The Global Bourgeoisie: The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire

Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge, 27-29 August 2015

Convenors: Christof Dejung, David Motadel, Jürgen Osterhammel

This conference provides a new approach to the emerging research field of global social history by examining the emergence of ‘middle classes’ and ‘bourgeois cultures’ across the globe in the long nineteenth century, as well as their encounters, both in imperial and non-imperial contexts. It aims to demonstrate that the nineteenth century saw the formation of similar social groups all over the world that can be described as ‘middle classes’. The conference examines the extent to which the making of these middle classes around the globe can be explained by considering the rising exchange of ideas and goods between the Western and non-Western worlds. Instead of understanding the establishment of middle class society as a distinctly Western phenomenon, which became diffused throughout the rest of the world, the conference papers seek to explore the extent to which it was, from its start, the result of global interactions and entanglements in the age of empire.

The conference will be supported by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, the Economic History Society, the German History Society, the Leibnizpreis Programme ‘Global Processes’ of the German Research Foundation, and the Smuts Memorial Fund of the University of Cambridge.

The conference is open to everybody interested. There will be no conference fee. Registration is not required; however, we would appreciate a short message to Christof Dejung (cd513-at-cam.ac.uk) if you would like to attend.

Programme:

Thursday, 27 August

14:00 INTRODUCTION

14:30: Session 1: CLASS AND POLITICS
Chair: David Motadel (Edinburgh/Cambridge)

Houchang Chehabi (Boston University): The Rise of the Iranian Middle Class and the State

Murat Siviloglu (Istanbul): The Emergence of an Ottoman Middle Class: A State Endeavour?

Coffee break

Adam Mestyan (Harvard): Charity and patriotism: The Religious Culture of the Ottoman Arab Middling Classes in the Nineteenth Century

Christof Dejung (Cambridge/Konstanz): Global Civilizing Missions and Class Politics in Europe

18:30: KEYNOTE
Richard Drayton (London): The Emergence of a Global Bourgeoisie and the Question of Social Order in the Long Nineteenth Century
Friday, 28 August

**9:30: INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION**
Jürgen Osterhammel (Konstanz): Chair and Comment to the Keynote and the Discussions of Day 1

**10:30 Session 2: CLASS AND CAPITALISM**
Chair: Christof Dejung (Cambridge/Konstanz)

Janet Hunter (LSE): Modern Business and the Rise of the Japanese Middle Classes

Coffee break

Rebecca E. Karl (New York University): Compradores: The Mediating Middle of Capitalism in China’s early Twentieth Century

Chambi Chachage (Harvard): Alcohol Consumption and the Cultural Rise of Capitalism in Colonial Tanzania

**13:00 Lunch break**

14:30: Continuation of Session 2:
Sven Beckert (Harvard): The American Bourgeoisie and the World in the Age of Empire

**15:15: Session 3: CLASS AND COLONIALISM**
Chair: Jürgen Osterhammel (Konstanz)

Tithi Bhattacharya (Purdue): Rereading Gramsci in Colonial Calcutta: Class location, Class Formation and Ideology

Coffee break

Emma Hunter (Edinburgh): Modernity, Print Media and the ‘Middle Class’ in Colonial East Africa


Saturday, 29 August

**9:30 Session 4: FAILURES AND FRINGES**
Chair: David Motadel (Edinburgh/Cambridge)

Alison K. Smith (Toronto): The ‘Missing’ or ‘Forgotten’ Middle of Imperial Russia

David S. Parker (Queen’s): Latin American Middle Classes Confront the Paradigm of the Failed Bourgeoisie

Kris Manjapra (Tufts): Studying the Global Bourgeoisie by Fraction: Difference and Entanglement in the Making of Radical Modernism

**12:30 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**