



**HAL**  
open science

## Introduction: Corruption, Empire and Colonialism in the Modern Era: Towards a Global Perspective

Ronald Kroeze, Pol Dalmau, Frédéric Monier

► **To cite this version:**

Ronald Kroeze, Pol Dalmau, Frédéric Monier. Introduction: Corruption, Empire and Colonialism in the Modern Era: Towards a Global Perspective. Corruption, Empire and Colonialism in the Modern Era, Springer, pp.1-19, 2021, Palgrave Studies in Comparative Global History, 978-981-16-0254-2. 10.1007/978-981-16-0255-9\_1 . halshs-04031961

**HAL Id: halshs-04031961**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-04031961v1>**

Submitted on 21 Mar 2023

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Copyright



## CHAPTER 1

---

# Introduction: Corruption, Empire and Colonialism in the Modern Era: Towards a Global Perspective

*Ronald Kroeze, Pol Dalmau, and Frédéric Monier*

Scandal, corruption, exploitation and abuse of power have been linked to the history of modern empire-building. Colonial territories often became promised lands where individuals sought to make quick fortunes, sometimes in collaboration with the local population but more often at the expense of them. On some occasions, these shady dealings resulted in scandals that reached back to the metropolis, questioning civilising

---

R. Kroeze (✉)

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

e-mail: [d.b.r.kroeze@vu.nl](mailto:d.b.r.kroeze@vu.nl)

P. Dalmau

Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain

e-mail: [pol.dalmau@upf.edu](mailto:pol.dalmau@upf.edu)

F. Monier

University of Avignon, Avignon, France

e-mail: [frederic.monier@univ-avignon.fr](mailto:frederic.monier@univ-avignon.fr)

© The Author(s) 2021

R. Kroeze et al. (eds.), *Corruption, Empire and Colonialism in the Modern Era*, Palgrave Studies in Comparative Global History,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-0255-9\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-0255-9_1)

discourses in parliaments and the press, and leading to reforms in colonial administrations. In spite of some valuable case studies and general essays on corruption and imperialism, historians have usually paid little systematic attention to these questions.

This is not to say that colonial corruption is an overall neglected topic. The literature on colonialism refers to the issue of corruption as an element of colonial rule and the colonial economy.<sup>1</sup> Such studies reveal the recurrent and sometimes systematic existence of corruption in a colonial context, and how varied it is defined and understood in different studies. There is also a series of contributions dedicated to case studies of corruption in a colonial setting. Examples are studies of the Warren Hastings scandal or corruption in colonial Burma (present-day Myanmar) and colonial Nigeria for the British case, as well as the role of corruption with regard to French Algeria, the Spanish Philippines or the decline of the Dutch East India Company.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, important studies on the history of empire often mention corruption, for example, as one of the reasons for the fall or reform of certain imperial regimes.<sup>3</sup> These accounts provide valuable insights as they point at the role of misuse of power and resources as part of the “politics of difference” of imperial rule, but barely reflect more in depth on the links between colonialism and corruption. In other words, corruption is treated more as a symptom (whether in colonial governance, the economy or the characteristics of an empire) than as a specific subject of enquiry.

Recent years have also seen a series of new publications on the history of corruption in Europe. These studies have shown that corruption as an idea and discourse, as well as a practice, played an important role in the history of modern politics and state-building processes. These works have highlighted the complexity of corruption in the modern era, for example, that corrupt practices continued to exist even though “modern” elites proclaimed they had freed their regimes from them. Moreover, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, accusations and debates about corruption served to initiate reform or, simply, as a pretext to undermine old structures and representatives of the so-called “Ancien Régime”.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, anticorruption campaigns could and were also used as political weapons, to get rid of opponents and to promote politicised institutional reforms.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, several historians have argued that the understanding of corruption as well as the link between corruption and political reform entered a new phase somewhere towards the end of the eighteenth century. From that moment onwards, instead of simply being

a word to be used for a great variety of deviations (sexual, moral, religious, administrative), corruption became more often defined in political terms as the misuse of public office or the general interest for private gain. Moreover, it became an absolutely non-tolerable phenomenon in the public arena. This does not mean, of course, that corruption ceased to exist; rather, corruption became a more serious and challenging problem in terms of political legitimacy.<sup>6</sup> As a result, a new political discourse developed in which corruption was portrayed as a remnant of “traditional” societies—in which “Ancien Régime” practices such as patronage and clientelism were rampant—that could be eliminated if the appropriate “modern” reforms were adopted.

