

Call for papers: ESSHC Valencia, 30 March – 2 April 2016

Solidarity before the welfare state: A global perspective (Middle Ages – early 20th century)

Practices of charity and alms giving as well as the organization of poor relief or mutual assistance always imply a sense of ‘community’. All assistance and relief is in one way or another reserved for a specific group considered ‘deserving’, be that co-religionists, fellow townsmen, members of a particular guild, confraternity or quarter, etc. When allocating aid or relief to one specific group, the in-group is formed while its boundaries are being sharpened to outsiders. But, while the mechanism as such may be virtually universal, the actual definition and delineation of communities changed considerably over time and across regions and contexts.

In Western European historiography major transformations have been exposed, for the sixteenth century, the end of the ancien régime and the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in particular. These mechanisms are often explained from religious transformations such as the Reformation, confessionalization and secularization; proletarianization and the disciplining of workforce; and state formation, bureaucratization and the pacification of the labour-capital conflict. These explanations, however, are indebted to Eurocentric modernity narratives and are therefore limited. An adequate understanding of solidarity mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion requires a global and comparative perspective, in addition to a long term perspective.

This session offers a platform for comparative and non-European views on the history of charity, mutual aid and poor relief mechanisms of diverse communities across time and space. We particularly welcome contributions on for instance the Middle East, China, Eastern Europe and Southern America, next to studies adopting an entangled history-approach, in which mutual influences and cross-regional developments are addressed.

Organisers: prof. dr. Bert De Munck, prof. dr. Isa Blumi and dra. Hadewijch Masure (University of Antwerp – Centre for Urban History). Please send a paper title and abstract (100-500 words) to hadewijch.masure@uantwerp.be **before 27 April 2015**.

For information on the European Social Science History Conference visit <https://esshc.socialhistory.org/esshc-valencia-2016>.