

Intersecting Worlds: The Interplay of Cultures and Technology

14 – 18 January 2019 Lorentz Center @Oort

The workshop *Intersecting Worlds: The Interplay of Cultures and Technology* was hosted at the Lorentz Center in Leiden between 14 and 18 January 2019. This workshop explored, in a comparative and connective way, the transformations and responses of indigenous societies around the world to changing cultural, social, economic, and political environments triggered by European invasion and colonialism. This workshop was supported by The Lorentz Center as part of the Distinguished Lorentz Fellowship (DLF) awarded to Prof. dr. Corinne L. Hofman in 2018 and the ERC-synergy project NEXUS1492. Prof. dr. Hofman co-organized this workshop with distinguished academics and colleagues Prof. dr. Ian Lilley (University of Queensland) and Prof. dr. Christopher DeCorse (Syracuse University).

European colonial invasions in the Americas, (Western) Africa, and SE Asia and the Pacific Rim formed the catalyst for widespread social, political, and economic change, but also caused catastrophic demographic collapse as the result of the introduction of exotic diseases to which Europeans were tolerant, but to which local populations had no resistance. These processes of contact and cultural intersection contributed to the formation of the multi-ethnic societies in these areas today. However, colonial narratives are still dominated by Eurocentric viewpoints and, as such, this workshop aimed to uncover the indigenous perspective on these infamous histories through the study of the archaeological record. Some 60 academics from across the world and with a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds came together in Leiden to discuss the two key questions posited by the workshop organizers:

- *What were the immediate, and the lasting, effects of colonial encounters on indigenous cultures and societies across the world, and what were the intercultural dynamics that took place during these infamous colonization processes?*
- *How can the study of indigenous histories contribute to a more sophisticated awareness in the present, and how can it speak to multiple and perhaps competing stakeholders at local, regional, pan-regional, and global scales?*

Discussions focused on the transformations of indigenous landscapes, lifeways and deathways, and mobility and exchange mechanisms as a result of colonial invasion. The development of methods and techniques inherent in such archaeological research across space and time were central to these conversations. Whilst focusing on the deep past, the resilience of indigenous communities and the continuation of their practices and traditions in the present and future were debated at length. In present and future archaeological research, the need for a stronger emphasis on knowledge *exchange* and an active collaboration with local communities are deemed important for the discipline to move forward. Community engagement should permeate and inform the entire archaeological process.

The format of the conference allowed room for keynote addresses and discussions of more general topics including all participants, as well as smaller work sessions in which researchers with similar backgrounds and areas of expertise could meet, discuss, and compare their work. The facilities provided by The Lorentz Center were instrumental to the outcomes of this workshop, which include plans for future synergies and several joint publications that will provide novel insights to indigenous perspectives on colonial narratives from both pan-regional and transdisciplinary perspectives.

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