

## **Relocating Governance in Asia: state and society in South- and Southeast Asia, c. 1800-2000.**

Leiden University, 22-24 January 2020

### ***Call for Papers***

From its early narrow focus upon the state, the study of governance in modern Asian societies has increasingly expanded to include non-state actors, networks and institutions. Colonial historians, for instance, have drawn attention to the continued importance of precolonial power brokers under European dispensations, as well as the merchants, mercenaries and local informants who helped sustain these. Likewise the authority of postcolonial nation states has been, and continues to be, mediated by the actions of a wide array of actors within civil society, from religious leaders, to media outlets and various NGOs. Together with formal states, these actors have helped shape Asian cultures of governance.

Focusing upon the interactions between state and non-state actors in colonial and postcolonial societies, this conference seeks to explore the modern history of governance in South- and South East Asia. For information regarding abstracts, deadlines and specific subjects see [here](#).

### ***Keynote Speakers:***

Indrani Chatterjee, University of Texas at Austin

Robert Cribb, Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University

Farish Ahmad-Noor, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

For all other enquiries, please contact Maarten Manse, Girija Joshi or Sander Tetteroo at [relocatinggovernance2020@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:relocatinggovernance2020@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

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Over the last decades, the study of governance in Asia has increasingly expanded to include a focus upon non-state entities. Historians have realized that engagement with local intermediaries, civil society organizations, power brokers, and interest groups has been crucial to the day-to-day administration of European colonies and postcolonial states alike. Historically, colonial regimes contended and interacted with pre-existing political and socioeconomic structures of the regions they occupied and sought to reshape. Simultaneously there has been a continued awareness that ideas, methods and policies did not develop in isolation in each colony, but instead circulated in trans-imperial networks. Similarly, nation states in postcolonial republics from Indonesia to India and Pakistan have been compelled to seek dialogue with non-state actors, even as their solutions to challenges from these quarters have been informed by wider discourses on statecraft.

This conference seeks to bring together these different insights in comparative perspective, to shed light on the many paradoxes, differences and continuities of (post)colonial rule across Asia. We seek to highlight the different sources and brokers of power in colonial and postcolonial societies, and the manner in which these interacted, contradicted, overlapped with and challenged the authority of the state. The aim is to bring this wider context of governance into focus, by crossing regional and temporal boundaries and including colonial and postcolonial states in the same framework of research.

The conference welcomes empirical investigations on the fluctuations of colonial and postcolonial governance, policy making and practice in its daily realities. Of interest are for instance: the hybridity and ambiguity of colonial law in theory and practice, the roles of intermediaries, colonial bureaucracies and the connections between old and new forms of statecraft, or ritual and bureaucratic procedure. Comparative studies between South- and/or Southeast Asia and other parts of the world are also welcome.

We invite papers based on case-studies on the following questions:

- What were the limitations of colonial governance and how did these shape postcolonial states?
- When and how did colonial society come into direct contact with the state? How was the experience of colonial rule different for those who were at the center or the periphery, geographically or socioeconomically?
- How did people subjected to the colonial state attempt to ensure their interests were served, and what strategies did interest groups use to manipulate state policy-making and implementation? What role did power brokers and intermediaries play in this?
- How, and to what extent, did the forms and routines of governance that were developed in colonial times, translate to and reverberate in post-colonial states?

Prospective participants are invited to send an abstract of no more than 250 words by **15 August, 2019** to [relocatinggovernance2020@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:relocatinggovernance2020@hum.leidenuniv.nl). Decisions will be conveyed by 15 September. Final papers should be between 6,000-8,000 words.

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*We especially invite scholars from Asia to apply. We will attempt to offer limited funding to those travelling from outside of Europe.*