

Gastvortrag

Taiwan's Death Penalty in Local-Global Dynamics

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People generally believe that the death penalty in Taiwan is supported by traditional retributive culture, and that public support is the main reason why this penal institution cannot be abolished. I intend to challenge this conventional wisdom and explain that in the past sixty years, the continuation of this penal institution has been shaped by the interplay of regime types, international politics, patterns of transitional politics and incumbent's inclinations. While politics have played a dominant role, human rights activism still managed to redefine politics, and thus helped the local abolitionist movement to achieve impressive progress within a short period of time. Intensive cooperation between global and local anti-death penalty activists has made the anti-death penalty movement western though and thus alien to Taiwanese society, which resulted in vehement backlashes in recent years. I thus wish to urge both supporters and opponents of the death penalty in Taiwan to re-evaluate this peculiar penal institution from its historical realities.

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