

GUEST EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

This special issue is concerned with the development, contestation and privatisation of public space in the Asia-Pacific. Public space is a scarce and highly contested resource. Diverse actors in the city struggle for the physical dominance over and symbolic meaning of public space. The recent uprisings in cities all over the Middle East from Tahrir Square in Cairo to Pearl Square in Bahrain have once again confirmed public space's function as an arena of acting and speaking men that Hannah Arendt already pointed to.

Besides their political relevance public spaces play an increasing role for the livability of the city. Public spaces in the form of green parks and river banks offer spaces for recreation and leisure. However, universal access to the places is endangered through privatisation measures. In the densely settled cities of the Asian Pacific Region the private appropriation of public space has become a strategy to acquire urban land. Thus, privatisation occurs in a twofold way: On the one hand, private investors transform former public spaces into privately owned amusement parks. In his research note Darren Cheung shows how private developers create public spaces in privately managed housing estates based on municipal planning policies and how these spaces are privatised through the claim of local residents. On the other hand, privatization occurs through citizens' appropriation of public space for everyday life activities. The photo pages by Mario Wilhelm illustrates the informal aspects of public space and its usage by the urban poor in the city of Jakarta.

Public spaces are a sphere of continuous negotiation. The case study on mobility and immobility in Phnom Penh by Thomas Kolnberger demonstrates how the planning regime of the municipality of Phnom Penh in fact reflects social inequalities. The urban poor often engaging in street vending and peddling are eradicated from the urban landscape for the good of an upcoming middle class that demands space for its consumption patterns e.g. parking spaces for four-wheel drives. Like other municipalities in the Asia-Pacific Phnom Penh's authorities embrace a vision of urban modernity in which street peddlers do not fit.

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Pacific News

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In order to uphold scientific standards, the PN is implementing a peer-review process. Articles marked as „scientific papers“ have been peer-reviewed by two external reviewers. Articles marked as „research notes“ have been peer-reviewed by one external reviewer and a member of the editorial board. All other articles have been reviewed by the editorial board.

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The Association for Pacific Studies (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Pazifische Studien e.V., APSA) was founded in 1987 at the Department of Geography of the University of Technology in Aachen. Activities include workshops, conferences, public lectures and poster exhibitions. The book series Pazifik Forum was initiated in 1990. In 1992, it was complemented by the publication of the semi-annual journal Pacific News. The latter has developed into the major activity of APSA in recent years.

The APSA sees itself as one of the largest scientific networks in Germany for academics and practitioners with an interest in the Asia-Pacific region as well as academic exchange.

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COVER PICTURE

Street Vendor in Binh Duong Province, Vietnam

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This picture is showing a middle-aged
lady selling ducks on open street. It
has been taken in close proximity to an
industrial zone in Binh Duong Province,
which is located within the metropolitan
region of Ho Chi Minh City. In this area,
many migrant workers from rural regions
of Vietnam are living in so-called board-
ing houses.

