

Elections, Parties, Participation

Jokes, like the one about abolishing the vote if it changed anything or thinking it preferable to keep your vote, are widespread in critical groups. Terms like “cacique democracy”, the characterisation of parties as mere electoral platforms or, in a broader sense, Colin Crouch’s “postdemocratic” approach, are evidence of a deep mistrust towards the actual implementation of democracy in general, and doubts about Southeast Asian states being more than “formal democracies” in specific.

Nevertheless, the wish for democratic conditions is widely shared, especially among those who would seem to profit least from them under the current oligarchical Set-Up. Even in spite of the “negative narrative” on democratic conditions in the respective countries, widespread among the intelligentsia. In Southeast Asia voter fatigue is far less of an issue, than it is in Germany.

These contradictions will be the thematic focus of “Elections, Parties, Participation” (“Wahlen, Parteien, Mitbestimmung”), a themed issue of *südostasien* to be released in autumn 2016.

Of further interest is an attempt to contrast dominant discourses in Europe with perspectives from the South. Colin Crouch’s postdemocracy will be but one among them. Another point of interest is whether the right-wing populism, that is virulent in Europe, is a global phenomenon and is also on the rise in Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, individuals and groups working towards social change keep struggling with the issue of how it should be accomplished. Disregarding revolutions, which seem to have fallen out of style recently, some appear to believe that reform of existing institutions and „strategic groups“ is possible, aiming for a march through the institutions. Others hope for base mobilisation and grassroots democracy. How can these developments be observed in contemporary Southeast Asian society?

Possible thematic foci for articles:

- Construction of the masses in the middleclass discourse - Big politics, little people
- Expertocracy: On the conflict of development and democracy
- Patronage, Feudalism, Family Orientation – Stumbling blocks for democracy
- The Public and the public space – spatial expressions of democracy

- Citizenship – a western import?
- Change advocates in Southeast Asia (revolutionary movements, NGOs, the middle class and grassroots organisations) and their conception of participation
- Gender democracy and women in power
- Does new media offer new forms of participation – and who's using them?
- Postdemocracy, Neo-Liberalism and „democratic space“ from a southern perspective
- Does decentralisation lead to democratisation?

This thematic focus is chosen on the occasion of the Philippines presidential election, to be held in May 2016. Thus, the space for articles regarding the Philippines will be larger than usual.

Articles should be 1 page (4.000 characters including spaces with one illustration), 2 pages (6.900 characters with 2 illustrations) or 3 pages (11.000 characters with 3 illustrations) in length. This includes the title, the subtitles and one picture per page. If possible, please include high quality (~300dpi) images or illustrations, after clearing them for copyright, along with a title and the copyright information.

Articles should be written in gender-neutral language, and should not include any formatting, except for line breaks and no more than 4 bibliographical references. Authors from Southeast Asia are most welcome.

Please submit your articles by the 15th of June 2016.

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