Although, there is still debate among historians about how sharp the break with the past really was<sup>7</sup>—see also the contribution to this volume by Jens Ivo Engels and Frédéric Monier—these insights that have been framed in the context of European history can bring valuable perspectives to the history of colonialism and empire. For example, it can help us to locate the development and consequences of the idea that corruption was a problem of traditional regimes and that it belonged to a geographical “Other”: the colony and its local culture and inhabitants. This argument was used by European colonial elites in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to justify colonial rule: it was legitimate as it would end corruption and bring modernity, so it was argued. Indeed, if corruption had already been present in the Enlightenment’s idea of “Oriental despotism”, it now became part of the civilising discourse of nineteenth-century European colonialism.<sup>8</sup> As such, the study of colonial corruption allows the tackling of historiographical debates about the ideological fundamentals of civilising discourses, modernisation programs and the legitimacy of colonial rule, which is an important theme in the history of colonialism (as well as in postcolonial and decolonisation studies, too).<sup>9</sup>

Methodologically, this volume takes inspiration from the latest stream of publications about the history of corruption as well. These studies have underlined the importance of a contextual approach that understands corruption, not as something fixed and universal. Indeed, corruption is by its very (linguistic) meaning, disapproved as an immoral phenomenon, and corruption in modern history is often about a form of misuse of public resources for private or group gain, but the real meaning of “immoral”, “misuse”, “public resources” and “private gain”, differs over time and place. One needs to analyse specific cases, scandals and debates, to understand corruption more precisely. This approach has proved highly

valuable and has opened up new lines of research. In countries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands, scholars have devoted growing attention to a topic that had little tradition in the respective national historiographies.<sup>10</sup> In other cases, such as those of Southern Europe and Latin America, traditional narratives that linked corruption with backwardness in historical development have been replaced by new research questions and methods. Examples of these are the interest to trace the changing meanings of corruption in periods of transition, the eruption of scandals in the public sphere or the measures to curtail corruption practices.<sup>11</sup> The outcome of these new publications has been a renewed and thriving historiography that has benefitted from the creation of new international collaborative research teams. While these developments have decisively contributed to renewing the field, to the point that we can speak of a “new history of corruption”, the nation-state has remained the predominant framework of reference. Moreover, most research questions have been posed from a European perspective.

This book is a first attempt, instead of a final analysis, to discuss the topic of corruption, empire and colonialism in a systematic manner and from a global comparative perspective. It does so through a set of original studies that examines the multi-layered nature of corruption in four different empires (Great Britain, Spain, the Netherlands and France) and their possessions in Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and Africa. Readers interested in colonialism will find in this book a wide array of studies that examine the changing contours of corruption and the different responses that empires designed to confront it. Against the temptation of seeing colonial rule as being permanent and stable, corruption sheds light on periods of crisis and reform, pointing at crucial moments when imperial rule was called into question or redesigned. Corruption can thus be seen as an important characteristic of colonial rule as well as a catalyst for reform in the modern era, a phenomenon that illuminates the strategies that empires put forward in order to cope with historical change. In parallel to this, the emphasis on the links between colony and metropolis allows for opening up new perspectives of analysis in a traditionally state-driven historiography, and to unveil new spatial units of analysis, such as Atlantic and—above all—global history that have not yet been applied to the history of corruption.

### Coherence and Approach

The volume offers a variety of case studies, touching on the history of four different empires and their possessions in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Coherence is provided, first of all, by the overall contextual approach of corruption—a method that has been applied in the most recent historiography on the topic, as discussed above. A contextual approach is important to find out the precise meanings: corruption has to be examined and explained through the very specific times and places where it was debated. Thus, the volume discusses examples of corruption and debates about how they were understood within the different time frames and geographical colonial settings of the moment, providing a variety of understandings of the roles corruption played. As will become clear, at times corruption was mainly about immoral forms of economic exploitation, while in other circumstances illegitimate forms of political or cultural dominance were at the heart of scandals and debates.

Second, coherence is provided by an overarching global comparative approach. Such standing is informed by the general literature on the history of empires from a global perspective,<sup>12</sup> including the books already published in the same book series as this volume.<sup>13</sup> Although there are many and not always coinciding understandings of global history, it can generally be defined on the basis of three elements. A global perspective seeks to explain the complexity of historical phenomena through the comparison between different parts of the world, but is also compatible with the interest to highlight the interconnections between these parts. This approach does not necessarily seek to write a “total history” of the whole planet, nor to merge all historical accounts into one single metanarrative. Rather, it seeks to break with the separate compartments that have traditionally characterised the writing of history by emphasising the similarities and the differences between diverse territories, cultures and societies, as well as by illuminating the connections that intertwined them.<sup>14</sup>

