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# ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

EVENT [REPORT]: Policy Forum on Resource  
Politics and the Public Sphere In Southeast Asia:

# Deliberation, Accountability and Alternatives

[Bangkok, 13 December 2018]

January 03, 2019

In Southeast Asia, access to resources, ranging from land and water, to clean air and energy, are central to livelihoods and wellbeing. The distribution of access to resources reflect state policies and societal values, as well as the inclusiveness and accountability of decision-making processes that link them together and result in their translation into practice. The public sphere is the arena where state policies and societal values interact and are debated, including on potentially contested issues such as access to resources. It includes public venues, and via the mass media and social media.

Civil, political and media freedoms are necessary for a vibrant public sphere, but they are increasingly challenged in Southeast Asia, and in practice accountability occurs only in part. Opportunities to utilize the public sphere for accountability and exploring alternatives vary across Southeast Asia due to diverse political and legal systems. It is important to reflect on the implications of these trends, and explore established and new opportunities to maintain an active public sphere for deliberating public policies and societal values, ensuring accountable decision-making and debating alternative development visions.

To address the challenge and opportunities of the public sphere in Southeast Asia, on 13 December 2018 the Center for Social Development Studies co-organized a policy forum together with [the Foundation for Community Educational Media \(FCEM\)](#), and [Heinrich Boell Stiftung \(HBS\) Southeast Asia Office](#). Civil society, academics, journalists, lawyers, and other stakeholders joined the event at the [Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University](#) to discuss the trends, opportunities and challenges of the public sphere for ensuring fair resource politics in Southeast Asia.



The Deputy Dean for Research Affairs of the Faculty of Political Science, **Asst. Prof. Dr. Pandit Chanrojanakit**, welcomed the participants by highlighting the importance of these kinds of discussions to explore the alternative ways of maintaining public participation in the continuously shrinking civic space in Southeast Asia. He also highlighted the main questions that the policy forum should address, namely: the role of civil society, government and business; an evaluation of the opportunities and challenges in local, national and transnational laws; and the role of mass media and social media.



The first session, moderated by **Jakkrit Sangkamanee** from the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn



information and transaction law – that is narrowing the civic space, but she also highlighted the opportunities and strategies of local and traditional communities movements that are occurring across Indonesia. **Benjamin Tay**, the President of the [People’s Movement to Stop Haze \(PM Haze\)](#), reflected on Singapore’s experience of haze, explaining the impacts of the haze to Singaporean people’s livelihoods and highlighting the importance of community engagement both locally and across borders, as well as raising public awareness through the media. **Mong Palatino**, the Southeast Asia Regional Director of [GlobalVoices](#), raised the situations of grave concern in the Philippines, particularly for environmental defenders with the targeted killings and surge of violence towards them. He noted how it has also led to a disturbing trend in the region on impunity and silencing the media.

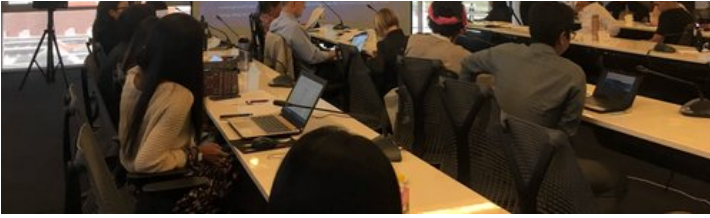
The second session, moderated by **Chantana Banpasirichote** from the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, discussed transboundary accountability mechanisms and the public sphere. **Eang Vuthy**, the Executive Director of [Equitable Cambodia](#), shared lessons learned from civil society in Cambodia on land issues, demonstrating how it is possible to transform community-company land conflicts through dialogue, but it is also necessary to empower communities so that they can participate effectively in the process. **Premrudee Daoroung** from [Project Sevana Southeast Asia/Lao Dam Investment Monitor](#) discussed about hydropower projects in Lao and how existing mechanisms in Laos has supported the expansion of the dam business, whilst not ensuring project developer’s accountability. **Carl Middleton** from the Center for Social Development Studies, Chulalongkorn University, explored hard-law and soft-law transnational accountability mechanisms and the public sphere in Southeast Asia. He argued that transnational public spheres are created, affirmed and reinforced only through the actions of affected communities, civil society groups, and allied individuals. Commissioner **Edmund Bon**, Malaysia Representative to the [ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights](#), discussed about the right to development and how it could facilitate public opinion and create the public sphere.

