

[Call for Contributions: "Empire and the City: Migrations and Memories in the Lusophone World"](#)

Announcement published by Christoph Kalter on Monday, October 31, 2022

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

October 20, 2022 to January 15, 2023

Subject Fields:

Colonial and Post-Colonial History / Studies, Contemporary History, Cultural History / Studies, Immigration & Migration History / Studies, Spanish and Portuguese History / Studies

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Empire and the City: Migrations and Memories in the Lusophone World

Eds: Christoph [Kalter](#), Jonas [Prinzleve](#), and Elsa Peralta

In the scope of FCT funded project "Constellations of Memory: a multidirectional study of postcolonial migration and remembering" (PTDC/SOC-ANT/4292/2021)

The ghosts of empire have returned to haunt our present times. Curiously, more than half a century after formal decolonization peaked (1945-1975), civil society movements proclaim, and put into practice, a turn towards 'decolonial' politics. Governments, museums, and cultural institutions are increasingly forced to engage with colonial legacies—not least their own. Institutional heritage practices are being revised globally, responding to activist and cultural debates, and opening up to previously marginalized voices and difficult histories. Urban protest movements rattle post-imperial commemorative landscapes - and face the backlash of those who criticize them as drivers of a new "cancel culture". This new visibility of imperial histories and their contested legacies is a worldwide phenomenon. Across its different locations, it is marked by two commonalities: the prominent role played by migrant groups and their descendants, and the effects of planetary urbanization. Cities are economic and cultural hubs and nodal points of regional and transnational migration paths. They also provide the stages on which collective imaginaries are negotiated, contested, and continuously reinvented. It is here that the struggles over memory, identity and place unfold, intensify, and draw public attention.

Against this backdrop, we are seeking contributions for an edited volume to be submitted to the Routledge series "[Memory Studies: Global Constellations](#)". Our volume aims to analyze the triangular relationship between postcolonial memories, migrations, and urban space-making in the last twenty-five years or so. It does so through an exploration of Portuguese- or Portuguese-Creole-speaking cities across the world. In São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous community associations commemorate histories of resistance to colonization, slavery, and land exploitation as they face a neo-colonial agenda of the Bolsonaro regime. In Lisbon, postcolonial memories are gaining access to central cultural spaces while Afro-Portuguese advocacy groups intervene in the city's post-imperial memory landscape. In Benguela, the presence of Portuguese migrants seeking

Citation: Christoph Kalter. *Call for Contributions: "Empire and the City: Migrations and Memories in the Lusophone World"*. H-Announce. 10-31-2022.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/11478489/call-contributions-empire-and-city-migrations-and-memories>

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employment in the booming economy of Portugal's erstwhile colony of Angola produces an unusual postcolonial encounter. In Cape Verde, a social movement of artists, scholars and student activists is campaigning to decolonize the education system; in 2021, its members delivered a petition with 2,000 signatures to the National Assembly to remove "pro-slavery and colonial monuments in Cape Verde".

The choice to analyze the global post-imperial dynamics since the 2000s through a focus on Lusophone cities follows from two general ideas. First, there is good reason to empirically probe the assumption that Portuguese-speaking urban demographics are connected in specific ways across regions, nations, and continents. These connections, we presume, result from a) these demographics' use of Portuguese-language and Creole news outlets, social media, music, literature, and performing arts; b) the effects of intercontinental migrations and the transnational social relations they create; and c) the weight of (post-)imperial histories that various groups in these cities inherited. These are histories that shape their daily realities, but that they are also conscious of—and seek to critically engage with—in order to mobilize for their goals or to build their identities around. Second, choosing Lusophone cities offers a valuable contribution and corrective to current academic debates. It has become a sad truism that the study of both (post-)imperial histories and memories suffers from a constant recentering of the experiences and afterlives connected to the "major" French and British empires. By contrast, the histories and legacies of "minor" empires like those of Italy, Spain, Belgium, or Portugal continue to be marginalized. Even less work analyzes the dialogue between Western cities and cities of the Global South, not to mention the South-South connections among the latter, to explore the multivocality of and entanglements between their respective decolonial projects and postcolonial cultures. Building on a host of recent efforts in various disciplines, this edited volume contributes to a redressing of this imbalance. It does so not by centering the former imperial metropole, Portugal and its capital Lisbon, but by building on the critical notion of a decentered Lusotopy ([Cahen/dos Santos 2018](#)) – that is, an empirical field of constellations, dependencies, and mobilities that exists within and between spaces, countries and communities impacted by Portuguese colonization and history.

