

Thinking ASEAN

From Southeast Asia On Southeast Asia

+
INFOGRAPHIC
UNSCR 1325
in ASEAN

*Excerpts from global
resurgence of populism: a
wake-up call for ASEAN's
progressives?*

*To find Dynamic
Equilibrium
in Indo-Pacific*

*The Challenges
on Implementing
AHRD*



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A note from the editor

Dear readers:

Welcome to the November 2018 issue of the monthly Thinking ASEAN!

The month saw leaders from the region gather in Singapore for the 33rd ASEAN Summit and Related Meeting. As Singapore hands over the ASEAN chairmanship to Thailand, we should congratulate the island republic for its stewardship of the regional organization over the past year. Amidst global uncertainty and tensions, Singapore has done its part to maintain peace and stability, most notably by hosting the historic Trump-Kim Summit earlier in the year.

As a founding member of ASEAN, Thailand should be more than capable of maintaining the positive momentum from this year as well as pushing for breakthroughs in the area the region fell short, not least the failure once again to conclude RCEP negotiations which has been pushed further back. With elections scheduled in early 2019, it will be interesting to observe, however, how a possible new government in Thailand will affect its chairmanship. It is indeed unprecedented for an ASEAN Chair to undergo a change of government during its year as chair.

In any case, we present three articles beginning with Thidar Kyaw, (Assistant Lecture, Department of International Relations, Yadanabon University, Myanmar) who writes on, 'The Challenges on Implementing AHRD.' Whilst, the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration was indeed a landmark document, it cannot be denied that shortcomings remain as highlighted in the article.

This is followed up by Wirya Adiwena (Researcher, The Habibie Center) on 'To find Dynamic Equilibrium in Indo-Pacific.' There have been many competing visions, with Indonesia recently pushing for ASEAN to have its own concept but as the article notes, the concept is not new and an analysis of previous ones are worth undertaking in order to ensure the Indo-Pacific is successful.

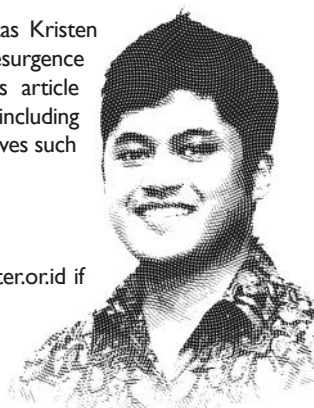
Our last article is from Joshua Gerry Mangkubudi (Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Indonesia) who writes on, 'Excerpts from global resurgence of populism: a wake-up call for ASEAN's progressives?' His article addresses the recent rise of populist leaders around the world including in Southeast Asia and proposes possible responses for progressives such as regionalists and human rights activists.

As usual, we present an infographic that this month covers

Don't hesitate to drop me a line at thinkingasean@habibiecenter.or.id if you have comments, input, or prospective submissions.

Happy reading!

Best regards from Jakarta



From Southeast Asia On Southeast Asia

Thinking ASEAN is a monthly publication that aims to provide insightful, cogent and engaging perspectives on issues central to contemporary Southeast Asia and the ASEAN member states. It is a product of The Habibie Center, with the generous support of the Republic of Korea's Mission to ASEAN.

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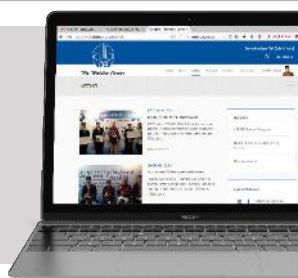
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The missions of The Habibie Center are first, to establish a structurally and culturally democratic society that recognizes, respects, and promotes human rights by undertaking study and advocacy of issues related to democratization and human rights, and second, to increase the effectiveness of the management of human resources and the spread of technology.

The Challenges on implementing AHRD



Monument statue

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Thidar Kyaw,
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On 18th November 2012, the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) was adopted by ASEAN Heads of State at the twenty-first ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh. However, the continuing silence on human rights abuses in ASEAN has led to loud criticisms from observers and activists. Looking back at ASEAN's history, it can be noted that the regional organisation began to embrace in the values and norms of human rights in the 1990s. The adoption of the ASEAN Charter which comprises to follow the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, and respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in its preamble¹ is one demonstration of this. Moreover, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the first regional human rights institution in Asia, was also set up in 2009.

The most significant progress by ASEAN regarding the implementation of human rights norms was to adopt the AHRD. The emergence of the AHRD is important for two reasons for Southeast Asian countries. First, it was a precursor of a formal human right treaty for the region and was positively related to the universal values of human rights norms.² The AHRD comprised many of the international human rights standards: it supports freedom and equality in dignity and rights, and is opposed to discrimination; provides the protection of one's honour, family and property; and guarantees the individual rights to education, medical and social care and protection, and a clean environment.³ Second, the AHRD clearly defines the mandate of the AICHR to enforce human rights in the region.

Alongside the emergence of the AHRD, it was highly expected that the human rights situation in the region would progress well initially. Nevertheless, ASEAN countries have struggled to address the protection of political rights and civil liberties, together with the low ratification rate of United Nations human rights status⁴ (for e.g. Thailand military coup in 2014, extra-judicial killings as the

result of anti-drug campaign in Philippines in 2017 and the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State in Myanmar until now⁵). Therefore, this paper will mainly explore why the protection of human rights has been continuously ignored in the region even though ASEAN has adopted the formal human rights treaty in the form of the AHRD since 2012. Consequently, the paper will discuss two main challenging issues for the implementation of the AHRD on the ground. In the final section, the paper will suggest a meaningful approach to bring real development to the human rights situation in Southeast Asia.

