

Call for Papers

südostasien 1/2021

"Corona – One Year on and Still in the Thick of it"

The COVID-19 pandemic has been giving us a hard time for the past year. It is about time to reflect on the experiences and cuts that are unprecedented in their form and extent. What are the experiences of people in Southeast Asia? Which interim conclusions can we draw after one year with regard to the region?

While Europe and the USA were hit by the 'first wave' within a few months of the outbreak, the spread of the virus in the countries of Southeast Asia developed different dynamics. Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and Cambodia seem to have successfully got on top the virus with measures taken quickly, whereas the virus is spreading unabatedly in Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. Myanmar is struggling with high infection numbers since August, while the country has had one of the lowest rates in the region before. Which factors made it possible to contain the pandemic in some of the countries in the region? And are lower infection rates really indicative of successful measures? The pandemic is revealing complex correlations which raise many questions, in particular with regard to counter-measures taken by predominantly autocratic governments and the reaction of people to these measures.

While in Thailand the emergency decree of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, which suspends the freedom of assembly, reignited the pro-democratic protests, people in the Philippines have taken to the streets to demonstrate against food shortages and the loss of jobs. How are the pandemic and the measures taken against it contributing to existing social tension? To what extent are governments taking advantage of the crisis to pursue state and power-political interests? Which narratives are used by governments to justify measures, e.g. in Vietnam, where the idea of a 'national war against the virus' is propagated to increase their acceptance among the population? How does the media depict and/or question these political narratives? Which aspects does the mass media in Southeast Asia generally prioritize with regard to COVID-19 and who or what influences these priorities?

Moreover, the pandemic as well as the counter-measures are exacerbating poverty and inequality. They put the economic systems of the Southeast Asian countries to the test. Global textile companies, for instance, have canceled contracts with their suppliers in Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos due to decreasing demand. As a result, workers, most of them women, lost their jobs which had been precarious even before the pandemic. The tourism and service sectors have been badly affected in many countries in the region, while the lives of migrant workers have become more precarious and deprived since the start of the pandemic. What are the challenges workers face and what relief programs have been established to support them so far? Which strategies to compensate the hardships can be observed, for instance an increased return to subsistence farming?

We are also interested which impact the closing of schools and universities had on schoolchildren, students, parents and teachers. How do people cope with social isolation during lockdowns? What is the extent of domestic and gender-based violence as a result of isolation during the pandemic? Has it become more acceptable to talk about psychological stress and make use of counseling services? Has the level of social solidarity changed and how does it manifest? How are health systems doing? What role can be attributed to different forms of medicine, e.g. the development of vaccines, or the use of alternative medicine, like Jamu in Indonesia, and what is the relation between people and governments on the one hand and science on the other?

Finally, we would like to take a look at international relations. How does the pandemic change the political cooperation among states in Southeast Asia? What impact does it have on the influence of China in the region, which is trying to expand its leverage in the context of the pandemic? And how does it change economic relations and development cooperation between the Global South and North?

We would like to address these questions in as many different formats as possible: background reports, reportages, analyzes, portraits of actors, interviews or photo essays.

südostasien:

The open access journal *südostasien* gathers voices from and about Southeast Asia on current developments in politics, economy, ecology, society and culture. Articles on the region and the countries of Southeast Asia as well as their global/international relations are published on four topics each year.

südostasien sees itself as a pluralistic forum for solidarity and critique on power imbalance, as space for discussions between actors in Southeast Asia and Germany with knowledge of and proximity to social movements. *südostasien* deals with the possibilities of transnational solidarity work in the face of unequal power relations between the Global South and North. *südostasien* wants to provide food for thought in Europe and Germany.

Editorial information:

Media: Please send us good quality photos matching the article (at least 1000px width, at least 300 dpi)

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Deadline for articles (maximum of 10.000 characters) is January 15, 2021 (in individual cases and after consultation with the editors a later deadline may be possible). Please submit a short abstract (max. 1000 characters) to the editors in advance.

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