A second aim of using a global history perspective is to challenge “traditional and sometimes obsolete national narratives”.<sup>15</sup> In the field of corruption, one could think of narratives that recurrently present corruption as being particularly present in certain empires (such as the “backward” Spanish, Portuguese and Ottoman empires), while supposedly being less present in other ones. Often, however, the historical situation was more complicated—corruption was a phenomenon present in all empires, but manifested and changed across time in many different

forms. Moreover, scholars in the past—including historians—helped to construct these stereotypical images and “black legends” for political, imperial and nationalist reasons.<sup>16</sup> A third related fundamental aim in the writing of global history is to challenge Western-centred master narratives by adding a new plurality of voices, sources and subaltern actors into historical analysis.<sup>17</sup>

In practical terms, these theoretical assumptions and aims informed the authors of this volume to understand corruption as a problem inherent to the history of all empires, instead of a problem specific to supposedly “Southern”, decrepit or decaying ones. Indeed, the four empires covered in this book (British, French, Spanish and Dutch) possessed a long experience of colonial rule, which in some cases stretched back to early modern times. When corruption was perceived as a recurring or systemic problem, it often led to moments of crisis and political conflict, that resulted in debates in the public sphere about normative values and the necessity of reform. On some occasions, the outcome was the implementation of legal and political programs that sought to re-design the foundations of empire, both in terms of legitimacy and practical rule. In some other cases, however, corruption served as a powerful pretext to justify the need to “civilise” indigenous societies, as Nicholas B. Dirks has shown for the case of the British empire.<sup>18</sup>

The study of corruption thus brings dynamism to the history of empire, stressing contingency and change, while contributing to explain why they have been one of the most enduring political entities in world history. Taken together, the four empires covered in this book, alongside the colonies they possessed in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, reveal how pervasive corruption was at the time, in addition to how different it was depending on where and when it took place. The focus on a wide number of cases allows the grappling of these two dimensions that are inherent to corruption. Namely, its universality as a problem common to all empires, as well as its complexity as a multi-layered phenomenon that was time and place dependent. Only a comparison between empires can serve as a safeguard against simplistic generalisations, which take a handful cases to draw shallow (and often ahistorical) conclusions,<sup>19</sup> and at the same time move beyond the exceptionalism of nation-centred approaches. For these reasons, all of the authors in this book emphasise transnational connections. Additionally, they make an effort to place their own case study and research questions in relation to other ones. Furthermore, although of course more sources and perspectives could have been included, the

outcome is—as we hope—a cohesive volume with cross-references in each chapter that challenge nation-centred approaches, and which when taken together provide a global outlook.<sup>20</sup>

### **Structure of the Volume**

Although the chapters represent differences in approach that are mainly the result of the fact that the authors come from different fields and historiographical traditions, they all subscribe to the benefits of (a) challenging the European nation-state as the traditional frame to research the history of corruption; (b) a methodological approach that is characterised by a contextual understanding of corruption and (c) cross-referencing by linking different colonial settings in order to provide a global perspective.

In total, the volume consists of eleven chapters—and a concluding chapter at the end—that are ordered more or less chronologically, focusing on a period that covers the end of the eighteenth century up to the beginning of the twentieth century. This period in history, famously referred to as the “birth of the modern world”, was an era in which large empires were formed and cemented, and where new ideas of human development (such as those about civilisation and progress) were developed and used to legitimise the hierarchical subordination of races and cultures across the globe.<sup>21</sup> In practice, however, the purpose of bringing “civilisation” to the new colonies often proved to be a much more difficult goal to achieve. Imperial powers did not only have to impose their control over immense extensions of territory, but also faced the challenge of subjecting widely heterogeneous populations. Furthermore, in such attempts they had to rely on a very limited number of imperial agents that on repeated occasions took advantage of their position, and of their distance from the metropolis, to make illicit gains. Cases of corruption, and how they were debated and managed both in the colony and the metropolis, therefore allow the examination of the forms of governance and tensions that were at the core of imperial rule. Informed by this and by the earlier introduced historiographical trends, we have structured the contributions to this book in two parts.

