers and simultaneous economic growth in China's manufacturing sector suggests that raising the position of Indian labour is not only an ethical concern, but an economic imperative to engender the country's development. The recruitment strategies of export-oriented textile employers to target impoverished, uneducated workers as cheap labour is a consequence of labour's poverty in the wider Indian context. This suggests that initiatives which improve the socioeconomic position of Indian workers are critical to alleviate the plight of labour coercion. Of course, implementing tangible measures which improve labour's position are hindered by the vastness of the textile industry and the state's poor resources. Nonetheless, a key reason for labour coercion is workers' reliance on labour relationships for housing and social security. In 2013 the World Bank initiated a housing project which gave low-income households access to private loans.[293] However, reliance on private capital to bring about social improvement *de facto* excludes the type of non-creditworthy workers from the lowest socioeconomic groups which compose a significant proportion of the textile workforce. Instead, *state* investment in public housing should be pursued as one avenue to improve the socioeconomic position of most the vulnerable workers.

[292] In 2010, 74% of Indian women between the ages of 15 and 24 were literate, compared with 99% of Chinese women. India has the lowest standard of access to improved sanitation in South Asia. *Ibid.*, 2013: 56–57.
[293] See footnote 252 for information on the World Bank project and the lack of state social security.

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9. APPENDICES

9.1 *Discussion with SOMO*
Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations

Transcript of the discussion between Martje Theuws and Jennifer Beckwith, "Discussion about Research Conducted by SOMO on the Sumangali Scheme." Telephone Interview, 15 April 2015.

Tamil Nadu Context

1. Is there a minimum wage in Tamil Nadu's textile mills?

No minimum wage for apprentice workers, the Sumangali Scheme predominantly employs workers as apprentices. Regular workers rarely know about the legal minimum wage. Since workers receive gross wages (i.e. with fines / deductions already imposed), the amount in relation to the legal minimum is not documented.

2. What proportion of workers are employed on permanent / apprenticeship / temporary contracts in Tamil Nadu's textile mills?

This varies depending upon how labour is recruited. For example, in the past year, the Sumangali Scheme has reduced the number of workers employed as apprentices because of media condemnation of the system. Instead, workers are hired on temporary contracts, this provides a regulatory loophole to avoid bad publicity. In reality, this makes little difference because temporary workers do not receive employment benefits and the system of paying gross wages means that workers do not receive the legal minimum.

The Sumangali Scheme - Remuneration

3. Are workers' contracts terminated early before they receive the lump sum?

Yes, cases of early dismissal are mainly used to avoid employers paying lump sums, typically on exaggerated charges of workers' misconduct.

4. Do workers have to pay for reinstatement after pregnancy / holiday leave?

The question was asked in 2014 at five spinning mills. None of the workers were pregnant. Theuws suggested that recruiting pre-marital girls was a management strategy for employers to avoid providing maternity welfare.

Workers are given 10 days holiday per year as standard. Missed days are worked at the end of the three-year period. There are cases in which for every 1 day missed, employers add 1 month of unpaid

work to workers' contracts. If workers leave beforehand, they do not receive their lump sum. Workers are unable to leave factories at will.

5. Is a proportion of the lump sum payment given during recruitment?

Not among the workers interviewed. Only a verbal promise of the lump sum was given.

6. Are wages paid on time?

Question not asked of workers.

Recruitment

7. Are brokers from private companies / factories' human resource departments / commissioned individuals? Is recruitment for the Sumangali Scheme their main source of employment?

The majority of brokers are individuals commissioned directly by the factory. There are two types of recruiters: community (within Tamil Nadu) and distant (migratory labour), both are socially influential in areas in which they recruit. No information available on whether it is their main source of employment.

Theuws said that employers hide behind recruitment brokers, absolving themselves of responsibility for the false promises recruiters tell workers. I.e. employers say that recruiters are deceptive, not the factory. Contradicts posters/leaflets factories distribute.

8. Does labour 'present' to factories for recruitment?

No, the spatial organisation of factories in isolated areas means that workers do not 'show up' at factories.

9. Do migrant workers pay travel expenses to the recruitment broker?

No, factories pay the recruitment brokers which covers the cost of transporting migrant workers.

10. Are bribes paid to workers during recruitment?

Typically gifts are given to workers' families such as clothes, crockery and ornaments. Other forms of social protection are also given, such as food.

11. Do workers, or their family, take out debts with recruitment brokers?

Not asked.

Production Site

12. Are workers punished for trade union participation?

There is no trade union activity because factories are heavily guarded and located in isolated areas. None of the workers interviewed were part of a union.

13. Do workers report physical injury / abuse?

Workers are very reluctant to talk about such incidents. Cases of sexual abuse emerge when information of a suicide is leaked to the media. All the managers and supervisors at the five factories investigated were male. Thuews reported seeing male supervisors intimidate girls on the 'shop-floor', bearing over their workbenches during inspections and making girls remain seated when they were being told off. Theuws suggested that supervisors used their dominant physicality to impose control.

14. Are workers able to terminate their contract?

No, since they will not receive their lump sum.

Thuews reported that in Sathyamangalam, northern Tamil Nadu, SOMO researchers came across numerous Dalit families protesting outside a factory in 2014 for the release of their children who were forcibly locked in dormitories to keep them at the site. They had been working between 2 and 3 years over the three-year contract period. To date, the protests were unsuccessful.

