

**COMBATING DIRT: ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION MANAGEMENT
TECHNIQUES AND THE POLITICS OF FILTH IN THE GOLD COAST (COLONIAL
GHANA), C. 1878 – 1950**

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ABSTRACT:

In many parts of the world, European colonisation implicitly incorporated the reorganisation of the schematics of cleanliness and order – an ambition whose primary target was environmental sanitation. This article paper examines the ways in which the British colonial administration addressed what they presented as poor environmental sanitation conditions in Gold Coast communities. It explores how effectively colonial sanitary technologies and sanitary regulations addressed the so-called sanitary challenges in the Gold Coast. The paper reveals a disconnect between the colonists' articulation of the urgency to address the sanitary challenges of Gold Coast communities and colonial attitude towards mitigating these challenges. Thus, despite abhorrence for the poor sanitation in the Gold Coast and what seemed like an obsession to rid Gold Coast communities of filth through varying techniques and regulatory regimes, colonial sanitary measures were not an unmitigated success. This was partly because the colonial administration's attitude towards funding sanitation projects remained impassive. Further, the administration appeared lethargic in implementing sanitary regulations. Yet, colonial officials, often blamed the limited successes of colonial sanitation techniques and regulations on what they described as the obstinate attitude of the African population. Thus, the management of dirt/refuse in the Gold Coast appeared confounding and presented a significant technocratic and politico-administrative challenge to the colonial administration.