

Networks of Paupers and Debtors
Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Forms of Monetary Dependence
in the Modern Period

Conference of the German Historical Institute London and the *Exzellenzcluster*
“Gesellschaftliche Abhängigkeiten und soziale Netzwerke” of Trier and Mainz Universities
London 24-26 February 2011

Call for Papers

Social networks play an important role in overcoming material dependence resulting from poverty and debts. Access to credit, the availability of material and social support, even access to community and state support can be regarded as social relationships that could be described as social networks. Sociological and social-historical research has so far been particularly interested in networks of power (e.g. networks of the nobility, networks of business and banking families) and has hardly paid any attention to the social relationships and strategies of dependents and paupers beyond close family relationships (e.g. neighbours, pawnbrokers). The conference should examine theoretically and empirically the concept of network-building as a strategy for overcoming extreme social difficulties. This requires a multi-methodological approach, which ideally combines quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Given the availability of sources, however, this can seldom be converted into wide-ranging individual projects. The heterogeneity of the methodological approaches and the source material (personal accounts, letters, legal sources, capital inventories, mortgage books) often leads to very different perspectives on the overall topic. The conference will therefore offer a platform for forming, by means of mutual exchange, a comprehensive view of the historical phenomenon of network-building as a reaction to poverty and debt in the modern period in both Europe and beyond. We are looking for papers relating to both past and present which deal with this topic using quantitative and/or qualitative approaches.

Please send an abstract and a brief CV, by 31 October 2010, to:

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