The first challenging issue is that the AHRD is a weak instrument for effective implementation on the ground because it includes the substantive limitations to deflect from universal human rights standards from a legal perspective⁶. In other words, it was created to merely get international legitimacy in human rights space⁷ rather than enforcing the international values of human rights on member states⁸. From a legal perspective, there are four major weakness to the AHRD that prove its rejection of the universalist approach to human rights. Firstly, Article 7⁹ limits universal values of human rights and freedom into the regional and national context¹⁰. It means that ASEAN practices international human rights norms only if it conforms with a member state's history, politics, religious or economic context.¹¹ Another weakness of the instrument is it balances rights with duties under Article 6¹² that undermines not only individual liberty but also the essence of international human rights' norms.¹³ The balancing between individual rights and individual duty ensures the solidity and the security of state that would automatically suffer the individual rights and disregards international human rights law.¹⁴

Furthermore, another shortcoming of the AHRD, Article 8,¹⁵ means that the national law, national security and morality would make stronger the power of the state rather than the universal human rights standard.¹⁶ Eventually, Article 40¹⁷ supposes to undercut the foregoing

39 articles because the clause means "the purposes and the principles of ASEAN", maintaining the traditional ASEAN way of non-intervention and state-centrism.¹⁸ These four limitations clearly show that the AHRD does not support individual rights and freedom for their people in the region and fails to comply with universal values of human rights. As a result, Matthew Davies argues that, "All the rights enunciated in the Declaration are packaged within the traditional ASEAN norms of non-intervention and sovereign equality".¹⁹ Therefore, it highlights that the AHRD was created so that ASEAN members were viewed as legitimate in the human rights space rather than protecting international human rights norms in the region.

Another challenging issue is that there is no competent regional human rights institution in the Southeast Asian region. To implement the AHRD in the region, an independent and effective regional human rights institution is necessary. However, AICHR which has been established in 2009 has a limited Term of References (TOR) to conform with traditional ASEAN norms rather than international human rights norms. Accordingly, AICHR has been a regional institution with the lack of independence (according to TOR article 9 and 5.2)²⁰ and weak protection mandates to protect the essential process of ASEAN human rights matters.²¹ Due to the lack of independence, the functions of AICHR for promoting and protecting human rights has been controlled by the member states' political wills because the chair of ASEAN is also the chair of AICHR in the same year.²² Therefore, the decision making of AICHR can be influenced by the political wills of the chairing state of ASEAN. It means that the effectiveness of AICHR's mechanisms highly depends on the decisions of the member states.²³

Additionally, the mandate of AICHR with respect to the AHRD only concentrates on promotion and not on the protection of human rights. To achieve the complete protection work, the mandates consist of "receiving communications about violations of rights, communicating them to states and investigating the

The adoption of the ASEAN Charter which comprises to follow the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance, and respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in its preamble²⁸ is one demonstration of this.

violations”²⁴ like the African Commission. However, although AICHR can perform the two functions of advisory services and technical assistance on human rights matters for promoting of regional human rights issues,²⁵ it has no power to investigate and enforce decisions regarding with the human rights violations in order to fulfil the protection mandates.²⁶ Consequently, according to its TOR, AICHR is a regional human rights body with a lack of institutional capacity and the possessing a weak protection mandate depending on the decisions of governments of member states. These two evidences show that AICHR is only rhetorical regional human right body which has continuously maintained the traditional ASEAN way.

In conclusion, the AHRD is created with some restrictions that prevent the implementation of meaningful human rights obligations of ASEAN membes in the region. Furthermore, according to its TOR, AICHR which has practically provided the declaration has been influenced by the member states’ decision. After reviewing those ASEAN human rights mechanisms, it has been argued that “much recent ASEAN activity amounts either to political rhetoric or has potential to fragment the human rights norms recognized by those ASEAN states which are committed to international

human rights treaties”.²⁷ Consequently, the AHRD should be a binding instrument to hold the international human rights obligations and the authority of AICHR should not be limited on state power. Especially, ASEAN member states should realize the differences between the Western colonization or the ideological influencing during the Cold War period and universal human rights norms and values. At the same time, ASEAN needs to consider whether its member states have manipulated traditional ASEAN way of non-intervention and sovereign equality to protect its regime security regarding with human rights matters. Nevertheless, ASEAN should be required to prove the development of human rights situation in terms of real action rather than “political rhetoric”.

