

## Call for Papers

# “Politics of pasts and futures in (post-)imperial contexts”

*First annual conference of the GRK 2571 ‘Empires’ (Freiburg)*

EMPIRES<sup>GRK2571</sup>

Dynamic Transformation  
Temporality and  
Postimperial Orders

**1 - 3 December 2022**, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

The conference aims to explore how references to past empires and imperialism have shaped perceptions of history and imagined futures, both in imperial and in post-imperial contexts. These include, for example, not only references to imperial foundation myths, but also stories of success and resilience during times of crisis, and uses of imperial symbolism and history to express civic, national and/or imperial identity. It also explores legacies of pre-existing empires in post-imperial political orders. In connection to imperial claims of universalism, longevity and a transcending historical significance, analyzing these temporal aspects of imperialism can serve as an important key to understanding imperial dynamics. Accordingly, markers of (imperial) temporality can be found, for example, in political discourse, but also in cultural products, social relations and religious practices.

The conference is the first of a series of annual conferences organized by the *DFG Graduate School 2571 “Empires: Dynamic Transformation, Temporality and Postimperial Orders”* (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg). More information on the research group can be found at [www.grk2571.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.grk2571.uni-freiburg.de).

Applicants are encouraged to submit papers that address at least one of the following issues. The questions might serve as an orientation:

- Imperial pasts and their use as means of political justification: For example, how do nations and other “imagined communities” try to claim succession to previous existing empires for contemporary use? How do empires transfer legitimacy over periods of time, also after their demise? What role do uses of imperial histories play in the construction of images of “Others”? What narrative structures, metaphors and leitmotifs are used in these situations?
- Transformation of self-images or identities formed under imperial rule in times of crisis or in post-imperial situations: How do the rise or the dissolution of empires influence the perception of communities within the empire about their own role in history? How are political and societal structures questioned, debated, and reformed in times of crisis? How are traditions reformulated in response to internal upheaval and/or external pressures?
- The effect of imperial pasts on imagined futures and progress: How were expectations of the future inscribed in the representation of imperial power? To what extent did claims of eternity and cyclical views of time interact with each other in forming an imperial identity? Were imperial institutions seen as driving factors of progress, as bulwarks of tradition, or as roadblocks that had to be removed? Were there ideas of an imperial mission that had to be fulfilled? If yes, how was this mission’s reception among different groups in the empire?

We welcome proposals that deal with at least one of these axes. We aim at a broad coverage not only in terms of chronology (from Antiquity to today), but also in terms of geography and (inter)disciplinarity. Members from all disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences, or interdisciplinary combinations within these fields, are invited to submit abstracts in this call. We especially encourage scholars in the early stages of their career (PhD, Postdoc) to submit proposals.

Please submit an abstract of 300-400 words (describing thesis and possible conclusions) for a 30-minute paper and a short biography (50-100 words) together with your contact details (academic affiliation, address, and email address) to [conference@grk2571.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:conference@grk2571.uni-freiburg.de). The **deadline for proposals is the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2022**. Notifications of paper acceptance will be sent out by April 2022. Conference papers may be presented in either English or German. If the language of the presentation is German, an English summary should be added. If the Covid-19 situation does not improve, the conference has the option of participation via Zoom. We plan to publish the results of the conference speedily in an edited volume.

For information and questions, please do not hesitate to send an e-mail to [conference@grk2571.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:conference@grk2571.uni-freiburg.de).