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OCTOBER 2025
17:30 – 19:00

Université du Luxembourg
Campus Belval, Maison du Savoir, MSA 4.510

LET'S
TALK ABOUT
HISTORY!



Small State Studies and History

Thoughts on Imperialism and Luxembourgish Foreign Policy

ABSTRACT

What difference does small make? – this paper will weigh the possibilities and problems in applying methods and findings from the field of Small State Studies to two historiographical fields that in terms of size seemingly could not be further apart: Modern Western Imperialism and Luxembourg's Foreign Policy towards a decolonising Africa. As historical figures, from Danish and Portuguese diplomats to Luxembourgish ministers, have put the size of their country at the forefront, the question remains if the rhetoric has had a meaningful impact on the policies applied. Were the colonial policies of states such as Belgium or the Netherlands different to France or Great Britain due to state size? Can the decisions taken by the Luxembourgish foreign ministry always be boiled down to their inherent smallness? The paper will touch on a variety of case studies, helping to enable a meaningful exchange between these different strands of research.



Dr. Yves Schmitz
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ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Yves Schmitz has studied history at the Universities of Hamburg and Exeter, and completed his PhD in comparative imperial history at Marburg University in 2021. Since then, he has worked at different post-doc positions at the Universities of Bremen, Hagen and Duisburg-Essen. In 2024, he has published an award-winning introduction to the colonial history of Luxembourg with the Luxembourgish art-collective Richtung22. Since October, he works as a lecturer (Lehrkraft für besondere Aufgaben) at Hildesheim University.

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Illustration: Edward Linley Sambourne "The Rhodes Colossus" Punch, 10.12.1892.