



Workshop

Historicizing Consent Consenting to Early Modern Empires

12 DEC 2022

14h30-19h00

Aud. Afonso de Barros, Iscte
Lisbon

Online streaming on [CIES-Iscte Youtube](#)

Does *consent* have a history? Looking for answers to this broad question, this workshop will focus specifically on the meaning of *consent to empire* in the early modern period, by discussing how ideas and practices of consent developed in the Portuguese and Spanish empires from both European and Indigenous perspectives.

Convenors: José Vicente Serrão, Sonia Tycko and Tamar Herzog

Organization: journal *Ler História*, CIES-Iscte, CEI-Iscte

Sponsors: Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (Harvard), and Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia

Presentation

Does *consent* have a history? Looking for answers to this broad question, this workshop will focus specifically on the meaning of *consent to empire* in the early modern period. We will do so by discussing how ideas and practices of consent developed in the Portuguese and Spanish empires from both European and Indigenous perspectives.

In early modern world, people commonly expected one another to consent to private contracts, for instance in commerce, marriage, or labor, as well as to less individuated arrangements like religious conversion or the acknowledgement of a ruling regime. Empire was another domain to which people actively applied the concept of consent. They did so in spite—or perhaps because—of the ways in which empire depended on brutality and coercion, with which consent is now commonly thought to be incompatible. This workshop puts aside that assumption of incompatibility, takes the repeated invocations of consent in the documents of the period seriously, and investigates the historical meaning of consent to early modern empires. The speakers will center the actions and ideas of diverse peoples throughout the Portuguese and Spanish monarchies in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. Most of these people used assertions or practices of consent in advancing, resisting, or coping with empire. In some cases, native people's actions instead suggested the irrelevance of consent as a framework for wars of conquest, but their voices did not prevail in the era of study. Key questions include: Is consent to empire a special case, or does it reflect these broader trends in early modern consent? What can we access and understand of native ideas about the consent that the Portuguese and Spaniards required from them? Consent to empire will be broken down into constitutive parts such as pacification, allegiance and deference to the king, provision of labor, engagement with trade, execution of bureaucracy, and conversion to Christianity.

This meeting in Lisbon is a sequel to the workshop on "*Historicizing Consent: What did it Mean to Agree in the Late Medieval and Early Modern World*" that met in April 2022 at Harvard Radcliffe Institute and the Weatherhead Center at Harvard University ([+ info](#)). Journal [Ler História](#) hosts the initiative as a way of promoting an emerging topic of current historical research, expecting to publish the main results of this meeting soon.

Historicizing Consent

Consenting to Early Modern Empires

PROGRAMME

14h30

Opening

-
15h00

José Vicente Serrão
Sonia Tycko

Panel 1 - The Portuguese Empire

15h00
-
16h45

José Vicente Serrão (Chair)

Ângela Barreto Xavier

Questioning Everyday Forms of Consent in Early Modern Goan Villages.

Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto

Empire and Consent in Portuguese Asia, sixteenth-seventeenth centuries.

16h45
-
17h15

Coffee-Break

Panel 2 - The Spanish Empire

17h15
-
19h00

Sonia Tycko (Chair)

Caroline Cunill

Translating Consent in the Spanish Empire: Maya Words and Deeds in Sixteenth-Century Yucatan.

Tamar Herzog

Imagining Native Consent and Native Resistance in Spain's Overseas Territories.

Venue: Auditorium Afonso de Barros, ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa
(or join us on [CIES-Iscte Youtube](#))

Participants' affiliations

Ângela Barreto Xavier, ICS-ULisboa, Portugal. Caroline Cunill, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France. José Vicente Serrão, Ler História and Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Portugal. Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto, CHAM, NOVA FCSH, Portugal. Sonia Tycko, University of Edinburgh, UK. Tamar Herzog, Harvard University, USA.