

*Workshop, University of Granada, March 27–28, 2025*

The ERC research project *SUSPICIO – Creating Suspects. Security Politics and Colonial Rule in the Spanish Empire* at the University of Granada is inviting proposals for a workshop on the culture of suspicion in the age of the Atlantic Revolutions between ca. 1770 and 1830.

## The Culture of Suspicion: Creating Suspects in the Age of Revolutions

After the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the phantasma of revolution began spreading through Europe and its colonies. The fear of conspiracy and revolution wasn't limited to the old régime of governments. Revolutionary governments in France and America also felt the threat posed by counterrevolutionary forces. Although the fear of revolution and conspiracy was initially abstract, it became more tangible when focused on certain people as potential subversive actors. By transferring this vague fear to individuals, the invisible became apparent, transforming the threat into enemies that could be combated through actions taken against them. A consequence of the fear of revolution and conspiracy and its subsequent tangible materialization in individuals was the emergence of a culture of distrust and suspicion.

The workshop will examine the impact of suspicion in the age of the Atlantic Revolutions (from around 1770 to 1830) in Europe and its colonial territories. We invite contributions that focus on the question of how individuals or groups of people became suspects of hostility towards the existing monarchical or revolutionary order, and thus potentially subversive. Contributions may deal with the narrative construction of suspicion as well as the practical surveillance measures and juridical proceedings that were used against the suspects. Particularly welcome are contributions that address the consequences of revolutionary paranoia and the culture of suspicion, as well as methodological reflections on how the concept of suspicion can be employed in historical research. Possible topics include:

### **1) Identification of suspects**

- Population registration and passport systems: How were suspects identified and marked?
- Denunciation practice
- Police surveillance

### **2) Law and legal practice**

- Legal practice of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary tribunals in dealing with suspects
- Suspicion in criminal law
- Suspicion penalties (*poena suspicionis*)
- Problems in providing evidence in cases of suspicion
- States of emergency

### 3) **Political and social consequences of a culture of suspicion**

- Phenomena like the so-called “witch hunt” and revolutionary paranoia
- Revolutionary and anti-revolutionary terror
- Stabilization/destabilization of the socio-political order through suspicion
- Instrumentalization of suspicion in competitive political or economic situations

### 4) **Narratives of suspicion**

- Conspiracy theories
- Processes of creating and discrediting trust
- Correlations between the fear of revolution and older fears and stereotypes
- Language describing suspicion: epidemiological, eschatological, juridical, biological, etc.; metaphor and its consequences
- Forms of communication: rumors, pamphlets, announcements

### 5) **Methodological reflection on a culture of suspicion**

- Methodological references to surveillance studies, securitization, cultures of vigilance
- Relation between suspicion and trust
- Conditions for the emergence and spread of suspicion
- Countermeasures to contain or control suspicion

The workshop will be held in person in Granada. The workshop language is English. The organizers will cover basic expenses for travel and accommodation.

A published collection from the workshop within a special issue or an edited volume is planned.

Submission:

Please submit a proposal of 400 words and a short CV of two pages by January 10, 2025, to [mbiersack@ugr.es](mailto:mbiersack@ugr.es)

This workshop is organized and hosted by the ERC Project *SUSPICIO – Creating Suspects. Security Politics and Colonial Rule in the Spanish Empire* at the University of Granada. For more information on the project, see: <http://suspicio.ugr.es/>