The contributions of Part I—**Corruption and Narratives of Imperial Decline and Reform During the Age of Revolutions, c. 1800**—discuss corruption as a problem for all empires in the decades around 1800, which was a period of global revolutions and major reforms. Contemporaries of the last decades of the eighteenth and first decades of the nineteenth centuries era often saw colonial corruption as a major reason



for the declining power or economic failure of “their” empires, as was clearly apparent in the debates about the decline of the Spanish and the Dutch Republican VOC-empire. This discourse, however, was also very present in the case of the British and French empires. Colonial scandals and debates about corruption in the colony served to criticise the old regime and to initiate change in persons and structures. The historian Lauren Benton, for instance, has recently highlighted the importance that the scandals of this period had in reshaping the legal fundamentals of the British empire.<sup>22</sup> Reflecting on the role of corruption in these empires from different geographical perspectives, therefore, appears as an untapped subject. Additionally, there is the need to re-examine the role that corruption played in the creation of national stereotypes (e.g. “Black Legends” in the Spanish case), attributing to a stereotypical image of decaying corrupt empires and reforming modern empires.

The contributions of Part II—**Civilising Missions and “Oriental” Corruption During the Age of Modern Imperialism, c. 1900**—focus on corruption in the decades around 1900, a period of extending the spheres of state power in different regions a process that was justified by the “civilising discourses”. Cultural and moral arguments were central elements in justifying the seizure of new lands and the extraction of resources.<sup>23</sup> Several contributions show that corruption was a recurring element in the genesis, or in the reshaping, of civilising discourses around the year 1900. In some occasions, it was the supposed corrupt nature of indigenous peoples that featured prominently behind the ideologies of modern imperialism, while in others it was the shady dealings of colonial bureaucrats and modern entrepreneurs that justified the need for new ethical fundamentals in ruling the colonies. The recurring and multi-faceted presence of corruption in civilising discourses and in debates on the colonies, and their roles in reinforcing notions of “bringing modernity” and processes of “Otherness”, are dimensions that the different chapters address as well.

## I. CORRUPTION AND NARRATIVES OF IMPERIAL DECLINE AND REFORM DURING THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS, C. 1800

More precisely, Part I comprises five chapters focusing on corruption and narratives of imperial decline and reform during the Age of Revolutions. In this age, corruption was understood as a problem concerning how overseas trade, imperial politics and economics worked. It was also the

period of the birth of a more modern concept of corruption, with an emphasis on understanding corruption as a problem of the mixing up of the public and the private, politics and economics, individual and general interests. According to the modern ideal, these should be separated as much as possible. The contributions of this part deal with corruption caused by tensions between these sectors, as well as the narratives about declining old empires and the necessity of reform. Informed by these issues, Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla provides a long-term perspective by looking at the role of corruption in early modern empires. In contrast to traditional narratives that portrayed Iberian empires as obsolete entities that were particularly prone to corruption, he shows that the reality was far more complex. Next to the study of formal institutions, Yun-Casalilla emphasises the need to focus on informal institutions (such as the family and kinship relations), the role of space and the negotiated nature of power, in order to understand a phenomenon that was not yet referred to as “corruption” at the time. All of these reflections illuminate the long history of corruption in the colonies and serve as a valuable reminder against teleological narratives that view the fight against corruption as a sign of modernity.

Chapter 3 by Tanja Bühler, examines the impeachment of the first Governor General of the British East India Company, Warren Hastings, in February 1788. This contribution aims to explain why, disregarding a long-standing argument against “old corruption” in domestic administration and politics, a case of colonial corruption became the most spectacular public scandal in this crucial period of transition from pre-modern to modern times. For a better understanding of the empire’s return home in scandal’s guise, a multi-perspective approach of the customary separated fields of national and imperial history, as well as area studies, is applied. Bühler provides an entangled history of the British and French “Imperial Nation-States” and the South Indian “Princely State” Hyderabad. She argues that the specific metropolitan anxieties regarding colonial corruption were caused by its emergence from Anglo-Indian cross-cultural and Anglo-French inter-imperial interactions on the margins of the empire. These “alien” influences sharpened the awareness of presumably national concepts of good governance back home, and caused anticorruption interventions that went ahead of the domestic reforms.

In chapter 4, Anubha Anushree discusses attempts to regulate corruption by the British East India Company. She argues that by the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth century, the East India

Company started projecting corruption as an anomalous and temporary phenomenon that allowed it to formulate a collective and systemic paternal morality. The chapter first focuses on two crucial interlocutors of the first half of the nineteenth century—Thomas Babington Macaulay and William Bentinck—to situate the correspondence between an ascendant governmental moralism and corruption. She then continues by examining several understudied instances of corruption—namely, the cases of Thomas Metcalfe, Mordaunt Ricketts and Edward Colebrook—in order to examine how the early-nineteenth-century discourse of colonial corruption was constituted by a double strategy. On the one hand, corruption came to be increasingly “investigated” and re-described as a financial disorder, whereby the British were presented as “supine” and “passive”. On the other hand, the investigations often sought to incriminate Indians and their relationships with these officers. The focus on finances and Indians allowed the British to contain the discourse of corruption, even as the term expanded to discipline a variety of official and quasi-official relationships between the British and the Indians that did not fit the normative character of the nineteenth-century public office.

