

[CFP: Conference on "Property and Being under Colonial Conditions in Africa and Asia," May 13-14, 2022, University of Michigan](#)

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

May 13, 2022 to May 14, 2022

Location:

Michigan, United States

Subject Fields:

African History / Studies, Asian History / Studies, Colonial and Post-Colonial History / Studies, Intellectual History, Law and Legal History

Call for Papers: In-person conference, COVID-19 situation permitting

Property and Being under Colonial Conditions in Africa and Asia

May 13th and 14th, 2022

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Scholars have long proposed that property is as much about relationships between people as it is about the ownership of "things." It is about both *belonging*, and *belongings*. Property offers a window onto contestations over power, social relations, resources, identity and political imagination. Histories of property in Asia and Africa, in particular, are intertwined with histories of colonial expansion, the emergence of new forms of state power, the creation of new categories/taxonomies of governance, the appropriation of indigenous lands, the reordering of social relations, and new or reworked imaginaries of property.

The purpose of this interdisciplinary conference, "Property and Being under Colonial Conditions in Asia and Africa," is to explore how comparing intellectual, cultural, social, political-economic, and legal histories of property from African and Asian colonial contexts may help us rethink ideas about land, ownership, dispossession, rights, credit, subjectivities, and political imaginations. Participants will engage with the historically sedimented entanglements of colonial policy and indigenous practices, developmentalist desires, and cultural and climatic change.

Conversations across these regions may thus enable new understandings of property histories. Relevant questions include: how did diverse colonial conditions across Africa and

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Asia produce distinct logics of property and ownership rooted in racial, ethnic, caste, and gendered ideologies? To what extent did vernacular ideas about property and ownership shape the trajectories of colonial/post-colonial state-making? Indigenous community-building and claim-making? How have liberal ideologies of property, ownership and personhood shaped histories of the emergence of racialized regimes in different colonial contexts?

We invite contributions from graduate students, recent PhDs, and junior scholars in the Humanities and the Social Sciences. Scholars who explore transregional connections and networks in colonial contexts, and engage with historiographical debates from Africa and Asia in their research are also encouraged to apply. This is a small conference and papers will be pre-circulated - works in progress and drafts are welcome.

Possible themes for submission include:

- How communities constitute themselves through property
- Property and racial regimes
- Property and state power
- Property and personhood
- Property and gender
- Colonial legalities and property law
- Relationship/s between rural and urban histories of property
- Decolonization and decolonizing property

To apply, please submit an abstract of 250-300 words, and a short bio of about 150 words at propertyconference2022@gmail.com by March 1, 2022.

The conference is supported by the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, the Center for South Asian Studies and the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, University of Michigan.

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