

Contributors

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Julia Malitska received her PhD in History from Södertörn University (Sweden) in 2017. She is the author of the book *Negotiating Imperial Rule: Colonists and Marriage in the Nineteenth-century Black Sea Steppe* (2017). Her current research interests cover the history of medicine, animal welfare and consumption in Eastern and Central Europe during nineteenth-twentieth centuries.

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Education. "Monitorial Schooling in India, 1789–1840" won the dissertation award of the German Historical Institute, London, of the same year. Afterwards, she worked as a lecturer in Global History at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, and as a guest lecturer at the University of St Gallen, Switzerland. In Zurich, she also coordinated a research group on anti-alcohol campaigns and moral reform in a global history perspective. Part of the results of this work have been published in the volume *Biopolitik und Sittlichkeitsreform* (Campus 2014), which she co-edited. Her research interests include the History of Education, Comparative and International Education, Transnational History, and Gender and Intersectionality.

Introduction

Gendered Imperial Formations

Ulrike Lindner and Dörte Lerp



Figure 1.1 German soldiers in Southwest Africa, ca. 1910. Courtesy bpk – Bildagentur für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte.

Around 1910, an unknown photographer took a picture of three German soldiers somewhere in the then German colony of Southwest Africa. The men sit outside, around a small, neatly covered table. They wear military caps, but have discarded their jackets and seem quite relaxed. All three of them are knitting socks. At first glance the image seems to confront us with a stark

contrast. It is hard to reconcile the peaceful scene of men knitting—a craft generally associated with women—with our historical knowledge about the bloody handiwork of war those men were sent out to do in the colony. After all, the picture was taken only a few years after the German colonial army had fought a genocidal war against the Ovaherero and Nama in German Southwest Africa (1904–1907). However, those associations reveal more about our conceptions of the relationship between gender and empire than about its realities. Knitting socks was in fact not yet a gendered practice, and it was not extraordinary that soldiers undertook such a task in their free time.¹ Besides that, colonial soldiers of lower ranks had to engage in other domestic activities such as cooking, cleaning, or washing clothes on a regular basis. Those tasks were part of a homosocial culture that characterized military and frontier life.² The picture thus presents us with a fairly trivial aspect of colonial masculinity and everyday military life.³ Disconcerting is not the scene itself, but its juxtaposition with what we know about the history of colonial violence, warfare, and in this specific case genocide. It unsettles us, because of what is not visible but still part of the story. The image forces us to change our viewpoint and look behind the obvious to discover the links between colonial domesticity, intimacy, and violence. More generally, it challenges us to reinvestigate imperial history and its sources. It is this task that the authors of this volume set out to do in order to open up new perspectives on the complicated relationship between gender and empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The expanse of empires (that of the European colonial powers as well as of Russia and the US) throughout this period is without precedent. They covered huge parts of the world, especially in the decades around the First World War.⁴ It was also in this era, from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, when European empires for various socio-political, economic, and environmental reasons were able to assume global hegemony. Previously, there had been several centers with their own peripheries.⁵ Now the “Great Divergence” occurred, a period during which Britain, France, and Russia gained military, political, technological, and economic superiority over Qing China, Moghul India, and the Ottoman Empire.⁶ *New Perspectives on the History of Gender and Empire* concentrates on this global setting in which the European empires, Russia, and later also the US, were highly dominant and

were able to exert a strong influence on the societies and cultures under their imperial rule, including the formation of gender regimes, the regulation of sexuality, the shaping of education, and the introduction of European concepts of household and family. All chapters deal with imperial settings in the nineteenth and twentieth century, many of them concentrate on the years from the 1880s to the beginning of the First World War, which witnessed a large spurt in globalization, resulting in a world which was interconnected in many more ways than before. This period is seen as a time of “great acceleration,” as Christopher Bayly puts it in his book *The Birth of the Modern World*.⁷ Technical and economic globalization also reached the colonies and imperial peripheries.⁸ In particular, the speed at which information traveled changed. Whereas letters had previously taken months, messages could now be sent home rapidly by telegraph, and the steamer lines made it possible for goods and people to be transported ever more quickly.⁹ These developments had a huge impact on the connections between colonies, imperial peripheries, and metropolises. The exchange of practices, ideas, and knowledge within and between empires was widened and intensified. Thus, globalization and high imperialism also increased and rearranged the flow of gendered practices, ideas, and knowledge that we address in this book. Furthermore, the end of the nineteenth century saw a growing influence and a radicalization of racial concepts and thoughts in many of the expanding and now more closely connected empires, that shaped and repositioned imperial policy in the field of gender and sexual relations worldwide.¹⁰