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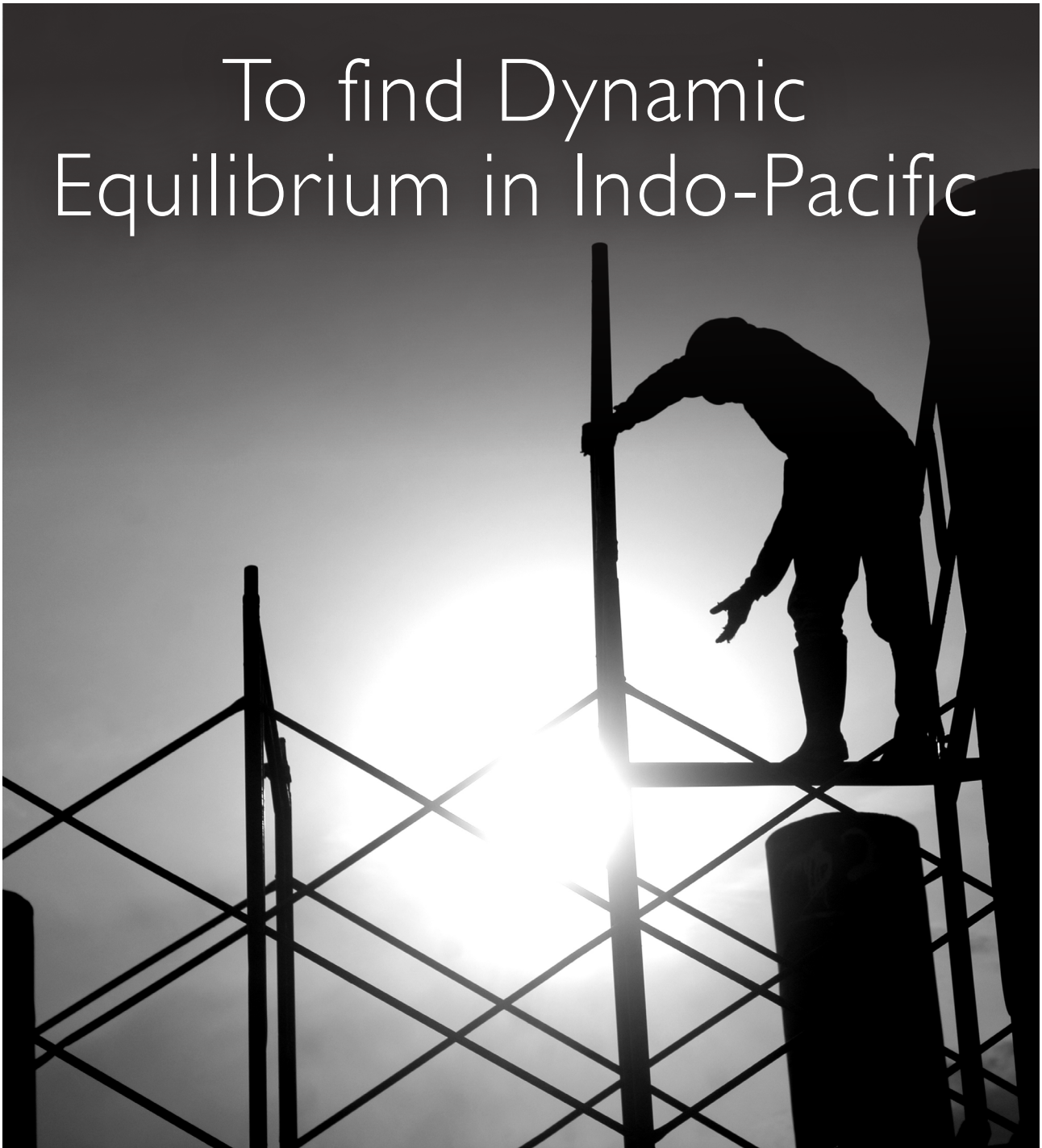
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To find Dynamic Equilibrium in Indo-Pacific



Work silhouette

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Wirya Adiwena,
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During the 33rd ASEAN Summit this year, the ten ASEAN Member States once again saw the Indo-Pacific concept being brought onto the discussion table. This was a follow up to the previous East Asia Summit (EAS), where ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners put the issue front and center in the discussion on the future shape of the regional architecture.

In light of this, Indonesia is moving forward with its idea to align the Indo-Pacific with its own vision of the Indo-Pacific, underlining the importance of developing an ASEAN collective concept on Indo-Pacific cooperation, focusing on certain key principles - ASEAN Centrality, openness, transparency, inclusivity and a rules-based approach - in order to enhance mutual trust, respect and benefit.

This perspective, while timely, is not entirely novel. This article will argue that this vision of Indo-Pacific still follows with Indonesia's free and active foreign policy doctrine by outlining its previous iteration in the concept of dynamic equilibrium, highlighting a number of similarities in the concept.

In its effort to stay true to the mandate of its constitution to "participate in maintaining world stability based on freedom, eternal peace, and social justice", Indonesia has produced a number of foreign policy concepts such as rowing between two reefs, ecumenical diplomacy, and total diplomacy. In the previous administration of Indonesia's sixth president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, its foreign policy was most recently characterized by an attempt to create a strategic environment of a million friends with zero enemies and the pursuit of 'dynamic equilibrium'—a new idea regarding Indonesia's regional and global aspirations.

It is a daunting task to pinpoint the core components of a foreign policy directive. However, a definition is a good place to start. Dynamic equilibrium was one of the main driving concepts of Indonesian foreign policy, particularly during the second term of President Yudhoyono (2009-2014). Primarily attributed to then Minister of Foreign Affairs Marty Natalegawa, the concept is defined as follow,

'Dynamic,' because change is a constant and indeed inherent in the region. The region's architecture must therefore be constantly adaptive. 'Equilibrium,' because such a state of constant change does not suggest a permanent state of anarchy or the uncertainty common to a diffuse multipolar system. Nor, on the other hand, of the imposed order of an unchecked preponderance of a single power. Instead, countries of the region develop norms and principles, codes of conduct and as the case may be, legal frameworks, to build a spirit of partnership and cooperation in addressing issues of common interest."

The concept is inspired by an understanding of the tensions that exists between major powers, especially between the US and China, and China and Japan, and Indonesia's rising prominence in the international world. As Indonesia tried to avoid political dominance by any hegemon, this concept does not seek to promote a conventional balance of power. It promotes norms sharing and

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confidence building instead of military alliances or arms races. It is useful to note that Indonesia's own rise was not followed by a conventional arms race among its immediate neighbours.

Moreover, it is also important to highlight that this concept believes that through common norms and principles, every country can cooperate in a spirit of mutual partnership, even amidst major power rivalries. This means small or *smaller* countries can live peacefully among giants.

Dynamic equilibrium is not entirely new. Its bodies were built upon the foreign policy legacies of previous administrations. Indeed, Indonesia's foreign policy history is more about continuity than change. Indonesia's foreign policy incarnations are often renewed interpretations of the 'free and active' foreign policy doctrine originally promoted by Mohammad Hatta, one of Indonesia's founding father.

There are a number of elements to this concept. Primary among this is **ASEAN Centrality**. The regional organisation that is ASEAN has always been a cornerstone of Indonesian foreign policy where the archipelagic country plays the role of *primus inter pares* or the first among equals. It is therefore not surprising that ASEAN plays a significant role in Indonesia's efforts to create a dynamic equilibrium.

Although there are proponents who advocate for a post-ASEAN foreign policy, Indonesian policymakers believe in the ability of ASEAN member states to, "shape the regional order and realize a common destiny on their own terms, without foreign meddling", and view ASEAN as "indispensable for managing relations with major powers".

