

Pathways to agricultural development in postcolonial Southeast Asia

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Over the past two decades, scholars in the social sciences and humanities have submitted “development” to the scrutiny of history and disclosed a great variety of ideas, assumptions, interests, and practices. This panel sets out to contribute new scholarship to this growing body of literature by presenting several papers on the history of agricultural development in Southeast Asia. Included case studies will draw attention to the multiple actors involved in the imagining and enacting of agricultural development and examine why at particular times and places certain “pathways of development” were favored over others. Special attention will be devoted to the role of knowledge and technologies, both broadly construed, in the promotion of new practices and entities (e.g. crop varieties, fertilizers, or farmers), and the politics behind these processes. The panel intends to open a dialogue between different regions within Southeast Asia in order to examine commonalities, differences, and cross-connections. Chronologically, it focuses on the period after the multiple struggles for political independence, keeping in mind that postcoloniality often went hand in hand with the forging of new dependencies and the partial reproduction of colonial ideologies and practices.

Depending on the interest expressed, we would like to organize a single or double session. We thoroughly hope that four other scholars will join us to present case studies on agricultural development outside of Indonesia.

Convener: Sebastiaan Broere, PhD candidate, University of Amsterdam,
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Discussant: Prof. Dr. Marc Frey, Professor of Contemporary History and International
Relations, University of the Federal German Armed Force, Munich

Papers: ‘The BIMAS project in Java, Indonesia, 1968-1970’ — Karin Bugow, PhD
Candidate and Research Associate, Jacobs University, Bremen

‘Small Farmers of Mechanization? Developing Indonesian agriculture,
1950-1960’ — Sebastiaan Broere, PhD candidate, University of Amsterdam