

Call for Papers

Plastic & plastic waste in Southeast Asia

Plastic is a comparably recently emerged material. It has been developed for 150 years and has been manufactured in mass production since the 1950s. However, the 'triumphal procession' of the material that is so 'practical' in many areas, but hardly degradable, has devastating consequences. Only a small part of the globally produced plastic is recycled. Most of it immediately ends up in nature, or on streets, beaches and garbage dumps. Every year, the oceans have to take in about eight million barrels of plastic from us humans. According to *National Geographic*, this is as much as having 15 shopping bags full of plastic waste on every square meter of coastline around the world.

According to a study by the *Ocean Cleanup Foundation*, of the 20 rivers that transport most of the plastic into the sea, seven are located in Southeast Asia. Rivers, like the Mekong (Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam), Irrawaddy (Myanmar), Pasig (Philippines) and Brantas, Bengawan Solo, Serayu and Progo (Indonesia) are among the main conveyors of plastic waste. In addition, there is garbage in all its different types, especially plastic though, in street corners, free spaces, beaches and even at the entrance gates of religious temples.

But the flood of plastic is not just caused where the consequences are most obvious. Large quantities of plastic waste produced in Europe are exported to Asia. Since China has restricted its admission, Indonesia and Malaysia have increasingly become importing countries of European plastic waste. Neither of the headquarters of the, according to *Greenpeace*, world-largest producers of plastic waste – CocaCola, Pepsi, Nestlé and Unilever – reside in Southeast Asia. However, the way companies operate in Southeast Asia and to what extent they take responsibility for people and the environment, is also determined by framework conditions given by politics. Consumers, on the other hand, have an influence on politics and the economy with their handling of plastic waste and their use of it.

In the upcoming *südostasien* issue 2/2019, we hope to shed light on, on the one hand, who the actors are and how they are involved in the interplay of production, sales, consumption, and disposal of plastic in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, we want to discover how plastic waste is recycled, handled and reified for the user's own purposes.

The following questions will concern us

- How has plastic production in Southeast Asia developed **historically** and in what cycles? What role do **colonial, postcolonial and neocolonial** structures play in this?
- How is plastic production in Southeast Asia organized today? In what **social-environmental context** and within which working structures does it take place?
- Who produces and distributes the most plastic in Southeast Asia? What role play 'big players', such as like CocaCola, Pepsi, Danone, Nestlé, Unilever, and other **corporations**, big **supermarket chains** and what responsibilities do they assume?

- How do **politics** in Southeast Asian states create **framework conditions** to urge industry and consumers to act sustainably? Which stakeholders influence plastic and waste policies (from the local to the international level)?
- How does so-called informal and formal **waste disposal** work in Southeast Asia? Who participates and who is excluded from public waste disposal? To what extent are dichotomies, such as formal and informal, questioned?
- In what **value chains** is waste embedded and who earns, locally, nationally and internationally, money from it? What is “Plastic Offsetting”? And what is the role of development cooperation in the areas of waste management and sustainability and which and whose interests are pursued?
- What is the scope of **plastic imports** (from Europe/ Germany) in Southeast Asia and what significance does it have for the economies of the region?
- What **everyday practices** and initiatives of waste disposal exist in Southeast Asia and how are they embedded in social contexts? What are the perceptions of perspectives on 'garbage' and 'nature'? How is that reflected in language? What knowledge about waste exists and how is it generated and spread?

We would like to address these (and other) questions in as many different formats as possible: features, in-depth-reports, (sector) analysis, portraits of actors, interviews or photo essays. We are looking forward to your ideas!

Mission statement: südostasien gathers voices from and about Southeast Asia on current developments in politics, economics, ecology, society, and culture. There are four issues published per year with one designated key topic each. Contributions are focused on the region and the respective countries of Southeast Asia and their global/ international relationships. südostasien sees itself as a pluralist forum for dialogue, driven by solidarity and critique of domination. südostasien aims to create a space for discussions between actors in Southeast Asia and Germany with proximity to and knowledge of social movements. südostasien deals with the possibilities of transnational solidarity work in the face of unequal power relationships between the Global North and the South. With regard to the above mentioned principles, südostasien wishes to provide food for thought to German readers.

Editorial information

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Deadline for submissions (max. 15.000 characters) is the 15th of April, 2019.

Please submit a short abstract (max 1000 characters) to the editors in advance by 10th of March, 2019 at the latest.

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