Chapter 5 by Moisés Prieto, discusses America’s “second discovery” in the early-nineteenth century. Inspired by Alexander von Humboldt, merchants, travellers, scientists and adventurers travelled through Latin America with different purposes. Their documents were not only supposed to provide mere entertainment or knowledge about local customs, flora and fauna, but contained historical essays on the recent past of those former colonies as well. Nepotism, favouritism, misappropriation, bribery and arbitrariness were witnessed by those travellers who tried to explain these phenomena in different ways. Prieto argues that colonial corruption should be understood in relation to the history of colonial rule—the distance from the motherland offered opportunities—although officeholders’ passions, vices and pursuits of prestige were as important. After emancipation, the second aspect remained but understandings of corruption were further influenced by a new rationalistic view, typical for the Enlightenment and positivism that linked the absence of corruption to (an idea of) progress and vice versa.

In chapter 6, Mark Knights and Zak Leonard discuss two nineteenth-century cases in the Gujarati princely state of Baroda that shed light on the politics of corruption. The first, running from the mid-1830s to mid-1850s, centred on allegations about the corrupt influence (known as “khutput”) of a native clique on the East Indian Company hierarchy; the

second, in 1893–1895, turned on allegations against Vasudev Sadashev Bapat, an allegedly corrupt official in a department dealing with sensitive land revenue issues. The authors show that the responses by the British authorities were different in the two cases. In the first, the Bombay hierarchy proved very resistant to challenging khutput despite the vigorous investigatory efforts of one of its own officials, James Outram. In the second, the British authorities were keen to intervene and brought the matter to trial. These differing approaches were nevertheless united by a common desire to maintain maximum influence over the nominally independent state.

## II. CIVILISING MISSIONS AND “ORIENTAL” CORRUPTION DURING THE AGE OF MODERN IMPERIALISM, C. 1900

Continuing the reflection on cases of colonial corruption in the decades around 1800 that are discussed in Part I, the six contributions of Part II shift their perspectives to the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries—the era of modern imperialism and the civilising missions. Ronald Kroeze relates debates of around 1800 to those of around 1900. Kroeze takes the Dutch-Indonesian histories of colonial state formation as a common base to define and test several hypotheses that are informed by debates in the historiography of corruption and (post-)colonialism. One is that corruption is never a neutral objective term and that when it is used in a colonial context it serves to set or challenge norms that underlay colonial power structures. Indeed, the Dutch-Indonesian case shows evidence of the link between corruption and the context of establishing a colonial empire: by both invoking scandals and asking for reform, as well as neglecting or denying corruption in other instances, elites (re)formulated norms in order to set or maintain power structures of colonial state-formation and economic exploitation. Kroeze also argues that cases of colonial corruption show how the metropole and colony were interlinked and influenced each other. For instance, political changes in the metropole, such as the growing influence of more morally outspoken Protestant and Liberal politicians, as well as experiences of misuse in the colony, together caused the emergence of the Dutch equivalent of the civilising mission: the “Ethical Policy”. Despite these connections, corruption and moral campaigns against it, often served to strengthen already existing differences and dissimilarities.

Part II then continues with chapter 8, in which Didier Guignard focuses on a specific case of colonial corruption in the context of French Algeria: the Bruat case of 1877. He explains how Algerian rural society was exposed to land confiscations during the nineteenth century; the Bruat case shows how public agents and European politicians took advantage of their front-row seat in order to seize land for their own interests or for cronyism. More precisely, this contribution provides a micro-level analysis of the awarding of 100 hectares of land to a civil servant in Low Kabylia during the 1870s. As a member of the upper class in France, the mother of this civil servant played the role of mediator in negotiations with central authorities to “help” them bypassing legal interdictions. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the usefulness of the concept of colonial corruption.

In chapter 9, Pol Dalmau examines the deep-rooted presence of corruption in Spain’s most prosperous colony in the Caribbean: Cuba. He shows how the booming economy of this sugar island in the global market ran parallel to a wide range of fraudulent practices that touched virtually all the levels of the colonial administration. Dalmau does not only provide evidence of this, but also argues that colonial corruption had an Atlantic dimension that can only be fully understood by examining the clientelistic networks that spanned the two sides of the Atlantic, and through an analytical approach that examines the metropolis and colony together. Hence, the chapter shows how Cuban elites made use of novels and other methods of political action to denounce corrupt practices back in the metropolis. Authorities in Madrid, however, often turned a deaf ear to these reports and considered that corruption was a minor price to be paid (and quite often, to benefit from) in order to maintain the integrity of the Spanish empire. The analysis of corruption in Cuba is thus used as a platform from which to examine the Atlantic dynamics of imperial rule, as well as the tensions and resistances that pervaded it.

