



WHO CARES IN EUROPE?

Call for Papers : Conference
“Decolonising Empires, 1930s – 1970s:
(Trans)national Actors and Social
Reform in (Post-) Colonial Countries

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CALL FOR PAPERS

For the Conference on
Decolonising Empires, 1930s – 1970s: (Trans)national Actors and Social Reform in (Post-) Colonial Countries

Research questions and perspectives

This is a call for papers for a conference to be held in September 2023, on how regional, national and transnational social movements helped or obstructed social reform during the transition from colonially governed to independent countries. The conference aims to reframe this process by placing at the centre of the analysis the action of transnational social movements, with a focus on non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), transnational labour movements and voluntary associations.

Social welfare has been commonly considered to be a distinctive trait of European history and identity. Academic research traditionally studied models, policies, practices, ideas based on European experiences. Only recently, political sciences and historiography began to explore the development of social policy in colonial and postcolonial areas. Starting from the recent studies on the global social policy, this interdisciplinary conference aims to scrutinise the role of the transnational actors that interconnected Europe and the (post)colonial spaces in the years 1930s–1970s. This call is primarily concerned with the territories of former European colonial empires, but it aims to include the role and influence of global players and ideas that affected the decolonisation process. The proposed contributions may deal with “social welfare” at large, including social security and healthcare, labour legislation, unionism, education, housing.

The project welcomes contributions from historians, political scientists, social scientists that examine the interactions that occurred among public and voluntary actors at national, regional, international levels. It thus focuses on the interconnections between the activity of the transnational social movements like INGOs/NGOs and, on the other hand, colonial administrations, local parties and unions, UN agencies. The proposal integrates the traditional “euro-centric” views by shifting emphasis to the non-European actors that promoted and shaped social reform worldwide throughout the second half of the 20th Century. Moreover, it decentralises the current interpretations that mainly focused on institutional national and multilateral actors, e.g., UN international organisations, by including the role of transnational volunteerism.

Relevant questions stemming from this topic may be:

- 1) How and to what extent did national, regional and transnational social movements acted as brokers in the exchanges between metropolises and dependant territories?
- 2) To what extent did transnational social movements influenced the debate and implementation of welfare reform in Europe and in (post)colonial areas?
- 3) What roles did transnational social movements play in the transition from colonial to post-colonial social policies?
- 4) To which extent did the transnational social movements' social action reflect/shape the family welfare in dependent/newly independent territories?
- 5) How and to what extent did the Cold War context influence the goals and action of the transnational social movements in term of ideas and policies?

This CfP and Conference forms one of the fruits of the COST-action Who Cares in Europe?, dealing with families, voluntary organisations and the European states. We study their relations with transnational social movements in the framework of colonial empires and newly independent states, as well as the Cold War.

Publication venues

Depending on the papers we aim for an edited volume – with an introduction by us – or a special issue of a Journal, such as the *Journal of Global History*, or the *International Review of Social History*.

Please let us know before 31 January 2023 if you are interested to participate in this conference, mentioning a title and a preliminary abstract of 1-2 pages.

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