

**In the name of God, of the King and the Capital.**  
*Legitimation(s) of the occupation of indigenous territories  
from the Modern Age to nowadays.*

**International colloquium**

**Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3 (Site St-Charles)**  
**March 28 & 29, 2019**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

Whether in America, Asia, Oceania, Africa or the Middle East, the great European powers always justified their colonial policy with the moral and material benefits they brought to the native peoples of the territories they conquered and exploited for the exclusive benefit of the metropolis. In the Modern Age, Spain and Portugal, still impregnated with the religious proselytism inherited from the Reconquest, legitimized their sovereignty in the West Indies by bringing faith and redemption to the indigenous and "barbarian" populations they exploited on the other hand for commercial purposes. From the nineteenth century, the European colonialist discourse was inspired more by the racial theories of Arthur Gobineau or Herbert Spencer and emphasized the "civilizing mission" of the "superior" peoples towards the "inferior" peoples to justify the rights they arrogated to themselves on what they considered as *terrae nullius* that could be freely appropriated. Thus, from the end of the 15th century until the 1930s, bringing European culture and "modernity" to the colonies legitimized by itself a juridically illegitimate act such as the dispossession of lands belonging to foreign nations arbitrarily considered "inferior" and unable to exercise their rights.

The emancipation of the colonial yoke did not necessarily mean the end of the usurpation of indigenous territories. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the young American republics began a process of occupation and exploitation of their colonial *frontier*. The conquest of the "Wild West" of the United States or the Mexican or Patagonian "deserts", with the objective to develop agriculture and mining, led to the taking by force of the indigenous lands and territories. In the Amazon Basin, the rise of rubber prompted the Peruvian, Bolivian and Brazilian authorities to "colonize" the ancestral lands of communities and tribal peoples from the Eastern Andes to the Amazonian lowlands. As in the European colonialist discourses, the occupation of the indigenous territories and the expulsion, if not the extermination, of the native populations were justified by the "duty" of the Republic to ensure the development and prosperity of the whole nation and to bring "civilization" and "modernity" to "barbarian" people, often considered archaic and reluctant to any form of progress.

In 1989, the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted Convention no. 169, which recognizes to "indigenous and tribal peoples" the collective right « to exercise control over their

own institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions ». Twenty-two nations have ratified the agreement, including fourteen in Latin America. In September 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples reinforced international recognition of the rights of native peoples to own, manage and develop their traditional lands and territories. Despite having been approved by a large majority, Australia, Canada, United States and New Zealand, in which "indigenous and tribal peoples" represent a significant percentage of the population, initially rejected it, before finally adopting it a few years later. However, although the rights of native peoples continue to improve in the world, a simple follow-up of international news is enough to realize the continuous violation of these rights, due to clandestine gold hunters, local farmers and businessmen or multinationals and foreign consortiums, supported by official discourses that invoke the "general" interest to legitimize the evacuation, occupation and exploitation of territories protected by national and international laws, without taking into account the destructive effects of this "economic colonization", not only on the native populations, but also on the ecosystem and the environment.

Transversal and multidisciplinary, this symposium will aim to analyze, from a comparatist and/or a long-term perspective, how the different political, economic and media powers have justified the occupation and exploitation of indigenous territories through the world, from modern times to the present day. The papers will therefore focus on the legal, political, economic, cultural, scientific and media arguments and mechanisms developed by past and present regimes in order to legitimize their policy of external or internal colonization, despite the human and environmental repercussions. In a postcolonial perspective, they will also be able to study how these devices have been or can be deconstructed, in particular by analyzing the mobilizations and current demands of contemporary Aboriginal peoples or recent events in the geographical areas concerned.

The proposals will be sent before October 10, 2018 to the following address:

[aunomduroi2019@gmail.com](mailto:aunomduroi2019@gmail.com)

They must integrate the title of the paper, a summary of about 200 words and a brief presentation by the author of about ten lines. The answers will be communicated no later than November 30, 2018.

The papers will be preferentially done in French, and it is also possible to do them in English, Spanish or Portuguese.

The written contributions will be published exclusively in French, after scientific evaluation of each contribution.

Organisation : Paola DOMINGO

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