Gemma Rubí, in chapter 10, continues with the topic of corruption in Cuba, but focuses on Victor Balaguer—Spain’s Minister of Overseas Affairs in different periods (1871, 1874 and 1886–1888). The fight against corruption carried out by public employees was a constant in the political career of Balaguer. From the Court of Auditors and from the Debt Inspection Commission, he devoted considerable efforts to pursuing it. Upon access to the position of Overseas Affairs’ Minister, Balaguer ran into several powerful irregularities practiced by civil servants of the colonial administration in Cuba, which came to be the continuation

of those that he had already found during his previous mandates. Rubí's contribution thus draws on the case of a reputed politician, in order to examine the motivations to fight political corruption in the colonies and the measures that were developed in such attempts.

In chapter 11, Jonathan Saha focuses on paperwork as a source of corruption in colonial Myanmar (formerly Burma) around 1900. He argues that the bureaucratic paperwork produced by colonial states was often embroiled in malfeasant practices. Take, for example, the paperwork that was used to regulate fishing in colonial Myanmar from the late-nineteenth century onwards. Certain littoral areas and deltaic waterways were designated as fisheries. Individuals could bid for leases to these fisheries in auctions. In non-leased open fisheries, people had to apply for licenses to fish. In addition, to mitigate against overfishing, licenses were required for the use of nets. However, the prescriptive nature of these documents did not always have the effects that they were intended to have. This chapter argues that by considering paperwork to be a particular type of commodity, we can better understand the prevalence of particular corrupt practices in the colonial context.

Xavier Huetz de Lempis, in the last contribution of Part II, takes contemporary discussions about the colonial roots of today's corruption as a starting point for an analysis of the role of corruption in the Philippines in the decades around 1900. He argues that corruption in post-colonial Philippines is deeply rooted in the long colonial history of the archipelago, but that this is less a matter of showing that corruption is a very ancient local phenomenon and more about understanding the reasons why corrupt practices passed from one political system to the other. During the Spanish period, embezzlement and abuse of power became unremarkable behaviours for Spanish civil servants and their Philippine subordinates. Beginning in 1898, the Americans gradually endowed the colony with modern democratic institutions. Yet, the US imperial contradictions and the skill of the Philippine political elites allowed the corruption to remain and to pervert the new institutions.

The final contribution to this volume is written by Jens Ivo Engels and Frédéric Monier, which should be read more as a reflection and an agenda for further research, than as a summary of each contribution. Engels and Monier challenge the reader by highlighting the role of lasting systems of gifts and patronage, and emphasise the influence of conflicting norms and political changes for the rise (and absences) of debates about colonial corruption in one context, but not in another. They, like other

contributors did, stress the point not to treat “colonial corruption” as only about—and taking place in—the colony.

## NOTES

1. For example, for the Dutch-Indonesian case Jan Luiten van Zanden and Daan Marks pointed to corruption and other “extractive institutions” in their *An Economic History of Indonesia of Indonesia 1800–2010* (London: Routledge, 2012), 30, 31, 72, 107 and 113; Ewout Frankema and Frans Buelens, *Colonial Exploitation and Economic Development. The Belgian Congo and the Netherlands Indies Compared* (London: Routledge, 2013), 122–124.
2. Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire. India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Xavier Huetz de Lemps, *L’archipel des épices. La corruption de l’administration espagnole aux Philippines (fin XVIIIe-fin XIXe siècle)* (Madrid: Casa Velázquez, 2006); Didier Guignard, *L’abus de pouvoir en Algérie coloniale (1880–1914). Visibilité et singularité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2010); Chris Nierstrasz, *In the shadow of the Company: The Dutch East India Company and Its Servants in the Period of Its Decline, 1740–1796* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Jonathan Saha, *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State: Corruption in Burma c.1900* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Another example is Steven Pierce, “Looking Like a State: Colonialism and the Discourse of Corruption in Northern Nigeria,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 4 (2006): 887–914.
3. For example: C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World. Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004) who refers to the role of “old corruption” (p. 98) and “moral corruption” (p. 101), which he links to the “old order” and the “politics of difference”; Burbank and Cooper also, every now and then, point at the role of corruption in the history of empires as shown in Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History. Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
4. Cesare Mattina, Frédéric Monier, Olivier Dard and Jens Ivo Engels, eds., *Dénoncer la corruption. Chevaliers blancs, pamphlétaires et promoteurs de la transparence à l’époque contemporaine* (Paris: Demopolis, 2018).
5. Jens Ivo Engels, “Corruption and Anticorruption in the Era of Modernity and Beyond,” in *Anticorruption in History. From Antiquity to the Modern Era*, eds. Ronald Kroeze, André Vitoria and Guy Geltner (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018); Pol Dalmau, “Fighting Against Corruption. Newspapers and Public Morality in Modern Spain,” in *Scandales*

