

1. Title of session: *Corruption in colonial and postcolonial histories of empire and nations in Southeast Asia in the 20th and 21st centuries*

2. Convener: Ronald Kroeze (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), d.b.r.kroeze@vu.nl

3. Urgency of topic and questions to be discussed (One Session (1 x 90 min.))

Contemporary corruption in Southeast Asia is regularly linked to the history of colonial state formation. How these two relate has not systematically been researched. This session takes as a starting point a Dutch-Indonesian project on the role of corruption in Dutch and Indonesian histories of state-formation and economic development, and has invited discussants who are experts of other Southeast Asian regions to reflect on the first findings, and this theme in a broader sense. Doing so, the aim of this session is twofold: to discuss some early results from the Dutch-Indonesian research project and to evaluate the role of corruption discourses in critically understanding Southeast-Asian colonial and postcolonial state-building and economic processes from a comparative perspective. The session explores the contexts of corruption as a normative framework to create, maintain and challenge exclusive power structures in colonial and post independent processes of state formation. It does so at intersecting moments of entanglement: around 1900 (late colonial state, norm-setting debates among the colonizers); around WWII (independence, debates on good governance of the anti-colonial nationalists against colonialism); during the Cold War (the authoritarian state, and the conditional norms of development aid); post-1990 (transnational corruption; global corruption indices). Questions that will be addressed include:

- What role did corruption and anticorruption play in the development of a colonial normativity both in the colonies and in Europe in the late 19th and 20th centuries?
- How were discursive stereotypes and anticorruption policies used to (de)legitimize institutions?
- What role did (anti-)corruption discourses play in Southeast Asia during the Cold War?
- What is the connection between colonial political structures and contemporary notions of corruption?
- What do today's indices show in terms of governance; what is the weight of the past, and which past?

4. Presentations and discussants (One Session (1 x 90 min.)):

- Presentation 1: Corruption and normativity: Ronald Kroeze and Susan Legêne (VU Amsterdam)
- Presentation 2: Corruption discourses in colonial Indonesia (1870s-1940s): Otto Linde (VU Amsterdam) and Uji Nugroho Winardi (UGM Yogyakarta)
- Presentation 3 Corruption discourses and Indonesia during the Cold War: Farabi Fakhri (UGM Yogyakarta) and Bambang Purwanto (UGM Yogyakarta)
- Discussant 1: Xavier Huetz de Lempdes (Université Côte d'Azur)
- Discussant 2: Jonathan Saha (University of Durham)

Some references:

- Ronald Kroeze, Pol Dalmau and Frédéric Monier (eds.) *Corruption, Empire and Colonialism: A Global Perspective* (Singapore/ New York: Palgrave, 2021).
- Huetz de Lempdes, "The Entrenchment of corruption in a colonial context: the case of the Philippines", in: Ronald Kroeze, Pol Dalmau and Frédéric Monier (eds.) *Corruption, Empire and Colonialism: A Global Perspective* (Singapore/ New York: Palgrave, 2021).
- Purwanto, B, "Entertain People, Accumulate Capital: Indonesian Military Entrepreneurship in the 1950s and 1960s." In Schriker, A. & Touwen, J. (Eds.), *Promises and Predicaments: Trade and Entrepreneurship in Colonial and Independent Indonesia*. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015).
- Jonathan Saha, *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State: Corruption in Burma c. 1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- <https://colonial-normativity.com/>