



IEA



## International Conference

Theme: *Colonial Cities in Global Perspective*

Venue and date : *Saint-Louis, Senegal, from December 10-12, 2018*

## Call for Papers

The Global History Network, the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, the Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis, the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris, and the Institute of Advanced Study in Saint-Louis, seek papers for a conference on Colonial Cities in Global Perspective, to be held in Saint-Louis, Senegal, from December 10-12, 2018.

For over four centuries, the colonial city served as interface between the imperial powers and the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It functioned as fortified outpost, administrative center, trading portal, in some case as collection point for the overseas shipment of slaves, and always as a site of cross-cultural learning and experience. Coastal colonial cities exhibited tremendous diversity and common traits, shaped by the interaction among imperial governors and merchants, colonial capitalists and peasant laborers in their agrarian hinterlands, indigenous and immigrant populations, and highly diverse and challenging physical environments. In many ways their global role anticipated the role that urban theory has established for the contemporary global city—both as the market and industrial pole for a rural hinterland, and a site in an archipelago of cosmopolitan entrepôts linked with their metropolises and developing a unique fusion of services and clientele.

We seek papers that will examine coastal colonial cities in a comparative framework. Appropriate topics include patterns of settlement and spatial organization; administration, policing, sanitation and evolving economic profiles; labor and workers' collective action; colonial cities' position in global trade networks and their importance to the expansion of capitalism; trade links between urban and rural domains of production and consumption; formal and informal relations between ethnic communities; patterns of leadership and urban organization; distinctive cultural production; and historical legacies for post-colonial states.

We invite papers addressing the above themes from all periods of colonial history. Advanced research students as well as senior scholars are invited to apply for the conference. We will be able to cover travel costs for all invited presenters.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Please submit a single combined doc or pdf file including an abstract of no more than 500 words, along with a brief CV and mail it by electronic mail to wigh@fas.harvard.edu with the subject line “ColonialCities2018” by August 1, 2018. The abstract can be in French or English, though we prefer English.
- Scholars chosen to participate in the conference will have to submit the final version of their unpublished and original paper (of no more than 7000 words) no later than November 1, 2018.
- In the body of the email, please include your name, affiliation, and the title of your project.
- We recommend including a header with your name on every page of your submission.
- In the case of papers with multiple contributors, we are only able to cover transportation costs for one person.

We are particularly interested in and encourage applications from the Global South. The conference languages will be French and English.

We will inform applicants by September 15, 2018 if they will be invited to Dakar. We will be able to support the travel of invited participants.

The Conference is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, the Foundation Maison des sciences de l’Homme in Paris and the Department of History and Geography at FASTEF (Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal), and is part of a series of academic initiatives of the Global History Network, a network of global history institutions including East China Normal University, Shanghai; the International Institute of Social History, the Netherlands; Lab Mundi at University of Sao Paulo, Brazil; Department of History, University of Delhi, the Weatherhead Initiative on Global History, Harvard University, USA, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal, and the University of Göttingen, Germany.

Coordination:

Department of History and Geography, FASTEF, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar

Institute of Advanced Study in Saint-Louis, Senegal

Weatherhead Initiative on Global History, Harvard University, USA

The Foundation Maison des Sciences de l’Homme in Paris, France

## **International conference on Colonial Cities in Global Perspective**

### **Background**

Although there is a time difference in the colonial history of France, Great Britain and Portugal, these countries used similar patterns to expand across the territories they colonised in Africa, Asia and America. From a base on the coastland (Bahia, then Rio de Janeiro in South America for Portugal, Saint-Louis in Senegal for France in Africa, and Calcutta in India for Great Britain), these three Western powers each initially extended their dominion over vast areas of the mainland, and then moved to other areas within their area of focus.

Portugal contributed the most to European exploration of the world in the age of great explorers during the fifteenth century. The 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas shared the New World between Spain and Portugal. At the end of the fifteenth century, Vasco da Gama's voyage to India showed there were opportunities to establish an extensive commercial, military, political and cultural network, anchored in the expansionist model experimented before by the city-states of Italy (Geneva, Florence, Venice and Milan). Giovanni Arrighi characterised this model as the first system in a cycle of hegemonic accumulation and expansion of capital in the European-based system. The territories under Portugal's control were consolidated into a global empire with the establishment of trading posts in Africa, Asia and America. Portuguese colonisation of America focused mainly on South America, with Brazil being a vast and central territory of the Portuguese empire.