9.2 *Discussion with SAVE*
Social Awareness and Voluntary Education

Transcript of the discussion between A. Viyakula Mary and Jennifer Beckwith, "Discussion about Operation of the Sumangali Scheme in Tiruppur." Skype Interview, 5 May 2015.

Tiruppur Context

1. What proportion of factories in Tiruppur use the Sumangali Scheme?

80% of factories use the Sumangali Scheme, predominately at spinning mills, of which 75% of the workforce is female; women are between the ages of 15 and 18. The remaining 20% recruit local labour primarily because there is no space for the employer to provide onsite hostel accommodation, especially in the centre of Tiruppur. Local labour receives higher wages than migrant workers.

2. How does the system of labour intermediation operate?

The system is informally organised: four levels of labour intermediaries are involved in supplying labour to the factory. 1) Factory, a contact employed by factory for recruitment; 2) District, a contact outside factory with multiple connections in local area; 3) Block, a contact with more localised knowledge of prospective recruits; 4) Neighbour, a contact with a direct relationship to the recruit. A combination of these intermediary levels may be involved in the Sumangali Scheme. Each intermediary is remunerated by taking a cut from the workers' eventual wages, causing wage-rate deflation.

Remuneration

3. Are wages paid on time?

No, delayed wage payments are common. Monthly wages are typically withheld for between 3 and 12 months. Workers who reside at the factory (hostel workers) are required to work overtime in order to gain a personal allowance. Even when paid, their wages are paid to the family, either through an intermediary or parents visit the factory in order to collect money. Wages are also often transferred to the family through an intermediary who takes a cut of workers' wages for the remittance service.

Recruitment

4. Is a proportion of the lump sum payment given during recruitment?

Yes, as an advance by the factory broker which is then deducted from the workers' wage. The amount is typically between Rs.3,000-5,000 and has been uncovered in 11 cases during April 2015.

5. Is money paid to families as a bribe to recruitment, or are other gifts given?

In cases where money is advanced to families, this is an advance rather than a bribe. It is implicit that the money will be repaid and is therefore not a gift. Other gifts, such as clothes or household items, were not reported.

6. Do parents take out debts with the factory management or broker?

Brokers are not typically moneylenders as a secondary occupation because they receive a stipend for workers who remain employed at the factory after recruitment. The factory management is not used for money-lending services either.

7. Do migrant workers pay brokers for travel expenses?

No, the factory pays travel expenses to the broker. In the garment sector, 15-20% of migrants travel with their families, the remainder are young single migrants.

Production Site

8. How effective are trade unions?

Trade unions are unorganised; unions which represent each industrial sector are not present in every district. Participation in trade unions among textile workers is between 3% and 4%. This is because the workforce predominately comprises young women who are uninformed of their labour rights. For example, while wage differentials between men and women are formally unlawful, they exist in practice because of the prevailing societal gender inequality—men and women do not communicate about wage-rates or labour conditions, and it is expected that women occupy unskilled labour roles and earn less than men.

9. How do workers who live onsite provide for their personal needs?

The factory provides basic accommodation, food and toiletries which are deducted from workers' wages. Once a month the factory organises a supervised outing to a local market. 20-25% of factories have an onsite shop run by a contractor who leases the premises from the factory. At these factories workers do not leave the compound. The range of products at factory shops is limited and the prices are invariably higher than at the market.

10. What causes the persistence of the Sumangali Scheme?

Viyakula Mary suggested poor education and low literacy among the workforce was the cause. In 2002, legislation made it compulsory for education to be attained up to 8th grade (14 years). Despite this, the majority of the workforce is illiterate because factories are only concerned with employing able-bodied workers. The Employment Department rarely enforces formal regulation since it is under-resourced and inefficient.

11. Do parents facilitate labour coercion under the Sumangali Scheme?

The relationship between families and workers is usually ambivalent in as much as parents often encourage their daughters to participate in the Sumangali Scheme because of family debt. The families are, however, ignorant of the Scheme's conditions and are as susceptible to accept its false promises as the worker.

12. Why are females targeted as a source of casual labour?

Viyakula Mary suggested that pre-marital women are implicitly a casual (short-term) labour force since long-term employment is dependent upon their husbands. Women typically relocate or assume household duties after marriage. Females also have lower levels of literacy and are less likely to unionise.

9.3 *Sumangali Scheme Recruitment Advertisement*

A translation of a factory recruitment advertisement distributed in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu during April and May 2015, provided by Social Awareness and Voluntary Education (SAVE).

GHCL Limited

(unit: Sri Meenakshi mills)

Kovilpatti Road-Manaparai

Female Apprentice wanted for spinning mill

Highly technologizing *[sic]* spinning mill **Sri Meenakshi mill** (Thiyagesar Aalai) which is situated in Kovilpatti Road, Manaparai, Trichy district wanted female apprentice for **3** years

Eligibility

- Unmarried women 15 years to 20 years
- Minimum education 5th grade should be passed
- Photo copies of transfer certificate and Ration card have to be given at the time of joining.

