

‘Accumulation is the conquest of the world’: International Law, Property
Law, Original Accumulation

For the workshop: International Law and Property Law: Missing Connections?
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The paper will suggest that one of the ‘missing connections?’ asked about in the title of the workshop is: original accumulation. Marx talked about original accumulation in order to address the ways in which capitalism is not a spontaneous order but constituted through violence. The central aspect of this violence is the separation of the bulk of the population from the means of production, without which capital could not have come into being. Much work has shown the importance of property law to this process; very little work has addressed the importance of international law to the process. The paper therefore seeks to contribute to our understanding of the connections between international law and property law through the idea of original accumulation. Understood through the concept of original accumulation, international law and property law have been central to the conquest of the world.