



Do the keys to  
understanding  
today's complex  
world lie in the past?

**TSEG  
Essay  
prize**

Pitch deadline:  
1 February 2026

**Do the keys to understanding today's complex world lie in the past? TSEG (Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History) challenges young researchers to demonstrate whether economic and social history can contribute to solving current social issues, and if so, how.**

Many of the major debates of our time, such as climate change, pandemics, inequality or geopolitical conflicts, seem to be dominated by technologists, hard scientists, economists and opinion makers. What role does historical insight have to play? And would it help? In what way?

Historians, in particular, have the knowledge and skills to provide in-depth context and nuance. Consider, for example, the migration debate, in which historians have already demonstrated how previous waves of migration can shed light on current dynamics. But what about the (aftermath of the) COVID-19 pandemic, the double standards towards Russia, the ongoing violence in the Middle East, Trump's tariff war, the rapid advance of artificial intelligence or climate change?

Furthermore, are there not downsides to providing historical context for contemporary issues? Doesn't this make historians vulnerable? Precisely because they provide historical context, historians are forced to take a stand. Consequently, won't their expertise become "just an opinion", one that may even be politically biased?

Do you believe that historical research is an indispensable guide to understanding the present and the future? If so, pitch a draft historical essay (max. 750 words, English or Dutch) that addresses these questions by **1 February 2026**. You may start from a contemporary social issue, as in the examples. Your essay could be a theoretical treatise or a historical case study. Either way, it must be clear why you deserve a place at the talk show table. Proposals may be submitted to [info@tseg.nl](mailto:info@tseg.nl)

Five authors, chosen by an expert jury, will be invited to develop their pitch into an essay of approximately 3,500 words. The winning essay will receive €500, and all five essays will be published in TSEG. Are you a PhD student, or did you obtain your PhD no more than three years ago? If so, take part and demonstrate the relevance of history as a discipline that has the potential to contribute to solving tomorrow's problems.

See here which essays were published in the previous edition of the essay prize:

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