The volume addresses the specific changes and radicalizations as well as the global framework that shaped the relationship between gender and empire during the nineteenth and twentieth century. It deals with a variety of colonial and imperial situations and locations based on multi-archival research that explores new and unusual source bases. The chapters discuss colonies in Southern and Eastern Africa; they address British India and the Philippines, settler colonial settings in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as imperial peripheries like the Aegean Sea in the Italian Empire or the Black Sea Steppe in the Russian Empire. Thus *New Perspectives on the History of Gender and Empire* expands and decentralizes research on gender and empire. It offers novel opportunities to compare topics such as domesticity and sexuality, or violence and intimacy, in various imperial situations.¹¹ It also traces imperial

connections like those between New Zealand and South Africa, which were both part of the British Empire but were situated far apart from each other on different continents. And even more importantly, while imperial studies usually focus on the main overseas empires of the nineteenth century, i.e., the British, Dutch, and French empires, we argue that for a truly global approach, less familiar settings must be explored. This is why we included chapters on the Russian Empire, a land empire with forms of internal colonization, the Italian and the German empires, two rather short-lived empires that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, as well as the US empire, that has been included more intensely in the discourse of imperial and colonial history only during the last decades.¹² In doing so, we widen the arena of imperial comparison and are able to address multiple configurations and structures of imperial rule. For example, “mixed marriage” regulations, a fairly well-studied object of colonial gender history, have so far been researched mainly in the context of British, Dutch, and German colonialism.¹³ This volume allows for a more differentiated view by addressing the topic in the context of the Russian and Italian empires. Furthermore, the case studies of this volume deal with the ambiguous distinctions between subjecthood and citizenship, which form a central category in the production of difference within empires, from a completely new angle.¹⁴ The imperial expansion of the US in the Philippines, still rarely researched in gender history, adds another aspect to the global outlook.¹⁵ The volume also deals with “typical” colonial empires such as the British Empire; however, in such cases the authors engage with new global perspectives, as is evident for example in the comparative analysis of violence and domesticity in South Africa and New Zealand. When investigating colonial education in British India, the volume includes global networks and transnational influences of knowledge production in the analysis, both of which played a growing role in the development of colonial and imperial strategies of the nineteenth century. Generally, we not only create a global view by combining new cases and examples from a wide array of imperial settings, but also by focusing on global entanglements, by looking at specific local situations with a global perspective and by addressing shared histories of metropolises and colonies as well as connections between empires.¹⁶

In our endeavor to explore unexpected settings and issues the chapters of this volume engage with key themes of gender history such as intimacy,

marriage, family, sexuality, and education, but also with issues that have been addressed to a lesser extent with respect to gender and empire, such as the workings of colonial homes and schools, the self-positioning of colonizing men and women, and homosexuality in colonial spheres. Generally, we address spaces of colonial dominance as well as spaces of resistance, often combined in ambiguous ways, as the analysis of Indian missionary schools reveals.

This volume focuses on the analysis of what we suggest to term “gendered imperial formations.” Expanding on the epistemic framework of the “(social) imperial formation” introduced by Mrinalini Sinha as well as Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan we place the study of gender relations at the center of comparative and entangled imperial history. The authors delve deeply into the multiple ways in which the imperial world was structured according to gender and other categories like race, class, sexuality, religion, nationality, and citizenship. With their case studies, they tie the gendered formation of empire back to certain places and local conditions, particularly when addressing the intimate as a domain that strongly localizes people and practices.¹⁷ At the same time, they identify overarching developments across the empires of the nineteenth and twentieth century. And they explore the conjunctions of power structures and personal experiences within both typical and more unexpected imperial situations. Generally, the volume points out global networks and entanglements, seeks to include subaltern perspectives, and questions dichotomies such as male/female or colonizer/colonized.

Gender and empire: Towards new global perspectives

Scholars have been studying the history of women, gender, and empire now for more than three decades. Works by historians such as Helen Callaway or Margaret MacMillan in the 1980s and 1990s have argued against the notion of white women being the reason for racism in colonial settings, questioned the idea of colonialism as an exclusively male endeavor, and explored the relations between indigenous and Western women.¹⁸ But most importantly, they did not merely add the stories of white and colonized women to the historiography of empire; they went on to expose colonialism itself as a fundamentally gendered project. Several monographs and a number of edited volumes published in the