Indonesia has played an important leadership role in ensuring ASEAN Centrality even amidst disputes among ASEAN member states. For example, Indonesia was instrumental in resolving the deadlock between member countries following the 2012 ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, as well as during the creation of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. However, it should be noted that Indonesia also tried to actively resolve the territorial conflict between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear. However, although Indonesia managed to deescalate the conflict, it was not entirely successful in resolving the conflict.

In a dynamic equilibrium world map, Indonesia and Southeast Asia would be in the middle, not as a dominating presence but as a stabilizing one. They would be connected with countries in their immediate neighbourhood: through the ASEAN plus mechanisms, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the East Asia Summit (EAS). All

of these were Indonesia's attempts at "aggressively *waging* peace and development".

The third element is **priority in confidence building and peaceful settlement of disputes**. Under this concept, Indonesia identified three major challenges in the Asia Pacific region: the declining of trust, continuing territorial disputes, and the always shifting geo-politics and geo-economy. Thus, transforming "trust deficit into strategic trust" is an important aspect of this concept.

While dynamic equilibrium does not naively portray a conflict-less world—it is after all inspired by major powers competition—it asks countries to "set aside worst-case assumptions of the other's intention" and "resolve to stop ... relentless rush towards conflict".

So far, so good.

Indeed, all of these elements are good and important ideas to incorporate into foreign policy. However, the concept is not without its own challenges, and it is from these challenges that Indonesia and ASEAN's vision of an ASEAN-centered Indo-Pacific concept need to learn from. Indeed, with its broad scope and great ambitions, one prominent scholar had asked whether dynamic equilibrium was "merely a descriptive, grandiloquent attempt at reconciling all aspects of the security implications present in the

Indonesia's foreign policy incarnations are often renewed interpretations of the 'free and active' foreign policy doctrine originally promoted by Mohammad Hatta, one of Indonesia's founding father.

region without a dominant, prescriptive strategy“. This uncertainty often surfaced because Indonesia seems to view competing major powers as both strategic partners and potential threats at the same time, especially in the case of the US-China rivalry.

This issue is also present in Indonesia’s current view on the Indo-Pacific. Its view seems to focus on broad goals such as promoting development, prosperity, connectivity and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals are ones that are agreeable to all stakeholders. Moreover, these goals also do not contradict other major powers views on what the Indo-Pacific should mean.

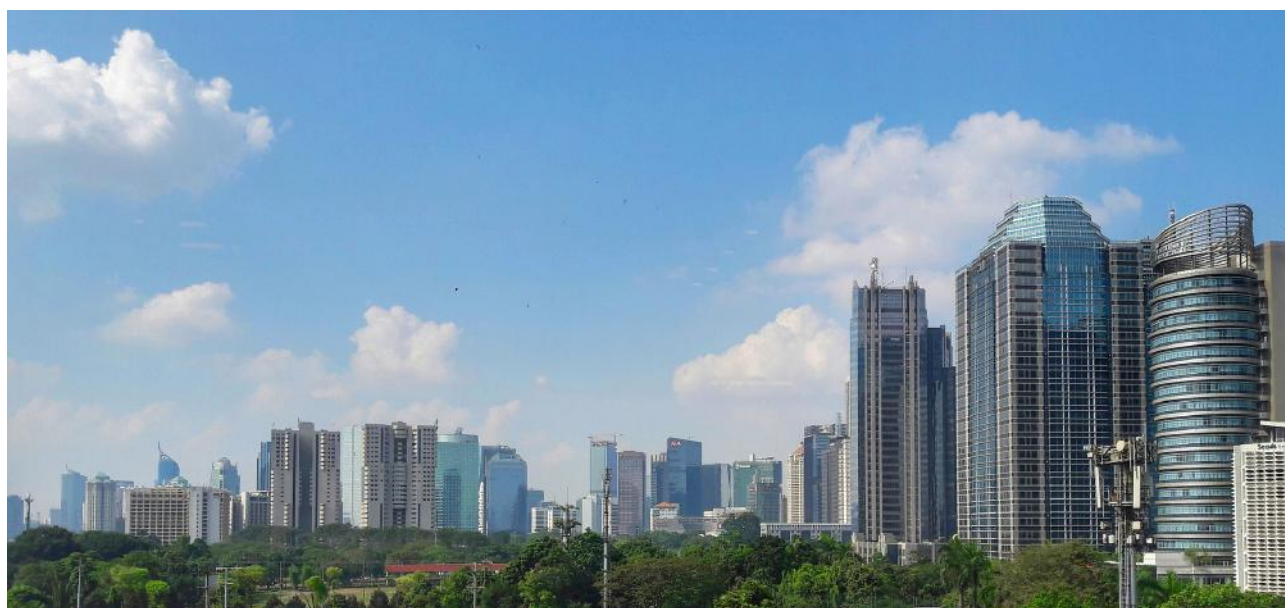
Such views might foster cooperation, but it does not address pressing strategic concerns on how ASEAN will navigate great powers competition in the region. Indeed, the region has now become the theatre for multiple competing views on how its architecture should take shape in the future. Most notably, China and the US have in recent time outlined their own vision on Indo-Pacific cooperation, with each vision centered on their activism in the region—*Pax Americana* and *Pax Sinica*, if you will.

Indonesia is already on the right track by ensuring that ASEAN is central to the Indo-Pacific architecture. However, in its views on the Indo-Pacific, as well as on dynamic equilibrium before it, it has yet to be able to ensure that no preponderance power will divide ASEAN and the wider Indo-Pacific region into different platforms—thematically or structurally. It is not clear what strategy that Indonesia or ASEAN has in store to respond to this, but its success or lack thereof will determine the shape and future of the Indo-Pacific.

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Excerpts from global resurgence of populism: a wake-up call for ASEAN's progressives?



