

**Panel title: Electoral integrity in Southeast Asia**

Convenor: Pär Zetterberg, Uppsala University (par.zetterberg@statsvet.uu.se)

Brief description of panel:

The Southeast Asian countries vary in terms of level of democracy, both across time (e.g. Thailand, Myanmar) and space (e.g. Vietnam, the Philippines). How do we understand this variation, and the volatility and stability of the regimes in the region? This panel seeks to address this question through the lens of electoral integrity. There is widespread and growing concern that elections are commonly marred by problems such as limits on equal ballot access for opposition parties, pro-government media bias, maladministration in electoral registers, intimidation of candidates, and vote-rigging at the count. Recent elections in Southeast Asia point at the usage of electoral malpractices and thus at the challenges facing electoral integrity in the region. In the 2015 election in Singapore, for instance, the drawing of district boundaries discriminated against opposition parties and favored incumbents. And in the 2015 election in Myanmar, candidates were disqualified from running, and names on electoral rolls were reported missing. At the same time, the same Myanmar election was assessed positively by observers with respect to, among other things, vote counting. Thus, within a single election, some parts of the process may be credible – or free and fair – whereas other parts are not.

To what extent is electoral integrity protected and respected in the region? And how can we understand variation in electoral integrity within and between countries? Within this broad topic we invite all kinds of papers that address one or more aspects of electoral integrity, in a single country or comparatively across the region, using a broad range of research methods (quantitative and/or qualitative approaches).

Session:

The idea is to have a single session, but I guess it depends on the number and quality of the paper proposals. If there is a large number of high-quality paper proposals, a double session is an option.