Wage the day of 1st onwards

per day **Rs.299/-**

After completion of 3 years apprentice

Rs.85,000/- **will be given including P.F (Provident Fund)**

<u>Work experienced women</u>

- Per day endowment amount **Rs.299/-**

- End of one year **Rs.37,000/-** (Including EPF) as reward

GHCL Limited (Unit: Sri Meenakshi Mills)

Kovilpatti Road-Manapparai

- Very safe, caring environment and hostel with advanced comfort
- ESI and EPF is there for all from the day of joining
- During apprenticeship period, the worker and their parents gets free of cost treatment for small to serious illness through ESI
- Training is for 8 hours only a day
- Weekly once weekly holiday
- Wage with holiday for National and festival days (9 days)
- Deepavali bonus will be given
- Food with vegetable will be served hotly *[sic]* morning, afternoon and night
- Quality rice, dhal, oils and vegetables used for cooking food
- Food is prepared hygienically and served
- Nutritious grains are offered in the evening an alternative days
- Food with egg is offered twice in a week
- Food with meat is offered once in a month
- Individual cot with bed is given in healthy and good ventilation room
- Television, Carem Board, News paper, Weekly magazine, Chess, Tennis Coit are the entertainment facilities in hostel
- Savings account and ATM facility will be arranged in State Bank of India
- Women's basic need materials Soap, Talcum Powder, Paste, Shampoo, Hair oil and Sanitary pads will be given at free of cost
- If any women wants to study, it will be arranged with specialised reduced cost
- Further Computer and tailoring courses are offered by excellent teacher at free of cost

Contact either through below mobile number or directly for other details

Contact mobile numbers

99 657 98056, 99 651 35916, 98 943 16995, 98 654 31923

10. INTERNSHIP WORK PLAN

The Organisation

The International Institute of Social History (IISH) is based in Amsterdam and was established in 1935. It conducts historical research into the development of work and labour relations between 1500 and the present within a global context. The IISH evolved from an organisation established by Nicolaas Posthumus in 1914 which sought to collect sources relevant to economic history. During the Second World War, the IISH worked to preserve archives related to the labour of persecuted peoples and organisations. This project continued during the 1970s with the IISH acquiring Latin American sources threatened by the continent's political instability, and is today facilitated by the IISH's regional desks in Russia, the Middle East, Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America which collaborate with other international research institutes. The IISH publishes the *International Review of Social History* and organises the biannual European Social Science History Conference.

The IISH's research projects investigate the diamond, silver, oil, tobacco, sugar and shipbuilding industries, as well as exploring women's labour position and slave and forced labour conditions. The research projects at the IISH investigate three questions: firstly, why has work been valued and compensated differently over the past five centuries?; secondly, why do working conditions vary from slavery to highly-paid wage labour?; and thirdly, how can individual or collective action influence these conditions? Through this research, the IISH aims to discover how inequality arises and is perpetuated within and between societies in order to contribute to current social discussions on social inequality, economic growth, the environment, globalisation, migration and democracy. The impact of inequality is considered with regard to democratic engagement, public health, the position of female workers and cultural differences within societies.

The IISH's work relates directly to the themes of the Politics and Society Master's Programme since it researches how both formal and informal institutions affect labour conditions. The IISH provides historical context to formal labour institutions such as large-scale industries in consumer products and the slave trade, as well as informal institutions such as the norms governing female labour, coerced labour and labour conflicts. In combination, this research enables the IISH to situate the theme of labour within both domestically and globally focused research projects. While the IISH's research primarily has an economic focus, the Institute extrapolates these implications to their social and cultural effects. In this way, the IISH, like the courses I have elected during this Master's, takes economic divergence as the starting point from which a holistic perspective of inequality is investigated. The Master's Programme is principally interested in how citizenship and the organisation of the market affects equality, both between and within societies. The IISH's research aligns with this objective by using labour conditions as the lens through which social equality is explored.

The organisation comprises of approximately forty research staff, consisting of PhD, Post Doctorate and Senior Researchers. Supporting the IISH's research, the organisation includes

approximately fifty archivists, a department for Digital Infrastructure manages the online datasets and a Publications department manages the IISH's public output. The 'corporate culture' at the IISH is academic and professional. Since research depends on an exchange of knowledge, the IISH is a collaborative and interdisciplinary organisation. During the internship, I will work alongside Senior Researcher Marcel van der Linden who co-heads a project investigating the immediate and long-term impact of eighteenth-century slavery on the Dutch economy. This field of research makes Van der Linden ideally positioned to supervise my research interest on force labour conditions (see section V).

Motivation and Learning Goals

I am motivated to conduct my internship at a research institute because I have an interest in pursuing a research career. I am keen to experience research in a non-University environment since I am considering future work in policy advice or social justice. At this stage, however, I have greater interest in a position at the IISH, as opposed to at a think tank organisation, because I want to gain experience in bringing *historical* research to bear on current social issues. Therefore, I am drawn to the farsightedness of the IISH's work which gives current application to knowledge of the past, and, more particularly, the ongoing social relevance of research on work and labour.

The courses which I have selected during the Master's centre around the theme of economic divergence. More specifically, *Wealth and Poverty* considers the 'reversal of fortune' between North and Latin America, and *Growth and Inequality* questions why Europe developed before Asia. By working with the IISH, I am deepening my exposure to economic history and further exploring the origins and effects of inequality. In selecting an internship which takes labour relations as its framework of analysis, I will gain knowledge of a theoretical approach which transcends the specific cases of economic inequality that I have studied thus far. In other words, by investigating theories regarding work and labour relations, I will develop an overarching theme to support the teaching imparted during the Master's and asses its central focus: the causes of inequality. It will also complement the institutional approach which is integral to the Master's Programme by studying work and labour relations through its formal organisation and informal norms of behaviour.

