



ECAY5004: Work, Welfare and Poverty

Theme 4: Changes in Working Practice (Part Two)



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

ken.dicks@uwtsd.ac.uk

Learning Recap

What did we cover in the previous session?



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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

A Brief History of Work

- In our first session exploring the way that work and attitudes to work have changed we had reached the point where towns and cities had developed
- We also noted that societies had created the role of the 'scribe' which means that records of these societies were now made
- This means that we can find evidence of what people in a society thought about work and the types of work that were carried out by other people.
- The social stratification that we discussed at the end of part 1 was also seen in the Greek and Roman societies and continued in many areas of Europe beyond these cultures.



A Brief History of Work

- Although towns and cities had developed a massive majority of people still lived and work in the countryside
- For example Smith *et al.* (2016) argue that 90% of the population on England lived in rural settlements
- This compares with 20.6% on the population in 2015 (DEFRA, 2020)
- This pattern remained, with some changes, the norm until the 18th century and the 'agricultural revolution'
- From Roman times until then the basic unit if agricultural work was the family
- Families worked the land and kept animals to feed themselves and any surplus was traded within the community or at market.



A Brief History of Work

The Division of Agricultural work by gender

- It has long been thought that the agricultural work of families was clearly divided on gender lines – *Can you think of examples?*
- However, more recent research is beginning to show that the way in which work was allocated was more complex (Whittle & Hailwood, 2018)
- For example they state that ‘the degree of women's participation in agricultural work is also unclear’. (Whittle & Hailwood, 2018)



A Brief History of Work

The Division of Agricultural work by gender

- There is a growing debate as to whether the divisions were as clear as it was supposed.
- For example, views range from Snell's (cited in Whittle & Hailwood) assertion that 'there is abundant supportive evidence for a very wide range of female participation in agricultural tasks before 1750 in the south-east'
- to Sharpe's (cited in Whittle & Hailwood) conclusion that 'before and during the industrial revolution, the demand from agriculture for female labour was limited'



A Brief History of Work

The Division of Agricultural work by gender

- So whilst it is difficult to give a definitive picture, there is evidence that some division of labour can be detected
- For example Ketsch (*cited in* Hubbs-Wright 2020) argues that ‘peasant women were in charge of the domestic economy, which consisted of home, yard, and the garden,
- while men worked more often at tasks that required physical strength, like construction, maintaining paths and fences, and work in the fields’



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The Division of Agricultural work by gender

- But we need to always remember that records from this period are not complete and often do not record the role of women separately
- Indeed Whittle (2014) argues that even when seeking evidence of the gendered division of work in surveys and inventories of farm activities the picture can be confusing
- This is because 'it is essential to remember that the inventories of married men also recorded evidence of their wives' work activities'



A Brief History of Work

- We can see that the work of women was often not recorded separately and we know from other Modules that women's rights were very limited
- However, it was a social norm that a widow could continue the work of their husband
- This has allowed historians, such as Whittle (2014), to explore the types of work carried out by households headed by a widow with those headed by a man
- She points out that work done by the wives and daughters of married men would be recorded under their husbands and that both types of household 'could also contain other workers such as children, servants and apprentices' but the comparison is interesting nevertheless



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Occupation / Activity	No. households headed by married men	Percentage carrying out the activity	No. households headed by widows	Percentage carrying out the activity
Arable farming	53	70.7%	21	28.0%
Livestock farming	66	88.0%	45	60.0%
Food processing	49	65.3%	40	53.3%
Textiles	46	61.3%	32	42.7%
Specialist Trade	21	28.0%	4	5.3%
Money Lending	20	26.7%	28	37.3%



Study Skills Interlude - Households

- We have been looking at historical data based on 'households'
- This is also a phrase that is used in contemporary data and statistics (e.g. household income).
- As with many phrases that we use we need to be aware of the specific meaning in a social science context.

What do you understand the terms 'household' to mean?



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Study Skills Interlude - Households

- As you develop your research skills you should have a list (either an actual list or a mental list) of sources of such definitions that you know you can rely on.
- In this case you need to be sure that the definition is 'official' and is the same as that used by Governments, social scientists etc.

Where might you choose to look for such a definition?



