Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa

*Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa* is an empirical study of medieval long-distance trade agreements and the surrounding social dynamics that transformed the feudal organization of men-of-arms into the world of Renaissance merchants. Making use of 20,000 notarial records, the book traces the commercial partnerships of thousands of people in Genoa from 1150 to 1435 and reports social activity, on a scale that is unprecedented for such an early period of history anywhere.

In combining a detailed historical reading with network modeling to analyze the change in the long-distance trade relationships, Quentin Van Doosselaere challenges the prevailing Western-centric view of development by demonstrating that the history of the three main medieval economic frameworks that brought about European capitalism – equity, credit, and insurance – was not driven by strategic merchants’ economic optimizations but rather by a change in partners’ selections that reflected the dynamic of the social structure as a whole.

Dr. Quentin Van Doosselaere is a Research Fellow at Nuffield College. He combines training in sociology and business administration to focus on the emergence of capitalism at the end of the medieval period. Adding formal network analysis tools to detailed archival research, Dr. Van Doosselaere has studied the social foundations underpinning the economic changes that initiated the Western dominance in global economic exchange. The multidisciplinary nature of his research has resulted in invitations to present his work to Business, Economics, History, and Sociology Departments in both Europe and the United States.
Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa

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To my Risë. May she overcome the odds.
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Abbreviations

Currency
£ Genoese pound
FL Genoese florin

Unpublished Primary Sources

Published Primary Sources

The number that follows each abbreviation in the text refers the number of a specific notarial record and the date when (month and year) the record was minuted. For example, the abbreviation BO#224/December 1198 refers to the notarial record number 224 minuted in December 1198 by the notary Bonvillano as it was classified by Eierman, Kruger, and Reynolds (1939).


Peter Bearman, Charles Tilly, and Harrison White were the three people who most shaped my sociological practice while I was at Columbia University.

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