Since I have an interest in doing a PhD, this internship is important because it will potentially provide the field of interest for my future research. It will also deepen my knowledge of how to conduct research since, firstly, I will be exposed to the work of academics in a research, rather than teaching capacity; and secondly, the wealth of archival material at the IISH will give me an opportunity to utilise primary sources in my thesis. Alongside developing my research capabilities, I also seek to improve general academic skills such as speeding up my writing process and becoming faster at extracting and critically assessing an author's core argument when required to read a large volume of literature. Analysis of theoretical models is an addition to my historical training which this Master's has offered and is an academic skill with which I need to become more proficient. I anticipate that my work at the IISH will enable me to better ground research within theoretical frameworks since I will become familiar with how all of the research projects integrate with labour theory and align my research with this theme.

The core insight which I have gained through this Master's Programme is that historical awareness can be applied to solve ongoing social issues. In this way, the Master's has broadened my hitherto niche historical knowledge by demonstrating the vital social relevance of historical research. The IISH offers me a 'real-life' environment which is realising this objective of the Master's Programme. Combining historical research with concurrent social justice issues is precisely the direction I intend to pursue in my professional career. This has motivated me throughout the Master's and enthuses me for an internship with the IISH.

The professional skill which I seek to develop during my internship is collaborative working, which is particularly crucial in the field of research. In my academic training so far (during this Master's), I have co-written one paper. From the experience I recognise that my aptness for group work is under exercised since I am accustomed to individual learning. In other words, since University teaching places such emphasis on academic independence, it is to the detriment of professional skills such as teamwork. By working closely with Marcel van der Linden I expect to use discussion as a means of improving my research. I also expect to hone skills in critiquing, evaluating and refining my work through progress logs and interim chapter deadlines.

As part of the internship I will assist Van der Linden with editing work independent of my research (see below). Through this I expect to further develop the professional skill of collaborative working since it will require logistical coordination as much as the exchange of ideas. The University's Thesis Lab, which commences in mid-March, will provide further opportunity to develop my collaborative working skills by sharpening my skills in offering and receiving peer review.

Supervision

As stated above, at the IISH I will be supervised by Marcel van der Linden, while at Utrecht University I will be supervised by Auke Rijpma. Van der Linden will provide academic guidance through his intimate knowledge of the historiography on coerced labour, while Rijpma will act as mentor by assessing my weekly progress logs to ascertain whether my objectives for the internship are being met.

Marcel van der Linden will aid my refinement of research questions, make suggestions for using primary sources and suggest alternative avenues of enquiry should the original research objectives prove problematic. In fortnightly face-to-face meetings I will discuss the academic progress of my research with Van der Linden. The content of these meetings will be recorded in the relevant weekly log which will be reviewed by Auke Rijpma and form part of the internship portfolio. I will take the initiative for scheduling these meetings, and, in the event of an unforeseen issue, liaise with Van der Linden should an impromptu discussion be necessary.

Auke Rijpma will oversee the internship's functioning through the weekly logs which I will send via email. While email will form our principle method of communication, I will take the initiative to arrange a minimum of two face-to-face meetings with Rijpma to discuss my management of the entire thesis and whether I am achieving my research objectives at the IISH. The first of these

meetings will be held at the end of February. As with the supervision at the IISH, I will take the initiate to arrange a meeting with Rijpma should I require assistance. The content of all meetings will also be recorded in the appropriate weekly log. I invite Rijpma to give feedback on my internship where he deems appropriate by commenting on the critical reflections I provide in the weekly logs.

Aside from my research, I will assist the IISH by helping Van der Linden edit a collection of essays on coerced labour. My role will include critiquing the essays for any necessary linguistic or stylistic alterations, commenting on the ordering of the essays and the book's coherence, and accompanying Van der Linden to meet with the essays' authors and discuss final revisions. As well as providing me with an opportunity to practice collaborative working, assessing the work of other authors will enable me to more critically edit my own writing. This work will constitute a maximum of one-third of my time at the IISH, in other words one day per week, and will only be performed for the first period of the internship, during February and March, so that I can devote more time to research in April.

Internship Product and Activities

The internship assignment will be an individual research study into the historical roots of coerced labour in the textile industry. Because of its research focus, the assignment will be a study which combines the internship project with its academic analysis. The product aims to demonstrate the importance of applying historical research to the continuity of coerced labour in the textile industry. The study will assess the extent to which continuities exist between historical and concurrent examples of coerced labour specifically in the Indian textile industry and question whether the persistence of coerced labour is rooted in structural causes.

The internship product will be a thoroughly researched and historiographically situated research study of between approximately 15,000 to 20,000 words. It will show a high degree of detail in its contextualisation of the Indian textile industry from the mid-nineteenth-century to the present-day, as well as specific examples of comparable historic and present cases of coerced labour. Provisionally, the study will be divided into three sections: the first will contextualise coerced labour in the Indian textile industry; the second section will compare in-depth case studies of coerced labour in the mid-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century; and the third section will extrapolate the implications of these cases in order to assess whether present-day coerced labour in the Indian textile industry is rooted in the structure of past labour relations. India is the subject of my research for two reasons: firstly, I have at least some grounding in Indian historiography from previous courses I elected at Undergraduate study, one of which investigated India in relation to the British empire and the second explored the influence of Ghandi in Indian Nationalism. In addition, as part of this Master's Programme, I am currently writing a paper on the social position of Indian weavers, as compared with their British counterparts, in the eighteenth-century. Secondly, India is an attractive research area since relevant primary source material and secondary literature is overwhelmingly written in English.