University, explored the trends, opportunities, and challenges related to resource politics and the public sphere in Southeast Asia. **Naruemon Thabchumpon** from the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, reflected on how the public sphere has shaped Thailand’s resource politics. She explained on how democracy has evolved in Thailand with a shrinking public sphere and raised the important question of how civil society movements can respond to these challenges. **Asfinawati**, the Executive Director of [Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation \(YLBHI\)](#), talked about the difficulties organizations in Indonesia are facing due to existing and new laws - such as the blasphemy law and the electronic



information and transaction law – that is narrowing the civic space, but she also highlighted the opportunities and strategies of local and traditional communities movements that are occurring across Indonesia. **Benjamin Tay**, the President of the [People’s Movement to Stop Haze \(PM Haze\)](#), reflected on Singapore’s experience of haze, explaining the impacts of the haze to Singaporean people’s livelihoods and highlighting the importance of community engagement both locally and across borders, as well as raising public awareness through the media. **Mong Palatino**, the Southeast Asia Regional Director of [GlobalVoices](#), raised the situations of grave concern in the Philippines, particularly for environmental defenders with the targeted killings and surge of violence towards them. He noted how it has also led to a disturbing trend in the region on impunity and silencing the media.

The third session, moderated by **Chiranuch Premchaiporn** from the Foundation for Community Educational Media (FCEM), discussed the role of public spaces, mass media and social media in protecting the local commons and community livelihoods. **Tran Vi** from the [Legal Initiatives for Vietnam](#) presented an overview of the impacts of industrial pollution caused by Formosa, a Taiwanese company, that affected Vietnam in 2016. She



explained the history and ongoing efforts of civil society, including how Vietnamese and Taiwanese groups have collaborated to assist people in affected areas. **Mokh Sobirin**, the Executive Director of **Desantara Foundation** and from the Kendeng Movement in Indonesia, demonstrated how the momentum of local people's movements, when supported by the urban middle class,

can be a vital element for democratization and ensuring an active public sphere in the case of natural resources management in Indonesia. **Tay Zar Myo Win**, an independent researcher and previously a MAIDS student at Chulalongkorn University, shared lessons from electricity planning in Dawei City, Myanmar. He concluded that the public sphere can contribute towards the accountability of the government by allowing civil society and the people to communicate with and hold accountable the government even in hybrid governance regimes that are not fully democratic. **Vincy Usun** from **Baram Kini** reflected on the anti-dam protest movement in Baram, Serawak, and how the civil society movement was successful in their efforts to stop the Baram Dam with their people's movement, blockades, talk sessions in the cities, and dialogues sessions between professionals.

The last session, moderated by **Srijula Yongstar** from Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southeast Asia Regional Office explored the alternative spaces for counter discourses. **Kyi Phyo** from **Mekong Energy and Ecology Network (MEENet)** and **Aung Myint Tun** from **Green Rights Organization** presented the successful example of how communities and civil society had managed energy, water and forest resources in Danu self-administrative area in Southern Shan, Myanmar at the local level. **Charoenkwan Chuntarawichit**, a youth member from the Southern Peasants Federation of Thailand (SPFT), discussed about access to land and livelihoods in Southern Thailand, comparing the land allocation for Special Economic Zone versus arable land. **Toshi Doi**, a Senior Advisor from **Mekong Watch**, drew lessons from his recent research on Laos' dominant development narrative that emphasizes on large hydropower dam construction, in contrast to how communities provide alternatives to the dominant narratives through local stories. Lastly, **Kirsten Han** from **New Naratif** shared about this new online multi-media platform that aims to provide an alternative media analysis of what is happening regionally in Southeast Asia, and to bring important issues from each country to the attention of regional readers.



For the closing remarks, **Mr. Manfred Hornung** from Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southeast Asia, emphasized the importance of protecting the multiple public spaces where different approaches to development can be deliberated and tested, whilst not viewing these different approaches as 'alternatives' as that could reduce their perceived value but rather seeing them as viable replacements for the current mainstream development. He acknowledge that there is a shrinking space that can limit the freedom of expression, even though the public space at large should be the space for anyone to express their opinion. **Naruemon Thabchumpon** from the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University ended the forum with a story of how she was inspired by the committed spirit of two women activists who passed away recently, highlighting that in the matter of public sphere, it's not about waiting for those in authority to grant public space, but how communities and civil society can create these spaces as well. Appreciating that many people had attended the policy forum and actively participated, she shared her optimism that people in Southeast Asia still and will continue to protect spaces to voice their opinions on things that matter to their societies.

The presentations from this public forum can be accessed [here](#). All of the sessions were broadcast on Facebook Live and can also be viewed on the above link.