Clock

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Introduction

In the second decade of the 21st century the global politics has been going on a populism spree, mostly in a nativist fashion, and casting doubt upon 30 years of neoliberalism deadlock. Evidences are ubiquitous; from the Euroscepticism embodied in the Brexit saga and Orban of Hungary's 'illiberal democracy', the upsetting presidential electoral victory of the advertised American's patriarch, to the newly elected leader in Brazil Bolsonaro that brings back memory of the country's dark days of 1964. What makes the headline is apparently the traditional exponents of liberal democracy have also received as much a massive blow of conservative-tribalism as those of fledgling democracies with long history of authoritarianism have.

However, the escalation is not unprecedented nor revolutionary. The recurrence is partly an act of reclaiming the loss of dignity following the aftermath of 'divine ruling versus radical secularization' episodes in the age of enlightenment¹. But now the resurgence is becoming even more complex with the growing awareness of the rights to free expression, shedding light upon those whose 'true self'—which stems from unique lived experience — have never been heard of, which are chiefly manifested in ethnicity, sexuality, class, or intersection of those. Uncontrolled multiplicity of identity, enabled by liberal-democracy and fueled by political correctness, has consequentially elicited sulky reaction from the self-proclaimed 'invisible majority' who refused to comply, demanding for purity and coherence. To cite Fukuyama, they felt that "their dignity—and sense of belonging—has been affronted and must be restored".²

A hitherto rarely recognized problem in the mainstream debate is how the media categorically associates populism with nativism and xenophobia, or even worse fascism. Such clumsiness is resulted from the sheer number of rising right-wing populism cases which has far outnumbered those of left-wing populism (Syria of

Greece and Podemos of Spain). The further implication would be the misportrayal of populism, as it had been gradually exposed as displaying rather chauvinist manner. Trump has exemplified this when he characterized Mexicans as rapists and criminals, and was caught on tape boasting about women-groping; although arguably this was actually more of a 'transgression against basic decency, rather than political correctness'.³ On a much deeper level, this rather visceral generalization, typically by the progressives, has led poorly to the habitual misunderstanding of populism as a valid political logic that impedes possible larger consolidation—i.e when Hillary Clinton despised Trump's supporters as 'deplorables'⁴ and the "Yellow Shirt" disdained Thai rural masses as 'pawn of vote buyers' during the 2006 election.⁵

Thus, instead of continuing on dismissing populism as a 'mere rhetoric'—as opposed to 'rational discourse'—that showcases 'intellectual poverty' and nurtures bigotry, which in turn poses threat to democracy and human rights, this article will follow Laclau's path which argue the opposite, to wit embracing those qualities as normal praxis in constructing the political in modern democratic societies. This is in no way overlooking the dire effect of using hoax as political tool nor the global trend toward authoritarian-tribalism—which is found common place in Southeast Asia and will be discussed afterwards—but to strip the nativist and pejorative connotation off the term by revisiting its own rationality and considering its attributive-performative function.

After contextualizing the concept, this article will proceed with a characterization of ASEAN countries' populism, by singling out several countries which have seen the enthronement of seemingly messianic populists which promotes anti-pluralist agenda. This will be briefly explained by contrasting it with other forms of populism—particularly in the US and Europe because most of the cited literatures came from their context. Thirdly, several recommendations will be given for ASEAN progressives—regionalist and human rights activist—and how they ought to respond.

How ought we define populism?

Essentially, Laclau established his understanding of populism as a form of social formation upon two main basic tenets: 1.) logics of antagonism within Gramscian cultural hegemony, and 2) Freudian libidinal social bond. The first tenet is, what Cas Mudde has clearly expressed, that populism is a political logic which splits the society into 'two homogenous and antagonistic warring camps: the "pure people" on the one end and "the corrupt elite" on the other'.⁶ Populist strategically capitalizes on the otherwise scattered crowd's collective resentment toward the establishment and frames the dispute as radically dichotomic and irreconcilable to gather legitimate support from 'the people'—or a distinct, well-coordinated plebs.⁷ Laclau included Gramscian cultural hegemony to conceptualize the process of social formation where 'collective wills'—whether in the form of class or other sectorial/intersectional interests—as political subjects, challenge each other to become the 'moral ascendant' which prevails over the rest within an indefinite time. Secondly, the notion of libidinal bond as the nature of any social formation as argued by Freud will explain much about the 'vagueness', 'emotive', or 'rhetorical' features and its performative-attributive function, which are considered as indispensable in creating unity to advance their social causes. Another key characteristic is its identification with symbol, which is commonly manifested in, but not limited to, charismatic leaders or political slogans.

Understanding populism is much more observable in an electoral context, within representative democracy system, in which politicians seek to unite as much sectorial interests as possible and transform it into *volontegenerale*—a more general demand. It becomes trickier when the populists actually hold onto power, because first, it takes time to articulate those heterogenous demands of their voters into concrete policies and second, this is a critical interregnum period where reshufflement of support will likely happen,

unless an effective, voluntary—either by commission or omission—system of repression is successfully implemented. In an electoral framework, ‘demands’ are what Laclau perceived as smaller unities within a larger social group unity.⁸ Principally, the inability of ‘the order’ to absorb all demands, which will never be a coherent totality, has left some demands unrequited but not vanished. Noteworthy here is the contingent nature of will formation, which means the construction of both sides is susceptible to change—making the demands being simultaneously inside and outside of the system.

