



CEACOP VIRTUAL SEMINAR

## The Architects of Dignity: Vietnamese Visions of Decolonization

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[zoom registration](#)



**Kevin Pham**

Assistant Professor  
University of Amsterdam

### Abstract

*The Architects of Dignity: Vietnamese Visions of Decolonization* (under contract with Oxford University Press) traces an intergenerational debate among six influential Vietnamese thinkers with competing visions for how the Vietnamese should respond to French colonial subjugation (1858-1954). As theorists from a peripheral nation, they struggled to identify a national cultural heritage to be proud of or take guidance from. Rather than despair, they harnessed feelings of shame for their anticolonial and nation-building projects. While theorists tend to view shame as destructive or false consciousness, these thinkers harness shame in productive and anticolonial ways. And while dignity is typically understood as something inherent in individuals, as a justification for rights, and as requiring recognition, these thinkers saw dignity as a property of nations, as rooted in the duties a nation's people embrace, and as something to be asserted by the nation instead of being dependent on recognition by colonizers.

### About the Speaker

Kevin Pham is an Assistant Professor of Political Theory at the University of Amsterdam. His work explores the history of political thought, the politics of cross-cultural borrowing, and non-Western theories of democracy and colonialism. Some of his articles are the first to introduce Vietnamese political thought to the field of political theory. He has degrees from the University of California, Irvine, the University of Amsterdam, and the University of California, Riverside. He is Vietnamese American and has lived in Vietnam and France.