

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“Family assets: Social practices and social regulation in the West during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”

Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Canada

June 16-17, 2016

*Jointly organized by the Centre interuniversitaire d'études québécoises (CIEQ) and the Canada
Research Chair in the History of Civil Law in Quebec during the Contemporary Era*

Theme

Over the nineteenth century, industrialization fundamentally changed the way families earned their livelihoods and sought, when the occasion arose, to transmit their resources and legacies. The decline of economies based on farmland and fisheries and a massive dependence on wage work weakened many households, while liberal ideology made individual will and personal property the foundations of socioeconomic relations. Henceforth, these relations would depend more directly on the exchange of money. With the development of capitalism, a variety of new methods of generating value emerged, and families found themselves interacting with more or less institutionalized markets for credit, insurance, finance, and everyday consumption.

How was the monetization of social life experienced by households and family lines across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Looking at the experiences, practices and strategies of families living in a wide range of circumstances can lead to a better understanding of the role of money as a dominant form of social bond. It will be necessary to keep in mind families' modes of material and symbolic reproduction, a process experienced under different conditions that varied according to time, place, and social status. Furthermore, what institutional practices presided, with varying degrees of intensity, over the regulation of the monetization of social life as experienced in the domestic sphere?

While the family lies at the heart of this academic conference, participants are free to choose the analytical scope of their papers. The study of private life cannot be separated from the “social question” raised by the spread of wage labour in the nineteenth century (Castel, 1995) and the unequal distribution of national wealth (Piketty, 2013). Indeed, before the rise of the welfare state, the family was the focal point of the social reproduction of individuals, and today, through

the resurgence of inheritance as a major source of wealth, the family still remains a vector of inequality. At the other end of the spectrum, family resources (salaries, real estate, capital...) create their own web of microsociological relationships, formal and informal, that evolve over time (Zelizer, 1994).

Objectives

The objectives of the conference are to promote discussion of the various processes and issues of the monetization of social life as they impact the family, to stimulate exchanges on strategies of analysis for various scales of time and place, and to understand the continuities and disruptions that have marked their history.

Here are some examples of subjects that could be explored in more depth:

- The diversity of family experiences and practices in relation to assets and resources, with particular attention to questions of gender and class
- Interactions between the domestic economy and “modern” relationships to money, including consumption and credit in a capitalist economy
- Institutionalization and state regulation of family assets, especially from a legal and judicial perspective

To submit a paper proposal

Proposals should address the theme of the conference from a historical perspective. They must include the author’s academic title, institutional affiliation and contact information (email, university address); the title and a brief summary of the paper (250 words); and a brief curriculum vitae. Papers may be presented in either English or French. Please note that the conference will lead to the publication of the submitted texts, subject to their favourable review.

Deadline for submitting proposals is September 15, 2015, by email to: cieq@uqtr.ca

Advisory Committee

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