

Editorial: Researching Digital Platforms and Dynamics of Civic Space

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► Trupp, A., & Lengauer, D. (2024). Editorial: Researching digital platforms and dynamics of civic space. *Advances in Southeast Asian Studies*, 17(1), 1-3.

ASEAS 17(1) marks a new phase for *Advances in Southeast Asian Studies* with adjusted publication timelines, now releasing issues in March/April and September/October, while maintaining our Online First feature. We are pleased to announce that ASEAS is now indexed in Scopus across seven social science categories: Cultural Studies; Law; Anthropology; Sociology and Political Science; Communication; Geography, Planning and Development; and Development¹, reflecting our commitment to enhancing the visibility and impact of diverse social science scholarship focused on Southeast Asia. ASEAS continues to uphold open access principles, further ensuring that it remains freely accessible to all. Another positive appearance is that recently ASEAS has been ranked Q1 in the field of cultural studies in the Scimago Journal Ranking². Although we agree that such rankings cannot fully reflect the labor invested in the existence of a journal, neither is a journal's impact factor a ticket for the quality of research published, we see this 'grade' as a minor recognition of the extraordinary effort our editors, reviewers, and authors put into the continuation of this largely voluntary project.

In this issue, we feature a thematically open collection of contributions covering such diverse aspects as philanthropy in Indonesia, issues in the context of Papua's special autonomy, digital intimacies in Indonesia, press freedom in the Philippines, and health and safety challenges in Southeast Asia's gig economy food delivery sector.

By delving into the evolving landscape of philanthropy in Indonesia, Bhirawa Anoraga in this issue (2024) examines the impacts of charitable crowdfunding on the social justice trajectory of Islamic philanthropy. His examination adds a new perspective to the work of Amelia Fauzia (2017), who published an article on a similar issue in ASEAS's special issue on philanthropy in 2017. In short, Anoraga finds that the trend of crowdfunding has amplified the inclusive space in Indonesian philanthropy where Muslim NGOs actively provide social services

1 <https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/21101141528>

2 <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=21101141528&tip=sid&clean=0>

and enact collaborations with non-Muslims – a space that was significantly smaller a decade ago (Fauzia, 2017). The author further shows how platforms like *Kitabisa* have transformed inclusivity and governance within Indonesian philanthropy, while also highlighting challenges related to sustainability and accountability.

Turning to issues of identity and autonomy, Rosita Dewi (2024, this issue) investigates the complex dynamics between Papua and Indonesia after two decades of special autonomy. Despite legislative efforts, incidents of racism and violence persist, underscoring unresolved tensions and a paradoxical lack of recognition that fuels calls for independence. A number of authors who have published in previous ASEAS issues (e.g., Hennings, 2016) have pointed out the role of large-scale land deals and investment projects in the degradation of Papua's conflict. This article contributes to the necessary political discourse on Papua's status, by outlining central discrepancies in the understanding and handling of autonomy as well as key issues of the provinces' political struggle. This contribution is important and timely as tensions between the Indonesian government, Papuan activists, and pro-independence organizations are expected to rise, as retired army general and ex-Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto – with questionable human rights records – has been elected president of Indonesia this year. Activists fear the detrimental effect of further land deals and investment projects accompanied by intense military presence on any reconciliation efforts or long-term peace prospects in the region.

In the realm of digital intimacies, Noviani and colleagues (2024, this issue) explore the construction of social capital among dating app users in Indonesia. Their study demonstrates how these platforms facilitate networked individualism and provide avenues for accumulating social capital, particularly significant for marginalized LGBT groups seeking acceptance and belonging. Despite these avenues, the authors convey that dating apps do not necessarily pose a challenge to Indonesia's heteronormative social system, but rather reproduce dominant sexual practices. Moreover, in Indonesia, as well as in other Southeast Asian countries, digital spheres are harshly controlled. This puts this study in line with preceding ASEAS publications discussing online surveillance in Southeast Asia's authoritarian and post-authoritarian contexts (e.g., Pinkaew Laungaramsri, 2016).

Bagalawis and associates (2024, this issue) shed light on the challenges faced by journalists in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic under the Duterte administration. Their work highlights the persistent threats to press freedom, with targeted attacks and legal constraints impacting the media's role as government watchdogs. This study brings further evidence into the militance of new authoritarian trends that have come to characterize the region (Einzenberger & Schaffar, 2018).

Beyond these current research articles, Daniels' (2024) research workshop article in this issue explores health and safety challenges in Southeast Asia's gig economy food delivery sector. By examining the practices of platforms like *GrabFood* and *Foodpanda*, he demonstrates the need for genuine worker-centric safety measures amidst the rise of algorithmic management and precarious employment. Lastly, we present a book review of *The Candidate's Dilemma: Anti-corruptionism and Money Politics in Indonesian Election Campaigns* by Herdi Sahrasad, offering insights into money politics in Indonesian election campaigns.



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DISCLOSURE

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

