

Call for Papers

We invite abstracts for our panel *Social Networks in the Global Diffusion of Insurance (19th and 20th centuries)* for the 19th World Economic History Congress, Paris, July 25–29, 2022. Website: <https://www.wehc2022.org/>

Conference Abstract

The 19th World Congress will be held in Paris on July 25-29, 2022. The Congress will address “**resources**” as one of the main challenges of the contemporary world. The Congress will consider sessions on all the categories of resources, that is natural, material, immaterial and human (work and skill): water, air, energy, food products, raw materials, labour, capital, patents etc. The panel will address the discovery, management and limitation of these resources, the impact their use has on territorial and social organizations as well as their significances in individuals’ eyes up for the world community at large.

Conveners:

Martin Lengwiler, University of Basel; Robin Pearson, University of Hull

Abstract

In recent Economic History, social capital is seen as a crucial resource for doing business. It relies on social networks, in combination with human capital, such as work, skills or cultural competences. Taking the history of insurance as an exemplary field, the section investigates the relevance of social networks as a resource for the global diffusion of finance. The case studies, presented in the session, focus on non-Western world regions (East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East), in which Western companies had to deal with the social and cultural specificities of non-Western regions and markets. In a globally comparative perspective, stretching from the late 19th century to the 1980s, the speakers discuss the relevance of social networks and cultural competences for selling insurance, for example to customers from specific ethnic communities or minorities. How did insurance companies – Western and local ones – accommodate to local traditions of saving and risk-sharing? How did agents, brokers or branch office managers sell contracts, both for life and non-life insurance, when confronted with non-actuarial valuations of life and death? What forms of expertise were mobilized to increase the social and reputational capital of individual insurance actors?

This panel welcomes papers that focus on the topic “social capital” in connection to private insurance. Both quantitative and qualitative investigations are welcome. Papers may either focus on developments in a single country or region or adopt a comparative perspective.

Papers (so far):

Networks as a Resource for the Diffusion of Insurance in Nineteenth-Century South and East Asia

Kaori Abe, Robin Pearson, University of Hull, UK

Bridging Psychic Distance: British and French Insurance Companies and the Making of a Turkish Market for Life Insurance

Claus Musterle, University of Basel, Switzerland

Networks of Decolonization: Social and Cultural Conditions of Insurance in Tanzania since the 1960s

Francis Daudi, University of Basel, Switzerland

Title to be defined

Eva Kocher, University of Basel, Switzerland

Abstract submission guidelines

All abstracts must be submitted in English and they should include:

- Title of the paper
- Author(s): First and last names, institutions, and e-mail addresses of the authors
- Abstract text: Abstract text should not exceed 300 words. The abstracts should include:

If you have any questions, please contact: martin.lengwiler@unibas.ch

Please send your abstract by April 14, 2022, to martin.lengwiler@unibas.ch.