

Beyond the Netherlands: Histories of Entanglements between Europe and colonial Indonesia, ca. 1850—1940

Convenor: Dr Bernhard C. Schär, ETH Zürich

Global and New Imperial Histories have fundamentally altered our understanding of the past in recent years. It appears that not only the former colonies were affected by European imperialism, but also Europe itself. Numerous studies on the British and French empires have illustrated the role institutions, people and knowledge from formerly colonized countries for historical fields that for a long time were considered to be uniquely European 'inventions' such as science, technology, trading know-how, human rights and democracy.

The debate on the former Dutch Empire in Southeast Asia has, however, remained rather restricted to the Netherlands themselves. Yet, as ongoing research indicates, 'flowbacks' from colonial Indonesia reached far beyond the Dutch metropolis across national borders and into the European 'hinterland'. Conversely, Javanese and other societies in the far-flung archipelago appropriated and transformed ideas not only from the Netherlands, but from larger European spaces to which they entertained relationships through various social networks.

This panel presents four examples from ongoing scholarship that illuminate the still fairly unknown history of entanglements between larger European regions beyond the Netherlands and colonial Indonesia during the time of the modern Dutch Empire. The panelists explore these historical entanglements through archives in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Indonesia. Together they will sketch out a historical landscape from multiple perspectives with a call for more collaborative research in the future.

Panelists

Monique Ligtenberg M.A. (Zurich)

Collecting colonial Indonesia for "German Science": Vienna, Frankfurt, and the Dutch East Indies, c. 1873-1914

Prima M. Mulyasari M.A. (Jakarta)

From Nationalism to Economic Interests: Deutsche Bund, the German Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands Indies, 1915-1940

Philipp Krauer M.A. (Zurich)

Cash & culture: Swiss mercenaries as transimperial agents of colonial violence in Indonesia and Europe, 1850-1914

Nur Ahmad M.A. (Leiden/Semarang)

Guarding Islam: Writing Against European Power in colonial Java 1825-1903.

Discussant

Prof Sumit K. Mandal (Semenyih)