Prior to staring concerted research, I intend to keep a broad scope of the possible case studies which will be included in the study. During the first six weeks of the internship I will narrow its focus. The potential methodologies through which I propose to do so include selecting one location (a region or city) in which to compare coerced labour; or alternatively, selecting one form of coerced labour (debt bondage or child workers, for example) and comparing a mid-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century case of its practice. For both proposals, methodological problems arise: the first difficulty is the effect that globalisation has on drawing an imperfect comparison between the mid-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century. The second consideration is to ensure that the two contexts selected underwent an equivalent degree of colonial rule during the mid-nineteenth-century.

In order to produce the study I will undertake a thorough review of the historiographical literature on labour relations in the textile industry more generally, and in the Indian context specifically. Alongside emersion in the secondary literature, I will utilise the IISH's research network by contacting affiliated academics with relevant research in the field and use their work to determine case studies relevant for comparative analysis. Through the IISH's research network I intend to contact other institutes which research the present-day textile industry, such as the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) and the Indian Committee of the Netherlands (LIW), in order to obtain relevant sources on concurrent cases of coerced labour. Finally, in addition to searching the IISH archives for relevant primary source material, I will investigate the records of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in order to compare the economic position of textile workers between the mid-nineteenth- and twenty-first-centuries.

The internship product will reflect an academic tone since it is primarily intended for the research community. In spite of its historical interest, however, I intend the study to be relevant to readers beyond the historical academic community. For example, the present-day implications of the study should be of interest to research organisations which act in an advisory or lobbying capacity to reform the textile industry, such as the SOMO and LIW.

Provisional time schedule

(Throughout the internship weekly logs will be emailed to Auke Rijpma).

Date (w/b):	*Activity:*	*Thesis Completion:*
4-January	Agree work plan with Marcel van der Linden (7th); Submit work plan to Auke Rijpma (10th).	
18-January	Finalise work plan and complete internship form Submit all documents to Student Desk.	Submit work plan
1-February	Start internship (3 days per week); Review secondary literature (C19 textile industry; compare with other global industries; theories on coerced labour); Determine theoretical framework (methodologies of comparative analysis: location; labour form); Commence editing work (ongoing until April).	
15-February	Review secondary literature (C21 textile industry); Select comparable cases; finalise methodology, focus review of secondary literature accordingly.	
1-March	Finalise research demarcations; Collect relevant primary sources.	Finalise research questions
15-March	Submit memo to Thesis Lab on research questions, historiography and plan; Use plan to determine sectional research (structure of thesis) and focus secondary research on cases.	Write thesis plan Write provisional introduction
29-March	Submit memo to Thesis Lab on introduction; Use peer review to re-draft introduction and finalise methodological problems with research.	
12-April	Write first section (context, methodology) at rate of 1,000 words per day.	Finalise introduction
26-April	Submit memo to Thesis Lab on first section of report; Use peer review to re-draft first section; Review weekly logs and write internship report.	 Submit internship report
10-May	Finish redraft of first section; Write second section (cases, sources).	Finalise first section (context, cases)
24-May	Submit memo to Thesis Lab on second section of report and conclusions; Use peer review to re-draft second section; Write conclusion; Send first draft to mentors for critique.	Finalise second section (implications) Complete first draft
7-June	Re-drafting, final editing and referencing.	Finalise second draft Submit thesis portfolio (20th)

The primary aim of this research is to compare and draw out the continuities between historic and current cases of coerced labour in the Indian textile industry. In doing so it will address the central research question: what causes coerced labour to occur in the textile industry? Sub-research questions with a specific focus on the Indian industry will support conclusions drawn for the textile industry in general. These include; how do historic and current cases of coerced labour in the Indian textile industry compare? In what forms does coerced labour occur? Are there structure similarities with regards to, firstly, the social position of textile workers; secondly, the economic position of textile labour unions; and thirdly the position of female textile workers?

Through investigation of economic theories such as Dependency Theory and by employing theories of coerced labour, the research report will situate the Indian textile industry within its global context: is there continuity in the global economic structures that cause the persistence of coerced labour in the textile industry which affects Third-World countries such as India? In addition to the methodological proposals discussed in section IV, the overarching methodology will therefore employ a structural approach to assess labour conditions in the Indian textile industry. In doing so, it will focus attention on the formal institutions determining labour conditions such as historic and current labour unions, as well as the employment policy of the East India Company as compared with private multinational textile companies such as H&M or Primark. Finally, by considering coerced labour as a method of discipline or pattern of behaviour, this research will also explore the informal institutions affecting labour conditions.

