

Research note

Vietnam unter der Herrschaft der „Partei-Staat-Unternehmens-Allianz“ – Herausforderungen für die Zivilgesellschaft im Jahr 2021

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Summary

Vietnam's civil society continues to face major challenges in 2021: A hegemonic “party-state-business alliance”, which occupies all political and economic “commanding heights” and is also ideologically in a relatively strong position not least due to the lack of practicable alternatives, has a civil society as an opposite that is deliberately divided. Numerically strong it is at best weakly articulating and influencing political change. In addition, while working on a wide range of issues, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in Hanoi are often thematically different from those in the south of the country, the latter being even more under political control than those in the north.

The pandemic threatens to exacerbate this imbalance of power. Certain CSOs (such as NGOs critical of certain policies and at least some forms of domination) are in danger of being marginalized, with informal practices of a philanthropic nature and traditional concepts such as “help for self-help” serving as the dominant, perhaps even alternative-less forms of civil society practice.

Because Vietnam does not have a “Rechtsstaat”, civil liberties (such as organizing associations or expressing one's opinion and organizing demonstrations) as laid down in the constitution are granted, if at all. This is all the more relevant as Vietnam's civil society has to deal with a state that unilaterally protects and promotes the interests of state-owned corporations as well as those of semi-state-owned companies, private investors and large companies. Whereas the interests of farmers, fishermen, and workers (especially those in the informal sector) are only taken into account on a case-by-case and intermittent basis. All these are not good prerequisites for shifting the existing imbalance of power in favor of civil society ideas, actors and practices.

Keywords: Vietnam, civil society, authoritarian rule, “Rechtsstaat”, “Party-state-business-alliance”, pandemic impact

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