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Families & Households statistics explained



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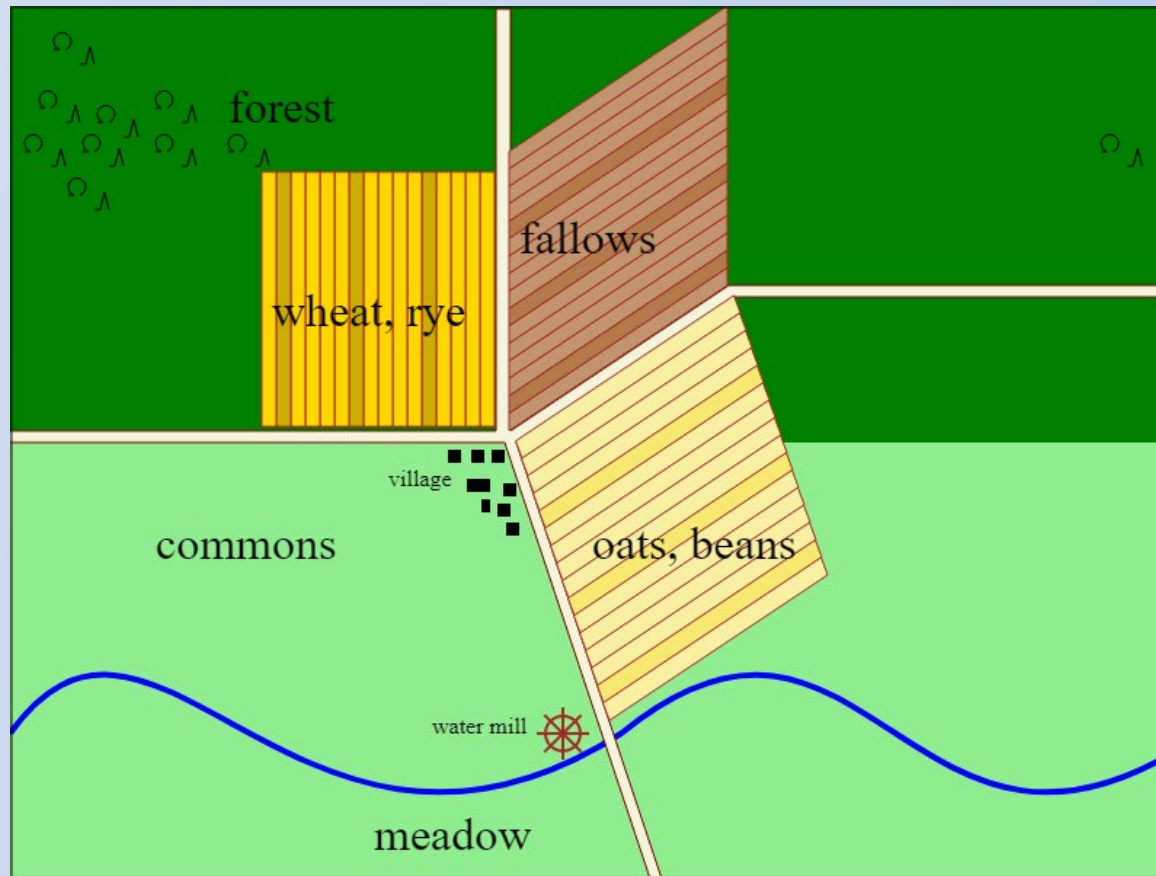
The organisation of work before the 18th century

- We have already seen that each family produced food for its own needs
- However families worked together in some aspects of agricultural production in what is known as 'communal organisation'.
- There were a number of reasons for this, as follows;
 1. The work of ploughing the land, planting and harvesting crops had to be done by everybody at the same time
 2. Ploughs needed 8 oxen to pull them so each family contribute one animal to a team
 3. The most common method of farming was the Open Field system



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The organisation of work before the 18th century



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The organisation of work before the 18th century

- One significant change that occurred in towns and cities was the development of the Craft Guilds
- These were established for all of the specialised trades
- The Guilds regulated who could and could not undertake a trade in a town or city
- They fixed prices for goods and services and intervened in trade disputes
- They established a strict hierarchy of 'Masters', 'Journeymen' and 'Apprentices'
- Training was long (often 7 years or more)

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The organisation of work before the 18th century

- We have already seen that some households undertook specialist work such as spinning wool and weaving cloth
- A system of early capitalism known as 'putting out' developed around these types of work
- Merchants and entrepreneurs would buy large amounts of raw material (e.g. wool) and then contract with individual households for them to do the spinning and weaving
- The work was done in the family's own cottage and on spinning wheels and looms that were built and owned by the family
- This meant that families were at the mercy of the markets



In the next session we will look at how
the Agricultural and Industrial
Revolutions affected working patterns.



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