The relevance of this research is two-fold, both academic and societal: firstly, it relates to the major historiographical debates which dominates research into the Indian textile industry. This contends, on the one hand, that British colonialism, specifically the East India Company, caused coerced labour conditions (Parthasarathi, 2001), while arguing on the other that coerced labour was caused by a deterioration in the low-wage labour conditions which arose from deindustrialisation (Matson, 1990). In short, by drawing continuities between coerced labour in historic and current examples of textile work this research will suggest that coerced labour is not dependent on economic conditions such as industrialisation, rather it is caused by an uneven distribution of power relations (Patterson, 1982). In seeking to integrate the political concept of power relations within the economic structure of the textile industry, this research hopes to offer an original perspective on coerced labour. Secondly, this research has societal relevance since it will demonstrate that ongoing social justice issues have historical roots. In doing so it will cast scrutiny on the media's myopic reporting of current coerced labour abuses as present-day or 'new' phenomena which overlooks the structural continuities in economic and political power relations that cause coerced labour conditions to persist.

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11. INTERNSHIP REPORT

The Organisation

I completed my internship at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam between February and May 2015. The IISH is a research organisation which specialises in the history of labour. Its research focus investigates variation within labour relationships, specifically global differences in working conditions and levels of remuneration, across occupational sectors between 1500 and the present-day. It questions the effect of individuals and collective action on labour relations, and seeks to use historical insight to contribute to contemporary discussions on social equality, economic growth, migration, globalisation, and democracy.

The internship originated from my interest in applying historical research to contemporary issues of social justice. I discussed this proposal with Jessica Dijkman who informed me of IISH's work and facilitated my introduction to Marcel van der Linden. In our first meeting, I suggested a project which combined historical research with anthropological fieldwork to assess labour relations within a specific industry. This lent itself to a long-term comparative project, an approach employed by the IISH in its own research. I chose the textile industry because over the past decade it has received a barrage of critical media attention regarding labour rights. I chose to focus on India because the textile industry is prominent in the country's historiography, of which I had prior knowledge from papers written during my Bachelor's and for another class during this Master's. I also anticipated that I would have ample access to sources since the majority of Indian scholarship is written in English.

I expected the internship to provide an opportunity for collaboration with other researchers. This was facilitated by the IISH's communal atmosphere in which work is discussed over lunch and at research seminars. IISH colleagues offered me great personal encouragement during these meetings. There was less scope for academic collaboration, however, due to the demands of individual's own projects. That said, the internship provided me with an opportunity to meet with Jan Breman, an eminent anthropologist whose research on India spans forty years. During our discussion in late March, Breman suggested that I incorporate analysis of contemporary textile production in the informal sector in order to reflect industrial change between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century. This proved a valuable insight because evidence from the informal power-loom sector elucidates my argument that intermediaries' influence in recruitment has declined over the period since workers in this sector are typically recruited directly by employers. I also met with Jan Lucassen in mid-April to discuss sources of statistical evidence on migration, employment and wage-rates in the textile industry. Lucassen directed me towards occupational and migration censuses which were most helpful, particularly to show levels of female and casual employment in the early-twentieth-century.

Internship Assignment and Tasks

The study is a combined internship product and analysis which offers a comparative assessment of labour relationships in the Indian textile industry between the late-nineteenth- and twenty-first-century. It asks how changes in labour recruitment over the period have affected the degree of coercion exerted within labour relationships. The study seeks to provide an in-depth, academic discussion of changes in labour relationships which are contextualised within industrial changes over the period. In general, the research outlined in the work plan was integrated into the study; it remained a long-term piece of comparative research which assessed the structural effects of labour coercion. Over the course of research, I narrowed my initial research question on the causes of labour coercion to consider the effect of labour recruitment on coercion. This focus is a valuable contribution since the literature predominantly considers working conditions rather than the supply of labour to production sites which is often the initial cause of coercion within labour relationships.

The purpose of my internship was to gain research experience; this informed my principal task of collecting relevant primary sources and secondary literature for the study. Working at the IISH facilitated this task because its library of labour studies and labour historiography is comprehensive, particularly on India. My second task was to assist Marcel van der Linden in editing a forthcoming collection of essays. I undertook this work in the first two weeks of the internship, after which I accompanied Marcel to meet with the book's co-editor in Brussels. We discussed which essays would be included in the final collection. My principal contribution was in improving the linguistic quality of the essays, particularly since the majority were written by non-native English speakers. My suggestions for alteration were relayed to the authors together with comments on the essay's coherence and structure.

From the experience I learnt two things about writing a research article: firstly, the main reason articles were rejected was poor structure which affected the argument's cogency. In some cases, articles which I considered to be written with clarity were rejected because of an internal inconsistency, whilst others which I thought poor to read were accepted because of structural coherence. I learnt that an author should gain perspective from the quality of the words written on the page and initially consider the overall direction of the writing. Secondly, the most common criticism leveraged against articles was imprecise use of definitions. This is particularly fraught in labour historiography which includes contested definitions of 'slave', 'coerced', 'forced', 'bonded', and 'unfree' labour. I learnt the importance of using definitions precisely since each term is applied to different types of labour relationships and is derived from its own historiographical tradition. This exposure informed my decision to use 'coerced labour' in my own research study. The term provides sufficient scope to include dependency labour relations which are entered voluntarily (as opposed to slave or forced labour), and are not exclusively maintained through debt (as in bonded labour). In short, the editing work highlighted the importance of structure to elucidate an argument and taught me the correct historiographical terms to employ.