- et corruption politique à l'époque contemporaine (XIXe-XXe siècles)*, eds. Frédéric Monier and Jens Ivo Engels (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014), 31–50.
6. See Jens Ivo Engels, *Die Geschichte der Korruption. Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 2014).
  7. See Ronald Kroeze, Vitoria, Geltner, “Introduction: Debating Corruption and Anticorruption in History,” in *Anticorruption in History. From Antiquity to the Modern Era*, eds. Ronald Kroeze, André Vitoria and Guy Geltner (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018), 1–17.
  8. On the Enlightenment and the notion of “Oriental” despotism, see: Joan Pau-Rubiés, “Oriental Despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 9, nos. 1–2 (January 2005): 109–190.
  9. For an example of a study that examines the role of colonialism, decolonisation processes and “modernity”, see Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). On the language of civilisation, see: Brett Bowden, *The Empire of civilisation: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civiliser of Nations. The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
  10. Examples include: Kroeze, Vitoria and Geltner, *Anticorruption in History*; Engels, *Die Geschichte der Korruption*; F. Monier, O. Dard and A. Fahrmeir, eds., *Scandales et Corruption*.
  11. Christopher Rosenmüller and Stephan Ruderer, eds., *Dádivas, dones y dineros. Aportes a una nueva historia de la corrupción en América Latina desde el Imperio español a la modernidad* (Madrid: Iberoamericana Verveurt, 2016); Borja de Riquer, Joan Lluís Pérez Francesc, Gemma Rubí, Lluís Ferran Toledano and Oriol Luján, eds., *La corrupción política en la España contemporánea. Un enfoque interdisciplinar* (Barcelona: Marcial Pons, 2018); Pol Dalmau and Isabel Burdiel, eds., *La imagen pública del poder. Escándalos y causas célebres en Europa (siglos XIX-XX)*, *Historia y Política*, 39, 2018 (special issue).
  12. John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: the Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400–2000* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008); Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History. Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Peter Crooks and Timothy Parsons, eds., *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History: From the Late Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
  13. Manuel Pérez Garcia and Lucio De Sousa, eds., *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches: Europe, Asia and the Americas in a World Network System* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla,



- Iberian World Empires and the Globalization of Europe, 1415–1668* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
14. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 1; Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 67–70; Richard Drayton and David Motadel, “Discussion: The Futures of Global History,” *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (March 2018): 3.
  15. Manuel Pérez García, “Introduction: Current Challenges of Global History in East Asian Historiographies,” in *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches: Europe, Asia and the Americas in a World Network System*, eds. Manuel Pérez García and Lucio De Sousa (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 2; Jorge Luengo and Pol Dalmau, “Writing Spanish History in the Global Age,” *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 3 (November 2018): 425–445.
  16. For the case of the Spanish Empire, see: Richard Kagan, “Prescott’s Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the decline of Spain,” *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (April 1996): 423–46; For that of the Ottoman, Asli Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World” to the “Sick Man of Europe”*. *European Images of the Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).
  17. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Dominic Sachsenmaier, “Global History and Critiques of Western Perspectives,” *Comparative Education* 42, no. 3 (August 2006): 451–470.
  18. Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*.
  19. Alan L. Karras, *Smuggling. Contraband and Corruption in World History* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).
  20. Sven Beckert and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds., *Global History, Globally: Research and Practice Around the World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).
  21. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*; Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire and the Idea of Human Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
  22. Lauren Benton, *Rage for Order. The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800–1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).
  23. McCarthy, *Race, Empire and the Idea*; Martin Thomas and Richard Toye, *Arguing about Empire: Imperial Rhetoric in Britain and France, 1882–1956* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