Exploring the social and cultural geographies of urban migration and memory in the post-colonial age that has now become a decolonial one as well, this volume seeks to stimulate a transnational conversation between scholars, activists, and cultural practitioners. Its chronology focuses on the period since the turn of the millennium until the present day, but it is obviously open to contextualization and genealogies that reach further back in time. While we strongly encourage all contributors to bring a historical sensibility to their topics, we welcome scholars from urban studies, memory studies, and migration studies whose approaches are rooted in history, anthropology, sociology, geography, literary studies, political science, or any other relevant discipline.

As long as contributors address the triangular relationship of Lusophone urban spaces, migrations, and memories after empire, we are open to all suggestions of topics. An incomplete list includes:

- Materialities - Visual culture and museums; cultural production; statues and toponomy; (post-)colonial urban planning, population control, and urban segregation.
- Heritage - Official memory policies and resistances; commemoration practices; decolonial academic and social movements and how they fight for the use and representation of/in the city space; transcultural interactions, transnational dynamics and dissonant interpretations in Lusophone/Creole urban spaces.

- Subjectivities - Migratory or subalternized collective (post-)memories; how migrants imagine and use the city; (racialized) exclusions, strategic appropriations, negotiations; memories and lifeworlds; the practice of space.
- Rights - (post)colonial migrations, labor relations and citizenship inclusions and exclusions; memorial activism and the struggles for citizenship legalization and civil rights.

Accordingly, some overarching questions that will be pertinent to most contributions, irrespective of the case study presented and the approach chosen, are:

- How does the imperial past materialize in different ways in urban settings where Portuguese or Luso-Creole languages are spoken or that have a history of Portuguese colonization? In which ways do public memories of empire and colonialism reciprocate, cross-fertilize, or antagonize in these cities? How have they been mobilized as a political category?
- How has the lived experience of colonial history shaped the lifeworlds, identities and memories of different post-colonial populations? How are their conflicting colonial stories performed, strategically appropriated, or contested in shared spaces of everyday life and become transmitted across generations? Are they agents of post-colonial memory transfer across transnational spaces and the former imperial world?
- How do legacies of colonialism continue to shape models of exclusion or inferior citizenship with regard to migrants, diasporic communities, and racialized minority groups? How do these legacies operate through paradigms of urban segregation inherited from colonial times? What is the role of memorial activism in the struggles for an inclusive citizenship and for civil rights?

We initially seek **abstracts of 450-550 words** from potential contributors, along with a **short bio** (including institutional affiliation if any) of **no more than 250 words** (in one Word document). We aim to incorporate ten book chapters in the volume. Once authors are informed whether their proposed chapters will be included (first in the book proposal to be sent to Routledge, and then in the collection if it is accepted by the publisher) they will be required to submit their full chapters by January 15, 2024. After receiving feedback from both the editors and anonymous reviewers, they will revise their texts and send their finalized chapters according to the provisional timeline below. Draft chapters and final chapters are expected to be 7000-10,000 words in length, including footnotes.

Abstracts and short bios should be sent to all three editors of the collection, i.e., Christoph Kalter, Jonas Prinzleve, and Elsa Peralta, **by January 15, 2023**. Our emails are:

christoph.kalter@uia.no

jonas.prinzleve@campus.ul.pt

elsa.peralta@campus.ul.pt

Any queries about the edited volume or this call for contributions should also be sent to these three email addresses. The projected volume is part of the [FCT](#)-funded research project **“Constellations of Memory: a multidirectional study of postcolonial migration and remembering” (PTDC/SOC-ANT/4292/2021)**, led by Elsa Peralta at the [FLUL](#) (Faculty of Humanities at the

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