Challenges Encountered

Managing the time spent on editing work was a problem in the first two or three weeks of the internship. In the work plan I agreed with Marcel that editing would occupy one day per week for the first two months. Due to Marcel's appointment with the book's co-editor in mid-February, we decided to reallocate this time to one period at the beginning of the internship. Two problems arose: firstly, I did not start research on my own study until late February as a result. Secondly, the editing work absorbed more time than the eight to ten days allocated. This was because the majority of articles were in a less revised state than anticipated; the poor language required substantial editing before I could give an overall assessment of the articles.

The additional time spent editing also resulted from miscommunication with Marcel as to what the work involved. I did not appreciate that the first stage of 'editing' determined which articles were sent forth for author's alterations, it did not require that the editors made improvement to the articles as they were initially submitted. Therefore, while Marcel expected me to critique the article's argument and structure, I expected to improve the article's language and style. In the second week of February I arranged a meeting with Marcel to discuss our different expectations of the work. This alleviated my concerns about not fulfilling the task as Marcel expected. However, since I had already made detailed suggestions for improvement on half of the submissions, I wanted to complete every article to the same standard. I was pleased that I did so because I think the suggestions were helpful to the authors whose articles were accepted. In view of the delay submitting my own work, however, I was probably mistaken to become needlessly engrossed in the editing work. My propensity to become bogged down by detail is a facet of my work approach which I need to manage.

The main research challenge I encountered was accessing primary evidence. I considered travelling to the British Library which holds sources from India's colonial period, particularly Government commissioned factory investigations and employment reports. Logistical matters prevented me from doing so, particularly because once I had clear research questions and hypotheses, the time to conduct primary research was limited. To solve the problem, firstly I used interlibrary loan to access material available in the Netherlands. Through this I obtained William Morison's (1908) *Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission* and J. R. Clynes' (1931) *Royal Commission on Labour in India*. Secondly, I searched digitised collections to access Janet Kelman's report (1923) *Labour in India* which focuses on women's position in industry. Thirdly, I arranged for scanned pages from S. R. Deshpande's (1946) *Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Cotton Mill Industry in India* to be sent from the British Library.[294]

It was also problematic to access primary sources with a specific focus on recruitment for the contemporary period. Anthropological fieldwork and NGO reports predominantly investigate labour conditions rather than methods of labour supply. To solve this I contacted the authors of three investigations conducted by the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) to request a meeting at their office in Amsterdam. I contacted SOMO in mid-March, but did not receive

[294] For full bibliographic information of these sources, please see chapter 8.1.

a response after several follow-up emails until the second week of April. I arranged a telephone interview with Martje Theuws in mid-April. This time delay posed a challenge because it prevented me from investigating the effect of gift-giving in recruitment, a practice which emerged from our discussion.

Through Theuws, I contacted A. Viyakula Mary from Social Awareness and Voluntary Education (SAVE), an NGO in Tiruppur which specialises in labour rights. We arranged a Skype interview in early May, although very poor internet connection posed a challenge for the discussion. To ensure that I had not recorded information incorrectly due to mishearing the responses, I sent a transcript of our discussion for Viyakula Mary to review. The practice of Sumangali workers obtaining advances during recruitment was the most significant evidence to emerge from our discussion. My research would have benefited from not having a month-long delay in collecting evidence from SAVE (as a result of SOMO's tardy response) because showing the continuity of debt in labour coercion formed a significant theme of the study.

Attainment of Learning Goals

I was motivated to complete an internship with the IISH in order to pursue academic and professional objectives. The academic skills I sought were twofold: to deepen my knowledge of economic history, and to improve my research abilities. Firstly, exposure to labour historiography has improved my understanding of economic history because it highlights the centrality of employment in constructing power relations which effect change between socioeconomic groups. Labour studies is another field of economic history to those I encountered in earlier Master's classes because it focuses attention on the position of individual workers, rather than national economic development. Nevertheless, the theory of capital-intensive development that I acquired in the class *Growth and Inequality* proved invaluable as it is the model which counters the theory of labour-intensive development. This emerged as key explanation for continuity in labour coercion. In researching this study, I have also gained knowledge of economic processes, such as supply chains, wage differentials and labour productivity, which are important in historical economic analysis.

Secondly, my general research skills have improved as I am more adept at extracting key pieces of evidence from lengthy primary sources, particularly reports from NGOs, the ILO and Indian Government. My speed of writing has also improved as I am more adept at the process of drafting, critiquing and improving my work. The research skill which remains under exercised is searching for archival material. My intention to investigate the records of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) held at the IISH did not prove fruitful since very few sources were relevant to the textile industry.

The professional objectives I sought related to gaining experience in collaborative working and developing an area of interest towards a research career. Firstly, as discussed above, my exposure to collaborative working did not develop broadly among my IISH colleagues. The fortnightly progress meetings with Marcel proposed in the work plan were conducted on a 'need-to' basis during the

internship. This did not generally pose a problem since Marcel was swift at responding to emails and arranging to meet as his schedule allowed. As it transpired, the supervision roles that I proposed in my work plan—that of Marcel as academic advisor at the IISH and Auke as mentor at Utrecht University—were reversed. Marcel's encouragement proved invaluable throughout the project, whilst Auke principally gave academic supervision in feedback sessions. These meetings provided the greatest opportunity for collaboration, although coordinating equal participation on a work project is a skill which needs further development.