## REFERENCES

- Bayly, Christopher, A. *The Birth of the Modern World. Global Connections and Comparisons*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- Beckert, Sven, and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds. *Global History, Globally: Research and Practice Around the World*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.
- Benton, Lauren. *Rage for Order. The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800–1850*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Bowden, Brett. *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Burbank, Jane, and Frederick Cooper. *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Çirakman, Aslı. *From the “Terror of the World” to the “Sick Man of Europe”. European Images of the Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002.
- Cooper, Frederick. *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2005.
- Conrad, Sebastian. *What Is Global History?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Crooks, Peter, and Timothy Parsons, eds. *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History: From the Late Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Dalmau, Pol. “Fighting Against Corruption. Newspapers and Public Morality in Modern Spain.” In *Scandales et corruption politique à l’époque contemporaine (XIXe-XXe siècles)*, edited by Frédéric Monier and Jens Ivo Engels, 31–50. Paris: Armand Colin, 2014.
- Dalmau, Pol, and Isabel Burdiel, eds. *La imagen pública del poder. Escándalos y causas célebres en Europa (siglos XIX-XX)*, *Historia y Política*, 39, 2018 (special issue).
- Darwin, John. *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400–2000*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2008.
- Dirks, Nicolas B. *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Drayton, Richard, and David Motadel. “Discussion: The Futures of Global History.” *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (March 2018): 1–21.
- Engels, Jens Ivo. *Die Geschichte der Korruption. Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis 20 Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 2014.
- Engels, Jens Ivo. “Corruption and Anticorruption in the Era of Modernity and Beyond.” In *Anticorruption in History. From Antiquity to the Modern Era*, edited by Ronald Kroeze, André Vitoria and Guy Geltner, 167–180. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

- Frankema, Ewout, and Frans Buelens. *Colonial Exploitation and Economic Development. The Belgian Congo and the Netherlands Indies Compared*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Huetz de Lempis, Xavier. *L'archipel des épices. La corruption de l'administration espagnole aux Philippines (fin XVIIIe-fin XIXe siècle)*. Madrid: Casa Velázquez, 2006.
- Kagan, Richard. "Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain." *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (April 1996): 423–446.
- Karras, Alan L. *Smuggling. Contraband and Corruption in World History*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010.
- Koskenniemi, Martti. *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations. The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870–1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Kroeze, Ronald, Andre Vitória, and Guy Geltner, eds. *Anticorruption in History: From Antiquity to the Modern Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Kroeze, Ronald, André Vitoria, and Guy Geltner, "Introduction: Debating Corruption and Anticorruption in History." In *Anticorruption in History. From Antiquity to the Modern Era*, edited by Ronald Kroeze, André Vitoria and Guy Geltner, 1–17. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018.
- Luengo, Jorge, and Pol Dalmau. "Writing Spanish History in the Global Age." *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 3 (November 2018), 425–445.
- Mattina, Cesare, Frédéric Monier, Olivier Dard, and Jens Ivo Engels, eds. *Dénoncer la corruption: Chevaliers blancs, pamphlétaires et promoteurs de la transparence à l'époque contemporaine*. Paris: Demopolis, 2018.
- McCarthy, Thomas. *Race, Empire and the Idea of Human Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Monier, Frédéric, Oliver Dard, and Andreas Fahrmeir, eds. *Scandales et corruption à l'époque contemporaine*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2014.
- Niertrasz, Chris. *In the Shadow of the Company: The Dutch East India Company and Its Servants in the Period of Its Decline 1740–1796*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Pau-Rubiés, Joan. "Oriental Despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu." *Journal of Early Modern History* 9, nos. 1–2 (January 2005): 109–190.
- Pierce, Steven. "Looking Like a State: Colonialism and the Discourse of Corruption in Northern Nigeria." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 4 (2006): 887–914.
- Pérez García, Manuel. "Introduction: Current Challenges of Global History in East Asian Historiographies." In *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches: Europe, Asia and the Americas in a World Network System*, edited by Manuel Pérez García and Lucio De Sousa. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

- Pérez García, Manuel, and Lucio De Sousa, eds. *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches Europe, Asia and the Americas in a World Network System*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Riquer, Borja de, Joan Lluís Pérez Francesc, Gemma Rubí, Lluís Ferran Toledano, and Oriol Luján, eds. *La corrupción política en la España contemporánea. Un enfoque interdisciplinar*. Barcelona: Marcial Pons, 2018.
- Sachsenmaier, Dominic. “Global History and Critiques of Western Perspectives.” *Comparative Education* 42, no. 3 (August 2006): 451–470.
- Saha, Jonathan. *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State. Corruption in Burma ca. 1900*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Thomas, Martin, and Richard Toye. *Arguing About Empire: Imperial Rhetoric in Britain and France, 1882–1956*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Yun-Casalilla, Bartolomé. *Iberian World Empires and the Globalization of Europe, 1415–1668*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- Zanden, Jan Luiten van, and Daan Marks. *An Economic History of Indonesia 1800–2010*. London: Routledge, 2012.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

