

Laboratory Title:

“Corporate perpetrators, ‘victimless’ crimes, and citizen resistance in Southeast Asia: exploring interlinked forms of violence and local responses to social and environmental destruction”

Conveners:

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Description:

‘No soul to damn, no body to kick’, lawyer John C. Coffee wrote in 1981 about corporate punishment (Michigan Law Review 386). Forty years later, the prosecution of green criminality is still a difficult task, despite mounting public denunciation of monoculture plantations and fossil fuels. Indeed, if there is a figure of perpetration that remains elusive, it is the corporate perpetrator, transnational protean entity par excellence. Southeast Asia, a region already marked by the effect on societies, ecologies, and landscapes of imperial extraction and mass violence, is increasingly confronted with the impact of extractivism, fast-paced and often unregulated development and urbanization, and capitalistic accumulations. We propose to explore the connections between current systems and cultures of exploitation on the one hand, and the legacy of colonialism and warfare on the other. We first seek to clarify the linkages between corporate perpetrator, war crime perpetrator, and colonial perpetrator in order to better understand the entanglements of the military-industrial complex, corporations, governments, and local decision-makers. The recent developments with legal rights being given to inanimate entities such as rivers and forests point to a reconfiguration of victimhood and agency and to new and unexpected interactions between humans and nonhumans expressed in a range of ritual activities, economic relations, technologies, etc. Therefore, along this line, we also aim to unpack emergent re-imaginings of resistance and citizenship in the region.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

1) the genocide/ecocide nexus; 2) the human/more-than-human nexus; 3) visual and auditory depictions of structural and extractive violence, and continuities of exploitation; 4) visual and auditory practices as micro-sites of resistance; 5) the documentary, artistic, and archival practices through which these nexuses can be recorded, materialized, and accessed for different types of intervention and engagement.

Plan for Discussion and Collaboration:

Our objective is to produce innovative and critical vocabularies and strategies. We have thus chosen the laboratory to facilitate interdisciplinary exchanges. We will have short presentations of case studies followed by in-depth discussion of methodologies and common themes. The format will provide the opportunity to workshop the presentations with a view to publishing a special issue in the open access Journal of Perpetrator Research (JPR). We will also discuss what public event could be organized in relation to the special issue. One option we have in mind is, for example, a roundtable at Spui25 to be recorded, so that the recording might be added at a later stage to the JPR website as audio-visual content connected to the special issue. The laboratory is open to activists, artists, and academics who work in the fields of anthropology, history, perpetrator studies, green justice, ecopolitics, environmental humanities, post- and decolonial studies, media studies, visual and material culture. We therefore invite papers and multimodal presentations, including film, audio, and performance-based works. We encourage Southeast Asia-based scholars to apply. **Please email proposals to: stephanie.benzaquen-gautier1@nottingham.ac.uk; d.nguyen@niod.knaw.nl; and k.i.weir@hull.ac.uk**