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, cities were transformed in the colonial period into cultural and economic centers. With the discovery of the new world, the Spanish and Portuguese settled on the coasts and established cities to serve as control and trade centres. These cities gave rise to a vast network of urban centres, including Bahia and especially Rio de Janeiro which, from 1808, would become the hub for transforming Brazil's different communities into a Nation-State and a cosmopolitan centre that would attract merchants, diplomats and artists from Spain, Austria, Russia and even France. Taking over from Lisbon – which was flooded at the time with Napoleon's troops – Rio de Janeiro served as the capital of the Portuguese Empire in 1808. It was home to the dynasty of Kings from the House of Braganza and its prestige lasted for two centuries. It was replaced in 1960 by the new and ultra-modern Brasilia.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the history of European settlements unfolded in the 17th century, a century behind America. But as early as the 16th century, Portuguese explorers along the coasts between present day Mauritania and Guinea maintained trade ties with the local communities and carried various products back to Europe. In 1482, they sailed past Cape Verde, which they named as such because of its vegetation cover. On the Cape Verde Islands, where their ships anchored en route to Brazil, they left no important establishment on the coast. El Mina, their main trading post, was located further east on the Gulf of Guinea's "Gold Coast".

French colonisation also began on the coasts. From the 17th century to the mid-18th century, the French installed coastal counters, first in Saint Louis in 1659 for slave trade and other types of trade, including gum Arabic in Senegal. Initially, Europeans did not have a strong presence on the coast because it was not necessarily required. The duty of organising trade was entrusted to companies representing European nations. This was how the "Compagnie du Sénégal" was assigned exclusive responsibility to organise trade with the outside world in Saint-Louis and Goree, and to represent France as well.

When Faidherbe arrived in Senegal in 1854 as the new governor, this marked the beginning of actual colonisation and eventually transformed some trade counters into colonial cities. This was the period of France's Second Empire, when the ideology of overseas territorial expansion was beginning to take root.

This strategy rested on Saint Louis, a West African coastal city, built on the island of Ndar, which is bordered by the two arms of River Senegal that flow into the Atlantic Ocean. Saint-Louis is a "memorial site" of African, Islamic and Christian heritage. It boasts over three centuries of a richly blended historical and cultural fabric. A melting pot and training ground for most of the Senegalese and Francophone elite, the city of Saint-Louis has a solid tradition of openness to civilizations the world over. It served as the capital of French West Africa until 1902, and as the headquarters of Senegal and Mauritania until 1957. With the transfer of its functions as a national capital, Saint-Louis experienced the shock of decline before rising again as Northern Senegal's key city and academic and cultural powerhouse. Since 2000, Saint-Louis is one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.

Since the connection of the three continents in 1492, Great Britain's great naval might has positioned it as a major player in the art of building a global colonial empire. For Great Britain, the Gulf of Guinea provided the anchor points to Cape Town and opened access to the Indian Ocean via the east coast. From there, the settlements in Malaysia paved the way to the Straits of Malacca, a gateway to the China Sea or Hong Kong and the beachhead for leveraging influence in the Middle Kingdom. Great Britain acquired another route from China to the west when it annexed the Falkland Islands, with anchor points to the Pacific.

India best symbolises Great Britain's imperial expansion into Asia. After the British East India Company consolidated its trade activities in Bengal, it started to build the city of Calcutta in 1690, a little less than 30 years after the French had built the Saint-Louis counter in Senegal. Located on the left bank of the Hooghly River, Calcutta became the Company headquarters, before becoming the capital of British India and the British Raj from 1773 to 1912. Calcutta still bears part of this colonial heritage in monuments such as the Victoria Memorial and St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral. Calcutta experienced rapid industrial growth from 1850, particularly in the textiles sector. In the 20th century, its population grew from about 100,000 to over 14 million people.

Calcutta, Saint-Louis and Rio de Janeiro are three important examples for coastal colonial cities and the role they played in shaping the economic, political, social and cultural history of the past five centuries. Whether one considers these cities as mere military anchor points or as trade centres, each of these coastal cities has, by virtue of its strategic geographical location, played a pivotal role in colonial expansion across the mainland under the colonial administrative system and in European colonial history. Coastal cities saw the birth of the first elites who promoted colonial expansion in their respective countries and even beyond. In the dynamics of their development, these spaces experienced profound social, spatial, architectural, cultural and political transformations and became shining examples of cosmopolitan cities on their respective continents. With the diverse nature of their experiences and the different assets they each possess; these historic cities raise questions about the future and face challenges of various sorts. The three historic cities nonetheless find the means to fulfil their aspirations of becoming metropolitan centres of cultural excellence in a globalising world. Establishing linkages between terms such as "legacy" and "transformation" raises questions on how individuals and communities deal today with their past and try to preserve an often-fragile balance between continuity and sudden change in the current world system.

## Methodology

This international colloquium's approach is based on studying these cosmopolitan cities to analyse the linkages between them and the rest of their respective countries and continents. This includes the factors of their growth and their relative decline. This is the history of part of humanity, obtained by intersecting the impacts of imperial policies on the territories of Asia, Africa and South America. Cross-cutting theme areas have been chosen to serve as lines for investigation, for highlighting the significant cultural, economic and architectural features of these colonial cities, and using the major lessons from history to rethink the future

of these cities. The idea of taking a plural outlook on these cities is meant to put their trajectory back within the dynamics of a world that is constantly experiencing rapid transformation.

This symposium is open to researchers in social science and the humanities (geographers, literary writers, artists, painters, filmmakers, philosophers, historians, anthropologists, architects, etc.).