\*Report written by Anisa Widyasari, Communications Coordinator at CSDS

CSDS Communications

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Resource Politics, Public Sphere, Activities And Events

Civil Society, Media, Social Media, Accountability

# EVENT [RESOURCES]: Policy Forum on Resource Politics and the Public Sphere In Southeast Asia: Deliberation, Accountability and Alternatives [Bangkok, 13 December 2018]

December 21, 2018



# Program and List of Panelists:

08.15 - 09.00 **Registration**

09.00 - 09.15 **Welcome remarks** by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pandit Chanrojanakit**, Deputy Dean for Research Department, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

09.15 - 10.30 **Panel 1: Resource Politics and the Public Sphere in Southeast Asia: Trends, Opportunities, Challenges**

Chair: **Jakkrit Sangkamanee**, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

- ‘How has the public sphere shaped Thailand’s resource politics, and implications for Southeast Asia’ by **Narueemon Thabchumpon**, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
- ‘Trends, opportunities and challenges in legal approaches to accountability in Indonesia: The role of the public sphere’ by **Asfinawati**, Executive Director, Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation
- ‘From local to transnational public spheres and public action: Reflecting on Singapore’s experience of haze’ by **Benjamin Tay**, President, People’s Movement to Stop Haze (PM Haze)
- ‘Trends, opportunities and challenges of environmental reporting in Southeast Asia: Whose voice is heard?’ by **Mong Palatino**, Regional Editor for Southeast Asia, GlobalVoices

10.30 - 11.00 **Coffee break**

11.00 - 12.30 **Panel 2: Transboundary accountability mechanisms and the public sphere**

Chair: **Chantana Banpasirichote Wungaeo**, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

- 'Land and livelihoods in Cambodia: Lessons learned from the civil society' by **Eang Vuthy**, Executive Director, Equitable Cambodia
- 'Transboundary responsibility and accountability in Laos' Hydropower projects' by **Premrudee Daoroung**, Lao Dams Investment Monitor
- 'Hard-law and soft-Law transnational accountability mechanisms and the public sphere in Southeast Asia' by **Carl Middleton**, Center for Social Development Studies, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
- 'Rights to Development' by **Commissioner Edmund Bon**, Malaysia Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights

12.30 - 13.30 **Lunch**

13.30 - 15.00 **Panel 3: Protecting local commons and community livelihoods: Role of public spaces, mass media and social media**

Chair: **Chiranuch Premchaiporn**, Foundation for Community Educational Media



- ‘Opportunities and challenges of the public sphere: Lessons learned from the Kendeng Movement to protect the land from mining industry’ by **Mokh Sobirin**, Kendeng Movement to protect the land from mining industry
- ‘Access to electricity in Dawei City: Implication of a transforming public sphere in Myanmar’ by **Tay Zar Myo Win**, Independent Researcher
- ‘Holding industrial pollution accountable in Vietnam: The role of social media and cyberactivism’ by **Tran Vi**, Co-founder and consultant , Luatkhoa.org
- ‘Multi-pronged approach: reflecting the anti-dam protest movement in Baram’ by **Vincy Usun**, Baram Kini

15.00 - 15.30 **Coffee Break**

15.30 - 16.45 **Panel 4: Deliberating alternatives: Spaces for counter discourses**

Chair: **Srijula Yongstar**, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southeast Asia Regional Office

- [‘Towards A Green Energy Vision in Shan State: A case of Community-Owned Management on Energy, Water and Forest in Danu self-administrative area in Southern Shan’](#) by **Kyi Phyo**, Mekong Energy and Ecology Network (MEENet) and **Aung Myint Tun**, Green Rights Organization
- [‘Access to land for livelihoods in Southern Thailand’](#) by **Charoenkwan Chuntarawichit**, Youth member, Southern Peasants Federation of Thailand (SPFT)
- [‘Why Irrawaddy dolphins and sida birds live together: People’s stories as alter-narratives’](#) by **Toshi Doi**, Senior Advisor, Mekong Watch
- [‘The role of media in exploring alternatives in Southeast Asia’](#) by **Kirsten Han**, New Naratif

#### 16.45 - 17.00 **Closing Reflections**

- **Mr. Manfred Hornung**, Director, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southeast Asia Regional Office
- **Professor Surichai Wun’gao**, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Chulalongkorn University

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 Resource Politics, Public Sphere, Activities And Events

 Civil Society, Media, Social Media, Accountability

# WORKSHOP: "Utilizing Storytelling and Innovative Social Media Strategies to Help Researchers

# Reach the Public"

January 22, 2018

## "Utilizing Storytelling and Innovative Social Media Strategies to Help Researchers Reach the Public"



Ahead of the first annual Social and Sustainability Science in ASEAN: "Agri-Food Systems, Rural Sustainability and Socioeconomic Transformations in South-east Asia," the Center for Social Development Studies (CSDS) and the [Stockholm Environment Institute \(SEI\)](#) held a special training workshop for interested participants of the conference to build their communications capacity, particularly using social media platforms and unique storytelling to reach wider audiences both online and in-person. The workshop convened on the afternoon of Monday, 22 January, 2018 and was attended by participants from around the region

and beyond. Bobby Irven of CSDS and Anneli Sundin of SEI created and conducted the two hour session.\*

