The Will to Democracy. Democracy in East Asia and a New Global History of Democracy in the 21st Century

This project deals with a question that has been gaining in importance recently: how can one explain the worldwide rise of Western democracy from the 19th century to our time? The focus of the project is on the experience of the democracies in East Asia (Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan), whose success is reflected in their political stability, rapid economic growth, and, most recently, effective and successful management of the COVID-19 crisis. By historically and comparatively examining the paths to democracy in East Asia and comparing them with the European cases, the project aims to critically examine different explanatory models for the conditions and causes of the development of democracy and to produce new research approaches.

Central to the considerations is the concept of the will to democracy, which is also the title of the project proposed here. The concept emphasizes the artificiality of modern democracy: artificiality in the sense that modern democracy, rather than being a natural evolution out of certain cultural characteristics, was rather an artificial product of thought and endeavor, in which a number of ideas played a core role (in philosophical terminology, they are called "values" precisely to denote their artificiality): the freedom of individuals, equality, and later human dignity and equal rights. They were supplemented by certain organizational principles of government. A society becomes democratic only when consensus is formed on those core values and principles. For this, they must be consciously propagated. Once democracy is established, it can survive and spread only if one persists in those values and principles and strives to develop them further. Democracy is thus based on a series of acts of will, both in its formation and in its survival.

The concept of the will to democracy is intended to mark precisely this centrality of the voluntaristic aspect. The insight gained through this project into the development of democracy in East Asia will finally serve to reflect on the state of democracy from a global perspective. By doing so, this project attempts, on the one hand, to reconstruct the various development paths of democracy from a global historical perspective and, on the other hand, to ask what prospects there are for democracy as a form of political and social life in our age.

Recommended Reading

Yun, Bee (Göttingen, 2021)
Das Komische, das Moralische und das Politische: der Pfaffe Amis in der Gedankenwelt der Stauferzeit
https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853836818

Yun, Bee (New York, NY [u.a.], 2021)
Persia and Pericles' grand strategy: was the Peloponnesian war a bipolar hegemonic war?
https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853835900

Yun, Bee (Berlin, 2021)
Culture of prognosis in the Medieval western Christian tradition of the Mirror-of-Princes
https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853835412

Yun, Bee (Wien, 2021)
Wege zu Machiavelli: die Rückkehr des Politischen im Spätmittelalter
https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1678696668
Beihfte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte; Band 91
https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1678696668

Yun, Bee (Exeter, 2020)
A long and winding road to reforming the corrupt republic: Niccolò Machiavelli's idea of the one-man reformer and his view of the Medici
https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1853834629