The uniting process is called chain of equivalence which involves two steps: logic of difference and logic of equivalence. Logic of difference speaks about the ontology of social world, which is constantly fluctuating and heterogenous. Those diverse sectors present each of their specific demands to the government; the relevant ones will be recognized, while the rest is to be met with rejection. At this point, the second step comes into play. The shared characteristic of having been rejected creates a condition to form an alliance. The process is completed when those rejected demands partially surrender each of their particularity and transform it into more general demands. To put simply, they are all analogous with each other in their confrontation with oligarchic power.⁹

Another essential feature is ‘empty signifier’, or symbols with which the

movement identifies themselves. The word ‘empty’ means literally as such; it must be distinguished from ‘abstraction’ which necessitates an infusion of certain value. It has no fixed content, but rather ‘invested with different meaning by each sector incorporated into the chain of equivalence’.¹⁰ This feature is often dismissed as vague, imprecise, and irrational—just because it is largely driven by emotion. However, Laclau conceded and justified it as ‘inherent in the logics presiding over the constitution and dissolution of any political space’¹¹—or simply a consequence of the social reality itself being, at some degree, vague and undetermined¹². The most vivid example is Althusser’s analysis of the Russian Revolution where the particularities were condensed into the general demands of ‘bread, peace, and land’. Those are designated as empty synecdoche of ‘justice’, yet the translation into the triad successfully fostered the movement notwithstanding. This success shows precisely the prominence of its attributive-performative, contrasted with logico-conceptual, function, namely the ability to create ‘an image which does not express its own particularity, but a plurality of quite similar currents of unconscious thought’. This is in line with Mudde’s argument supposing populism as ‘thin ideology’ which has no specific political agenda, hence typically paired with ‘thicker’ left- or right-leaning ideology.¹⁴ The current trend suggests that we are increasingly leaning toward the right.

What makes populism in ASEAN unique?

The typology of global politics, particularly in the second decade of 21st century is the shift of focus from economic to social inequality, which accentuates on identity politics and the quest of dignity. The nationalist and religious parties and politicians are becoming the global ‘dynamic new forces’, in lieu of the dominant class-based left-wing parties in the twentieth century.¹⁵ Apparently, the global rise of domestic inequality is not necessarily followed by the flourishing of the latter, as what Marxist critics have predicted on the sharpening nationalist or religious sentiment at the onset of industrialization—and now in the turbulent times of de-industrialization.

This ‘calling for justice’ movement—which seeks to put pluralism on hold—in Europe and US was an expression of quite similar concerns, which are the external threat to national interest, such as illegal migration and regional financial power disparity, and political correctness, which has kept the sensitive issues, like anti-immigration policy, off the mainstream parties’ agenda. The latter fueled the former, which led to their dismissal by, for instance, tarring the anti-immigration advocate as ‘racial puritan’, rather than seeing it as legitimate concern of ‘racial self-interest’.¹⁶ This increasingly vernacular phenomenon captures the paradox of free speech, when the increasing multiplicity of identity are recognized at the expense

What makes the headline is apparently the traditional exponents of liberal democracy have also received as much a massive blow of conservative-tribalism as those of fledgling democracies with long history of authoritarianism have.

of social coherence that demands statism to a certain extent—in short, the ‘good’ itself became tyrannical. Those problems arguably stem from the dysfunctional social-democratic institution in the condition of post-politics—the blurring of frontiers between the right and the left which results in the impoverishment of alternatives to neoliberal globalization.¹⁷

The *grande peur* of sliding back to authoritarian leadership incurred by the West is not considered as much threatening, or at least not as surprising, for ASEAN member states—and largely other non-Western—because of their distinct historical consciousness which is shaped in the ever-present, formative age of colonization, modernization, and democratization. The type of its regionalism is more inclined toward Westphalian-style rather than global cosmopolitan order, which uphold the principal of ‘non-intervention’ and state’s autonomy over the collective commitment to democratic rule of law which guarantees civil liberties and political rights. This ‘vetocracy’ has been sustaining the absence of consensus—the so-called ‘ASEAN way’—in making collective statement of denunciation, let alone disciplinary measures, in response to the defiant act against aforementioned values, such as Thailand’s military coup in 2014 and the state-sponsored Rohingya humanitarian crisis.

The identity politics, chiefly in the form of religious or ethnic groups, has always been domestically predominant in the majority of ASEAN countries. Hence, it is not much of a radical shift in this region, like what Fukuyama has suggested earlier. However, anti-pluralist sentiment, which resulted in the assault on minority groups, is currently escalating in several member states, notably Indonesia, the Philippines, and Myanmar¹⁸. Much more common are domestic, rather than inter-state, infighting which pits powerful interest groups against minority and vulnerable groups—not to mention pervasive neopatrimonialism.¹⁹ Their primary aim is to maintain its unbridled dominance rather than revolutionize the

establishment. Put simply, the problem is not a reversal from contemporary state of democracy, but the strength of durable authoritarianism.²⁰

Another potential factor is the revival of ‘Asian Values’ that emerged in the infant post-Cold War era as a response to the ‘end of history’ narratives of Western liberal democracy as the new global norm. Strong economic growth in the Asia Pacific, including Southeast Asia countries fostered the spread of the value. ‘Asian Values’ involves the belief in a strong government rather than political pluralism, where growth and stability becomes the source of legitimization, that emphasizes community over individual, and praises consensus over opposition.²¹ The significant role of China’s patronage in the region, or precisely in a bilateral fashion with several key member states, causes the flourishing of authoritarian statism. This nascent ‘ReOrientation’ toward China is best exemplified by Cambodia under Hun Sen, Myanmar since its political transition in 2011, and the Philippines under ‘Duterteismo’.²² They all share a common characteristic of denouncing democratization or basically, the West, to secure the deal on new economic project, mainly infrastructure, with China.

What can be learned?

The lessons for the progressives are twofold. Firstly, regionalism, in terms of trade cooperation, will function nonetheless, since none of its constituencies are liable to the commitment to upholding democratic values. Unlike what happened in the EU, the narrative of ‘ASEAN-skepticism’ is not widely propagated, if not nonexistent altogether. The framing of ‘otherness’ occurs in the intrastate between interest groups, not at the interstate level. In short, the domestic misery is not coming from the external state, but from internal factions. This is not entirely good news, considering the problem may lie in the dysfunction of the regionalism itself because the integration is not completed, mostly owing to China’s current looming

presence. Hence, institutionally speaking, it is yet to be a wake-up call for regionalists.