The workshop began by going over the basics and setup for utilizing the social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to present research in the forms of multimedia and engaging copy to reach audiences beyond the traditional academic spheres. Actioning the recommendations and implications of scientific research was the theme of this workshop, so practical applications as they relate to social media were the focal point of this section.. The discussion then moved onto the topic of storytelling and how mastering this age-old communications strategy can actually be very effective for researchers to better engage audiences and create buildup and excitement around their various projects. Attendees were challenged to begin putting these techniques immediately into practice, with ample opportunities to begin blogging and tweeting about the conference and beyond.



### The Basics



#### WHY:

- Build relationships, get feedback, integration, leverage multimedia

#### TOPICS OF CONTENT:

1. Learn and improve
2. Explore and Discover
3. Questions and Answer

#### TYPES OF CONTENT:

1. Adjacent content
2. Tips and tricks
3. Responses
4. Non-promotional org info
5. Job/fellowship openings

\*Full presentation and materials from training will be available to public in one weeks time.

For more information on the content, please visit the original announcement [page](#).

👤 CSDS Chula

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📁 Training, Blog, Activities And Events, Public Sphere, Knowledge And Innovation

📌 Social Media, Innovation, Communications, Storytelling

# EVENT: The Political Economy of New Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia

July 22, 2017

**Session organized at the 10th International Convention of Asian Scholars**

**11:30-13:15, 22nd July 2017, Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Center**

*Session convened by the Center for Social Development Studies, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University*



Political authoritarianism is strengthening across Southeast Asia, mirroring a noted trend globally. This panel explored the politics, processes, and implications of the (re)assertion of authoritarianism, focusing on its political-economic regimes, but also including its ideologies and discourses. The panel engaged in a long-standing debate that globalisation and economic liberalism goes hand in hand with liberalisation and democratization in the political sphere. This association goes back to Lipset's Modernisation Theory. Refuted by many and of fading interest by the 1970s, it came back into fashion in the 1990s with the spread of neoliberal

capitalism and the so-called "third wave" of democratization.

The recent rise of authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia and globally seems to be a sustained trend that may be connected to economic projects associated with a specific stage of capitalist development (crisis driven late capitalism), and that also mirror the interests of the elite in power. This can be analysed through what Poulantzas, in the 1970s, called authoritarian statism, whereby a growing role of the state seeks to ensure economic growth under conditions of capitalist crisis tendencies.

In [this panel](#), we situated the new authoritarianism of contemporary Southeast Asia within a post-Washington and post-aid era of globalization. The region's new authoritarianism builds upon legacies of past authoritarianism, in particular the various guises of developmental states - both capitalist and socialist - since the 1950s. Even if authoritarian statism receded in the 1990s and 2000s, it never fully ended. Now, the region is increasingly under the political and economic sway of China, but also subject to intensified attention of the United States. Some countries have visibly becoming more

authoritarian in recent years, including by military coup (Thailand) or strong-handed leaders (the Philippines; Cambodia), whilst others apparently less so, in particular Myanmar. Vietnam and Laos, meanwhile, have stated themselves as socialist-orientated market economies. Trends towards regional economic integration, market expansion and intensification, meanwhile, add a regional-scaled dynamic to political authoritarianism.

The panel sought to address the following conceptual and empirical questions:

- How can we conceptualize the connection between the trend of authoritarianism and the current state of capitalist development in Southeast Asia?
- What are the characteristics of the authoritarian states in Southeast Asia? What economic models of development are being proposed by these states?
- What are the implications for civil society, social movements, democracy and human rights?

The following papers were presented :

- *The One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative and its influence on the political situation of China's neighbouring countries*, by Dr. Wolfram Schaffar, University of Vienna
- *Thailand 4.0: the Rise of Neo-authoritarian Developmental State*, by Dr. Naruemon Thabchumpon, Chulalongkorn University
- *'Ephemeral transnational' and 'authoritarian domestic' public spheres in Laos hydropower dams*, Dr. Carl Middleton, Chulalongkorn University
- *Authoritarian development, frontier capitalism and indigenous counter-movements in Myanmar* Rainer Einzenberger, University of Vienna

The panel was chaired by Dr. Chantana Banpasirichote Wungaeo of Chulalongkorn University.

The papers presented on the panel are part of a forthcoming Special Issue to be published in the [Austrian Journal of Southeast Asia Studies](#) in mid-2018.

 Carl Middleton

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 Activities And Events, The Commons, Public Sphere, Rights And Justice

 Authoritarianism, China, Chin State, Public Sphere, Thailand

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