

Call for Papers

The Financial History of (De)Colonisation in the 19th and 20th Centuries

University of Antwerp, 16-17 May, 2025

In May 2025 we will host a workshop dedicated to exploring the financial dimensions of colonisation and decolonisation.

This event is the first of a series of workshops, organised by the University of Antwerp and University of Groningen, aiming at fostering a comprehensive dialogue on the diverse ways in which colonial economies have been structured, and how this ultimately influenced varying patterns of post-colonial growth. For this workshop, we are particularly interested in research that investigates the intricate interplay between imperialist policies, colonial institutions, and financial markets across the 19th and 20th centuries, including, but not limited to, the following themes:

- How did colonial powers organise, finance, and sustain their expansive operations across the globe? What were the financial returns on investments in colonies, and how were these returns distributed among investors, both within and between the metropole and the colonies?
- What roles did the institutions established during the colonial era in colonised territories play in shaping the trajectory of long-term economic development and inequality in post-colonial societies?
- What role did the financial system play in the global slave trade? Did specifically designed financial institutions and financial instruments lead to higher investments in slavery? How did finance impact the lives of slaves and their descendants?

We are looking for proposals on these or related topics from a financial history perspective. We encourage submissions of both descriptive studies and analytical papers, as we hope to bring together a wide range of perspectives that will enrich our understanding of these complex issues.

We invite scholars at all career stages and diverse backgrounds to participate in this workshop. If you are interested in contributing, please submit an abstract of 300 to 500 words, along with your affiliation and contact information, to fh.decolonisation@uantwerpen.be by 1 December 2024. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 20 December 2024. There will be no participation fee.

For further details about the workshop, feel free to reach out to us at the same email address, or directly contact one of the organisers: Amaury de Vicq, Maite de Sola, Marc Deloof or Oscar Gelderblom.