

Call for papers – *südostasien* 2/2021

Southeast Asia – Plaything of Hegemonic Interests?

[Hegemony](#) is usually defined as the domination of one state over one or more other states in political, economic, military, social, cultural or religious terms. The United States, China, Russia, Australia, India, Japan, and Europe have one thing in common: they took or are assuming a hegemonic position of power in Southeast Asia. Such dominant positions have also come and gone within Southeast Asia and out of the region.

In the 2/2021 issue of *südostasien*, we would like to broaden the concept of hegemony and understand it as the superiority, leadership or supremacy of various forms that exist, for example, through a country, an organization, a business enterprise or a group in comparison to others. We want to focus on both regional and global powers that are formative in and for Southeast Asia.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has grown into a political and economic actor since it was founded in 1967 and forms a link between its members and other regions of the world. The recently announced strategic partnership with the European Union is increasing Europe's supranational ties to the region in the post-colonial era. Access to raw materials and markets, but also security aspects such as armaments, play a role here.

U.S. military interests on the western edge of the Pacific are a significant factor for the region and vis-à-vis the mainland belt of South, Southeast, and East Asia. Several bilateral agreements between the United States and the Philippines reflect this, even after the closure of the two strategically important U.S. military bases, *Subic Naval Base* and *Clark Airfield*, in the 1990s.

A new dynamic is emerging in the economic area. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement signed in November 2020 between the ten ASEAN member states and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand from the Asia-Pacific region forms the largest free trade area in the world. 2.2 billion people live in the new trading bloc. They produce more than 30 percent of the world's economic output.

Agreements of this kind raise the question whether China in the long run will copy an expansive capitalist model like the one on which Europe and the United States have based their economic power. According to Beijing's government statements, its expansion of intercontinental trade and infrastructure as part of the *Belt and Road Initiative (New Silk Road)* is not about hegemonic dominance. As a major investor, China nonetheless repeatedly exerts decisive influence on political decisions in Southeast Asia. In Cambodia and Laos in particular, China is investing large sums of money in the *New Silk Road*.

The hegemonic paradigm of economic growth and the appropriation of nature as a resource have been internalized in Southeast Asian countries since colonial times. Countries of the Global North are still considered positive economic examples. This brings difficulties and dangers for the common good. Often it is decided by foreign actors, e.g. by logging companies, mine operators and palm oil plantations, what happens to the habitat of local populations. Something similar happens in the

context of climate change mitigation projects. Most of the countries in Southeast Asia are severely affected by climate change. They are primarily dependent on the major emitters from the [US, Europe and China](#). The setting and analysis of the climate agenda in Southeast Asia often take place outside the region and to the exclusion of those directly affected on site.

Hegemonic endeavors are also carried out through conveyance of values. Politics is made with religious or secular worldviews and discourses – such as that on human rights – and global and regional powers thereby attempt to consolidate their influence. Religious institutions and/or cultural institutes and their methods, for example language teaching, also aim to exert influence. It is worthwhile to shed light on these structures, as they import a 'lifestyle' from other countries and regions to Southeast Asia. Who are the actors in this process, who are the winners and who are the losers?

The following questions, among others, will be addressed in *südostasien 2/2021*:

- How does and how did the establishment of hegemonic supremacy in Southeast Asia proceed in the past? Can historical changes be observed?
- Which political, economic, military, social, cultural, and religious hegemonies are at work in Southeast Asia today?
- What are the consequences of hegemonic influence in Southeast Asia?
- What role do multilateral and bilateral agreements play for hegemonic supremacy? What is the role of the United Nations?
- What hegemonic interests and colonial legacies are behind current territorial disputes and border conflicts?
- What does hegemonic power mean with regard to the climate crisis in Southeast Asia?
- What role does development policy play in asserting hegemonic interests in Southeast Asia?
- How is hegemonic supremacy countered in Southeast Asia? What initiatives oppose hegemony and in what ways?

In the 02/2021 issue, we would like to address these questions in as many different forms as possible: reports, background reports, analyzes, portraits of actors, interviews, photo essays and reviews of films, books or music on the subject.

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 a 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 for action in Europe and Germany.

Editorial information:

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Deadline for articles (max 9.000 characters) is April 15, 2021 (in individual cases and after consultation with the editors a later deadline may be possible). Please submit a short abstract (max 1.000 characters) to the editors in advance.

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