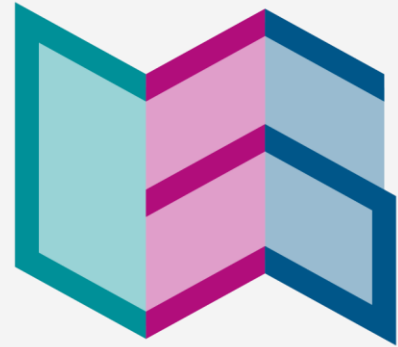


Universität
Münster



CENTRE FOR EMPIRE STUDIES

(Post)Colonial Histories and
Global Entanglements

Some Lessons on Internationalization

- What is the Centre for Empire Studies?
- Why and how was it created?
- What does it do?
- Practical Lessons
- Academic Lessons
- Personal Lessons
- General Lessons

What is the Centre for Empire Studies? (CES) (I)

- Interdisciplinary research centre for Empire Studies
- First permanent research centre on Empires within Germany without a specific epochal, local or thematic focus
- 44 Members and still growing
- Focus on History, but also members from British and American Studies, China Studies, Romance Studies and Music Studies
- Objective 1: Pooling and interconnecting research on Empires within Münster
- Objective 2: Connect research in Münster with the international research scene (internationalization)
- Objective 3: Increase visibility of humanities and specifically modern and contemporary history at our University and beyond

What is the Centre for Empire Studies? (CES) (II)

1. Imperial and post-imperial societies and cultures
2. Transimperiality
3. Mobility and Global Interdependence

Why and how was the CES created?

- Between 2020 and 2022 many new appointments of Professors at the Department of History, doing research on colonialism and/or Empires
- Great Britain, France, Russia, Spain, USA, Germany, Byzantium
- Also research on colonial History at the Cluster of Excellence „Religion and Politics“ and at the Käte Hamburger Kolleg „Legal Unity and Pluralism“
- “Arbeitsstelle Großbritannien und Commonwealth“ defunct but regular funds still available
- Problem 1: Low interconnectivity of research on empires within the History department and between the history department and other disciplines
- Problem 2: Low visibility of modern and contemporary history in Münster, especially compared to Ancient and Medieval History
- Problem 3: No clearly defined profile of modern and contemporary History in Münster on a national as well as international level, individual researchers have international connections but those need to be made available to the broader Münster context

Why and how was the CES created?

- First preliminary talks within the department of History starting in 2022, setting up an acting board of coordination
- Major preparatory work starting in early 2023
- Finding a name, recruit members, preparing the institutionalization on a bureaucratic level, find a common understanding on methods and topics, write a „constitution“ for the centre, finding consensus on future activities and procedures, set up a homepage, making the emerging centre visible, organizing a lecture series, preparing a kick off, finding consensus on future teaching and master’s programme, start preparing the implementation of the master’s programme, recruiting a student assistant to support our
- Coordination with the legal department, the financial department, the scholarship department, the office of the dean and the corresponding executive board, the executive board of the department
- Official foundation in July 2024, kick-off conference

What does the CES do?

- Lecture Series
- Conferences and Workshops
- Creating a Master's Programme
- Offering Fellowships
- Offering material support to related projects, workshops etc.
- Teaching on Empires and postcolonial topics, raising awareness among students
- Serving as an information hub
- Fostering cooperation with partners inside and outside of Münster
- Future Plans: Acquire third party funding for research projects and Summer Schools

Practical Lessons, or: How to become a bureaucrat and diplomat by accident

- Setting up a research centre means a lot of work
- Bureaucratic work – ensure you operate smoothly within existing legal and administrative framework
- Two-Level diplomacy
- Level 1: Ensure the interests and academic socialization of individual members (area/methods of research, institution, career background, available resources) are respected and represented while also creating a common ground and modus operandi (content, strategy, use of funds, bureaucratic procedures within the centre) and not losing sight of your objectives
- Level 2: interact and communicate with researchers from different academic and political cultures

Academic Lessons, or: on being a small fish in a big pond

- The process of internationalization will demonstrate to you how different academic fields and cultures are on an international level
- It will broaden your scope of interacting with varying national and international historiographies
- When you start out from your own national historiography this means a lot of learning to be done
- It also means you barely have an international network to start out with
- It lastly means interacting with persons with limited knowledge or understanding of your own academic and institutional background
- Reckon with your own limitations and strengths and reckon with different rationalities and structures within academia
- Learn, translate, communicate

Personal Lessons, or: What the fuck am I doing?!

- When you start internationalizing you start from somewhere
- You may come from a national academic background (therefore have to learn about others)
- You may get in contact with different academic cultures (therefore have to develop an understanding for them and learn to translate your own socialization and experiences)
- You may enter a new field of research (therefore have to grasp new information, learn new methods, become aware of themes, topics and „classics“ researchers from a different academic background take for granted)
- You are a researcher (and therefore may have to learn about legal frameworks, administrative procedures and financial questions)
- This will be overwhelming at times
- Most learning on a personal level is learning by doing
- It will therefore feel scarier and more complicated in the beginning than later on, you will make mistakes
- Be kind to yourself and others

General Lessons

- **Internationalization is neither an abstract process nor an end in itself**
- Ergo: You always internationalize something specific (e.g. your research, your network, your department)
- **Therefore your internationalization should have clear objectives structuring your strategy**
- Internationalization is also a lot of work and a process of learning and personal growth
- **You should get something out for yourself when undertaking this kind of work for or with others!**

Internationalization is fun!