Secondly, while it is not a threat to the institution, the authoritarian trend remains a threat to the idea of civil liberty and political rights of the minority groups. It is argued here, by looking at the nature of populism as political logic, the progressives should exercise the same strategy to advance their cause. Dismissing the conservatives as ‘bigot’ is a misstep toward greater inclusion, moreover considering their sheer number. While it is true that populism is based on antagonism, but it still requires pluralism and mutual recognition to some extent to build an alliance. It is indeed difficult to overturn the current predisposition to authoritarianism because of the existential threat, the least thing progressives can do is promoting media literacy and ensuring that the next election will be held. Those are interrelated because, in the case of rightwing populism, mass media is the platform of hate speech and fake news proliferation, which in turn affects voter’s worldview, then candidate’s electability, and finally the election result. The next election is vital to maintaining the principle of ‘organized uncertainty’, coined by Przeworski, where the incumbent does not enjoy an unfair access to resources that are crucial to self-entrenchment in elected offices²³.

Conclusion

Populism is nothing but political logic, which defines its social coherence as diametrically opposed to ‘what-is-not-us’ or the ‘corrupt otherness’—not the other way around. It is about number as much as it is about ideas. The logic seeks to appeal ‘the unspoken inverse of the Other’, which means they are many but being marginalized. Populism, in and of itself, is not fully against the politics of representation and anti-pluralist; if anything, it is an effective mean of expressing representation and requires inclusion to some extent. But its predisposition to conservative, nativist value has made it notoriously

so. Conceptual clarity is important to illuminate the current nativist trend is not caused by populism *per se*.

It is true that, as Mudde argued, populism is the 'illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism'. The progressives should learn that the 'other' is not the 'xenophobic', but rather the one who refuses to listen and exacerbates underrepresentation of the minority groups. The progressives should divert their attention to utilize the populist strategy, particularly its performative function, in promoting inclusivist policies while simultaneously address the intertwined eco-social demands from 'the unspoken majority'. Hence, they should find the 'empty signifier' to which the heterogenous demand could refer themselves. Promoting media literacy and ensuring sustained regular elections are the least they could do, especially in the context of ASEAN where authoritarianism is apologetically durable. Whereas the regional institution's sustainability is not endangered, the domestic issues of human rights violation which coupled with the straitjacket of 'non-intervention' principle remains a polemic for the progressives.

Dear progressives, remember a simple message from Feyereabend: "To say these people are ignorant is just ... ignorant."

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UNSCR 1325 IN ASEAN

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UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security is a landmark resolution.

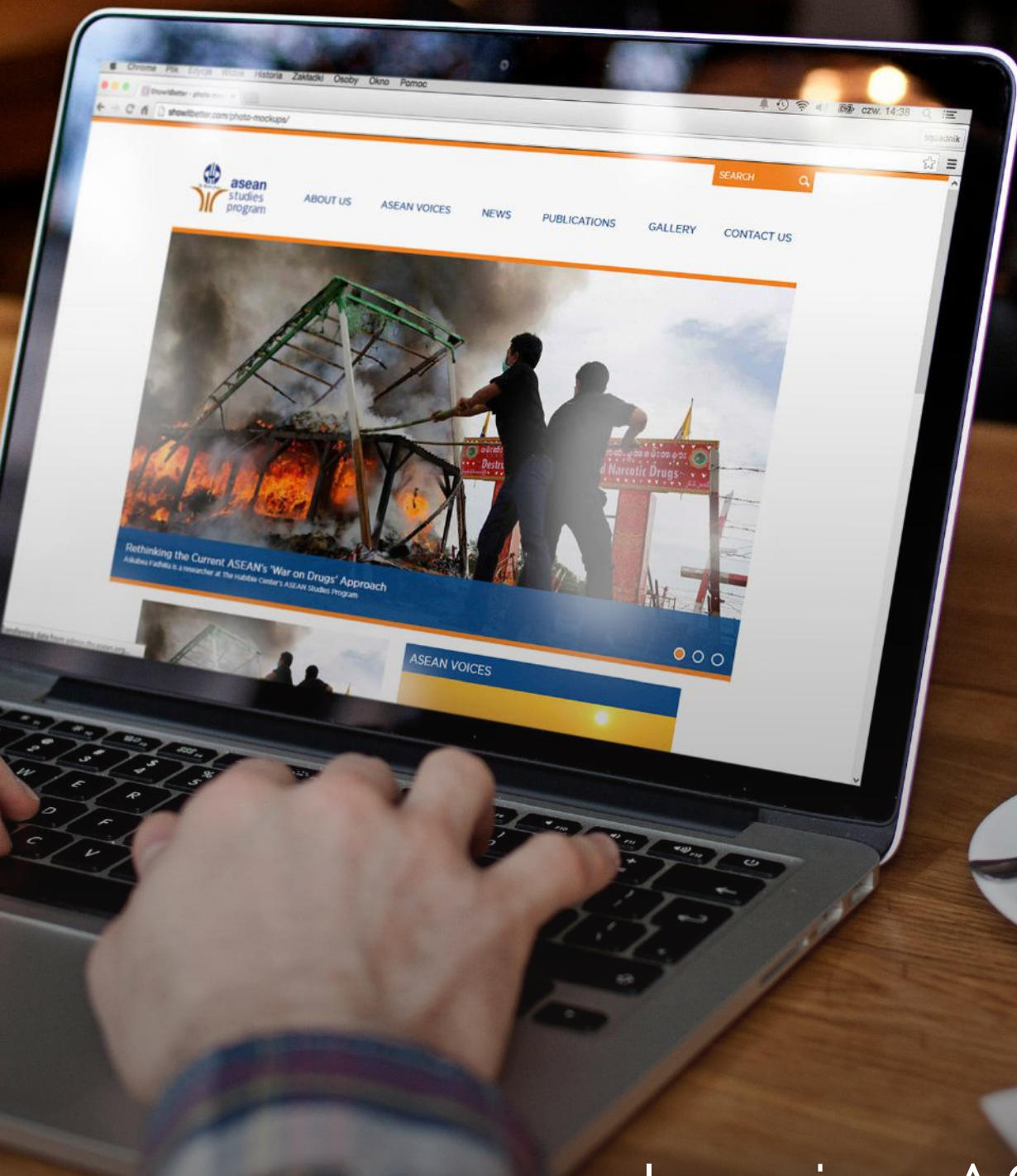
UNSCR 1325 addresses the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, and calls upon the involvement of women in promoting peace.