Secondly, I hoped that exposure to labour history would provide a potential area of interest for future research. I think research on the labour market has great societal applicability, particularly investigation into the process of labour casualisation which appears relevant to low skill, low wage jobs in developed and developing economies.[295] My key objective was to bring historical research to bear on current social justice issues. In an immediate sense, I think the study achieves this objective by highlighting that national context affects the persistence of labour coercion. Looking further ahead, engaging historical insight to inform social justice issues in international development is an avenue of further research in which I am particularly interested.

Critical Reflection

My internship provided me with a valuable opportunity to experience work in research outside a University setting. It also provided me with an opportunity to attend my first academic conference and interact with academics outside their teaching role. The conference was held in mid-March at the Centre for Historical Research on War and Contemporary Society (CEGESOMA) in Brussels on the subject of labour coercion in different contexts of conflict and colonialism. It was valuable to observe a collection of academic speakers because it demonstrated which skills are fundamental to successfully presenting one's research. In the most compelling presentations, authors gave a strong justification of their research and extracted the essence of core arguments. The ability to simplify, condense and clarify arguments are key skills which would improve my own academic presentations. Lastly, the internship exposed me to editing work which I enjoyed and will also consider as a professional career, either in an academic or non-academic capacity.

The experience I gained from this study is that undertaking research is time-consuming which needs to be accounted for in work schedules. In general, this requires maintaining a narrow research focus to avoid the study becoming unmanageable. I struggled with this, perhaps as a consequence of the study's wide scope and the unfamiliarity of the topic. I also learnt that the necessity of a clear structure for compelling academic writing is especially pertinent to lengthy studies. My eagerness to start writing first drafts of each chapter should have been channelled towards creating a detailed plan of the study. Although I developed a plan to aid redrafting, this stage should have been completed before writing.

[295] Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011.

Reflecting on the study itself, I recognise methodological limitations which are born out of the available source material. Firstly, the sectors encompassed by 'the textile industry' differ between the periods under study. For the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century, I drew evidence from the cotton textile industry (unless otherwise specified). In the twenty-first-century, the industry is dominated by the apparel and ready-made garment sector which is not exclusively based on cotton textiles. I sought to mitigate this inconsistency by focusing on South India where contemporary cotton production is most prevalent. Even so, its main textile cluster, Tiruppur, specialises in knitwear which mixes cotton, wool and synthetic fibres. I also focused on the Sumangali Scheme to maintain as much methodological consistency as possible since it is a recruitment strategy primarily used in cotton spinning mills.

I attempted two other methodologies during my research, as outlined in the work plan: the first was focusing on one factory case-study and the second was focusing on one type of labour coercion. The problem with selecting one factory case-study was that no factories detailed in the 1890 and 1908 Factory Commission remain in operation today.[296] During my early research, I did not anticipate the extent of industrial change in the organisation of textile production over the past century. This methodology was unrealistic due to the dismantlement of vertically integrated large-scale factories and relocation of production units to textile clusters outside Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Ahmedabad. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mill in Madras, referenced in this study, was the longest-running vertically integrated textile factory in India. It closed in 1996 and is now primarily used as a set for Tamil films and television.[297]

The second methodology I proposed was drawing comparison of one type of labour coercion between the two periods. My early research considered changes in bonded labour over the past century. The Sumangali Scheme provided evidence of labour bondage in the present-day; the imposition of physical restrictions on workers' movements, days worked in arrears for absenteeism and the expectation of a lump sum. This differed from labour bondage in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century which was imposed through debt. However, the problem with pursing this methodology was that historical sources gave insufficient detail on how the system operated, such as the amount by which workers were indebted, the proportion of the workforce indebted and how *jobbers* enforced threats against workers who did not repay. In short, disparity in the quality of evidence between the historical and contemporary period prevented using this methodological approach.

In the end, I am satisfied with the approach that developed, which focuses analysis on the profile of labour recruitment strategies target. I think this is successful for two reasons: firstly, it shows the link between workers' socioeconomic status and their profile as female, casual or migrant labour. Secondly, it shows continuity in the recruitment of workers from low socioeconomic groups

[296] Factory names from the 1890 Factory Commission are provided in Baniprasanna Misra, "Factory Labour during the Early Years of Industrialization: An Appraisal in the Light of the Indian Factory Commission, 1890." *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 12, no. 3 (January 1975): 203–28.

[297] Shalini Umachandran, "Chequered History of a Textile Company." *Times of India*, 12 March 2010; Sangeetha Kandavel, "Chennai's Biggest Township to Come up at Binny Mills." *The Hindu*. 27 November 2014 http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chennais-biggest-township-to-come-up-at-binny-mills/article6637143.ece. Accessed 29/06/15.

between the turn of the twentieth-century and the present. I am also satisfied with the breadth of sources employed on labour coercion in the contemporary period. I am less content with the range of historical sources since those which focus on Madras are derived from the 1920s and 1940s and therefore lack detail on the turn of the twentieth-century.[298] In part, this reflects that Bombay and Calcutta were the principal textile centres in that period, before Madras and Ahmedabad came to prominence in the subsequent decades.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the IISH for offering me an internship and giving me generous access to their resources. I thank Marcel in particular for his encouragement in my research and for inviting me to partake in the editing work and academic conference, opportunities I would not have had outside the internship.

[298] Evidence from Madras in the 1920s comes from Eamon Murphy, *Unions in Conflict: A Comparative Study of Four South Indian Textile Centres 1918-1939*. Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1981 and in the 1940s from S. R. Deshpande, *Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Cotton Mill Industry in India*. London, 1946.