

Call for papers: 'The corrupt colony? Empire, colonialism and corruption: 1800-present'

Place and date of conference: Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit, 22 January 2019

Introduction on the theme(s) of the conference

Scandal, corruption, exploitation and abuse of power are related to the history of modern empire-building. In spite of some case-studies and general essays on corruption and imperialism, no entangled analysis exists of empire and corruption. This conference is an attempt to discuss the topic more systematically. Colonial territories often became promised lands where individuals sought to make quick fortunes, sometimes in collaboration with the local population but more often at the expense of them. In some occasions, these shady dealings had repercussions back in the metropolis, questioning civilizing discourses in parliament and the press, and leading to reforms in the colonial administration. An analysis of these debates on empire and corruption can provide us new insights into the history of corruption, the 'politics of difference' and the origins of modern legacies, stereotypes and problems in former (colonial) empires. Besides overseas empires such as France, Spain, Great Britain and the Netherlands, the question of how land-based empires – such as Austro-Hungary, Russia and the Ottoman empire – debated colonial corruption will also be discussed. Another aim of this conference is to challenge the nation-state as the customary framework in the study of corruption. Clearly, therefore, better understanding of corruption in an imperial context is of scholarly interest and societal relevance. The conference is open for scholars from different countries and from different strands – history of empire, colonialism, postcolonial studies and the history of corruption. At the conference possibilities for publications and or further activities will be explored.

Structure of the conference, abstracts and preliminary papers

The organizing committee will invite several contributors to give a talk/ present a paper. There are also a limited number of places available for other contributors. If you are interested, please send us an abstract of your talk (500 words) by 1 October. In order to get the most out of this meeting we will circulate preliminary papers. If we accept your paper and if you accept the invitation to come, we kindly ask you to send us a preliminary draft of your paper (3000-5000 words) by 1 December. Abstract and preliminary papers should be in English and can be send to empireandcorruption@gmail.com

Topic and research questions

Authors are free to come up with their own topic as long as papers cover a topic that is related to the overall theme (see 'introduction') and pay attention to two overall questions 1) how is colonial corruption defined in the topic/ context under scrutiny, or what practices and ideas are discussed as corruption? 2) how does your analysis challenges existing views on empire, colonialism and corruption?

Outcome

The organizers would like to explore the possibilities to publish the papers in a special issue or an edited volume.

Organizers

Ronald Kroeze (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) Pol Dalmau (Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz), Frédéric Monier (Université d'Avignon). This initiative is also supported by the CNRS-funded GDRI-network of European social scientists and historians 'Politics and corruption: history and sociology' as well as the research institute CLUE+ of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Travel costs and accommodation

Travel costs will be reimbursed and accommodation will be provided for invited speakers. Listeners are welcome as well but should send an email beforehand to empireandcorruption@gmail.com