The Resolution was adopted anonymously and as of 2016 has been adopted into National Action Plan by 63 countries.

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Singapore to host 33rd ASEAN Summit from Nov 11 to 15



Channel NewsAsia, 10 November 2018,
<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/singapore-host-33rd-asean-summit-november-10916420>

SINGAPORE: Singapore will host the 33rd ASEAN Summit and other related summits at Suntec Singapore Convention Centre from Sunday (Nov 11) to Nov 15, marking the final milestone of Singapore's chairmanship of the 10-member regional bloc ASEAN in 2018. The summits will be chaired by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.



China Sea, Rohingya, and the Korean Peninsula. Despite the importance of the meetings, the US President, Donald Trump, will be absent from the meetings and will be replaced by the US Vice-President Mike Pence. The absence of the US President will likely raise a question on the US' engagement in the region.

Another important meeting during the summit is the Second Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) meeting. The negotiations of the RCEP has been going for more or less six years since the idea of the RCEP was launched at the 21st ASEAN Summit in Cambodia in November 2012. It seems that the participating countries will miss again its target for the trade agreement to be concluded this year. Trade negotiations have been hard to conclude due to different interests.

For example, RCEP participating countries expect India to cut 92 percent of tariff lines however India rejected the idea. On the other hand, India expect that liberalisation on services sector on the RCEP will also be improved but other RCEP countries are reluctant. Hence, the RCEP negotiations will still need to be carried out next year. It will be the job of the next ASEAN Chair to ensure the finalization of the negotiations.

Why it matters:

One of the main documents that will be adopted at the 33rd ASEAN Summit is the ASEAN Smart Cities Framework. As the ASEAN Chair of 2018, Singapore proposed the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN). It is a platform where the ASEAN Member States (AMS) will pursue smart and sustainable urban development by utilizing technology to improve people's live. In the end, the development of smart cities will also contribute to ASEAN community building.

The rationale of the ASCN is the fact that the growth of AMS will be driven by urban centres. Data also shows that it is expected that 90 million people will urbanise by 2030. Therefore, it is important to prepare

urban areas so that it can accommodate people with the help of technology.

The ASCN will include 26 pilot cities, namely Bandar Seri Begawan, Bangkok, Banyuwangi, Battambang, Cebu City, Chonburi, Da Nang, Davao City, DKI Jakarta, Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Luang Prabang, Makassar, Mandalay, Manila, Nay Pyi Taw, Phnom Penh, Phuket, Siem Reap, Singapore, Vientiane, and Yangon.

The 33rd ASEAN Summit will be held in conjunction with several other important meetings such as the 21st ASEAN Plus Three Summit and the 13th East Asia Summit. Some of the issues that will be discussed at the meeting are the South



Breaking norms, Thailand sets first 2019 ASEAN summit in June



Nikkei Asian Review, 8 November 2018,
<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Breaking-norms-Thailand-sets-first-2019-ASEAN-summit-in-June>.

BANGKOK -- Thailand will chair the first 2019 summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on June 22 and 23, the Nikkei Asian Review has learned. The June dates give the junta time to hold widely expected general elections before the summit. Over the last 10 years, ASEAN countries held summits twice a year, and typically, the first meetings were conducted late April and early May.

Why it matters:

2019 will be a busy year for Thailand. It will take the chairmanship of ASEAN after Singapore and will hold an election sometime between February and May. It is therefore likely that the first ASEAN Summit of 2019 will be pushed back to June. It will be the fourth time for Thailand to become the chair of ASEAN. Before this, it was the ASEAN Chair back in 1995, 2008, and 2009.

Thailand's chairmanship has invited criticisms due to its domestic politics. Since 2014, Thailand has been led by a military junta. In Thailand, the military is known to have strong influence and power in the government and there has been several records of military coups. When Thaksin Shinawatra served as

Prime Minister from 2001 to 2006, the military launched a coup against him. In addition, the military also toppled Yingluck Shinawatra in May 2014. Although Thailand will hold an election next year, people are questioning whether the election will be held free and democratic.

Aside from its internal domestic, it is no doubt that the Thailand government will face a number of challenges, both domestic and international. Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, Director-General of ASEAN affairs in the Thai Foreign Ministry mentioned that, internally, ASEAN will face an imbalance of rapidly ageing populations in countries, such as Singapore and Thailand. Therefore, ASEAN has initiated the New ASEAN Centre of Active Ageing. In addition, since ASEAN starts to experience stunting across the region, the issues should be addressed as well.

Externally, ASEAN will face issues such as the South China Sea and nuclear proliferation in North Korea. Dr. Chindawongse stressed that under the Thai Chairmanship, they will reenergised focus on building regional architecture to reduce regional tension.

In general, he mentioned that Thailand will have three broad objectives under



its chairmanship: a people-centred community, leaving no one behind, and looking ahead beyond 2040. Regarding the people-centred community, since Thailand is known to have large presence of local and regional CSOs, the government is planning to increase the interface between ASEAN Leaders and CSOs. While having dialogues between policy-makers and the people are essential, it is more important to actually adopt the aspiration of the people to ensure that ASEAN is having a close engagement with its people.

With all the problems coming from internal and external, the Thai government should show strong commitment to address all the issues hence all the initiatives will not be rethorical. It needs to ensure that under the chairmanship of Thailand, ASEAN will remain relevant.



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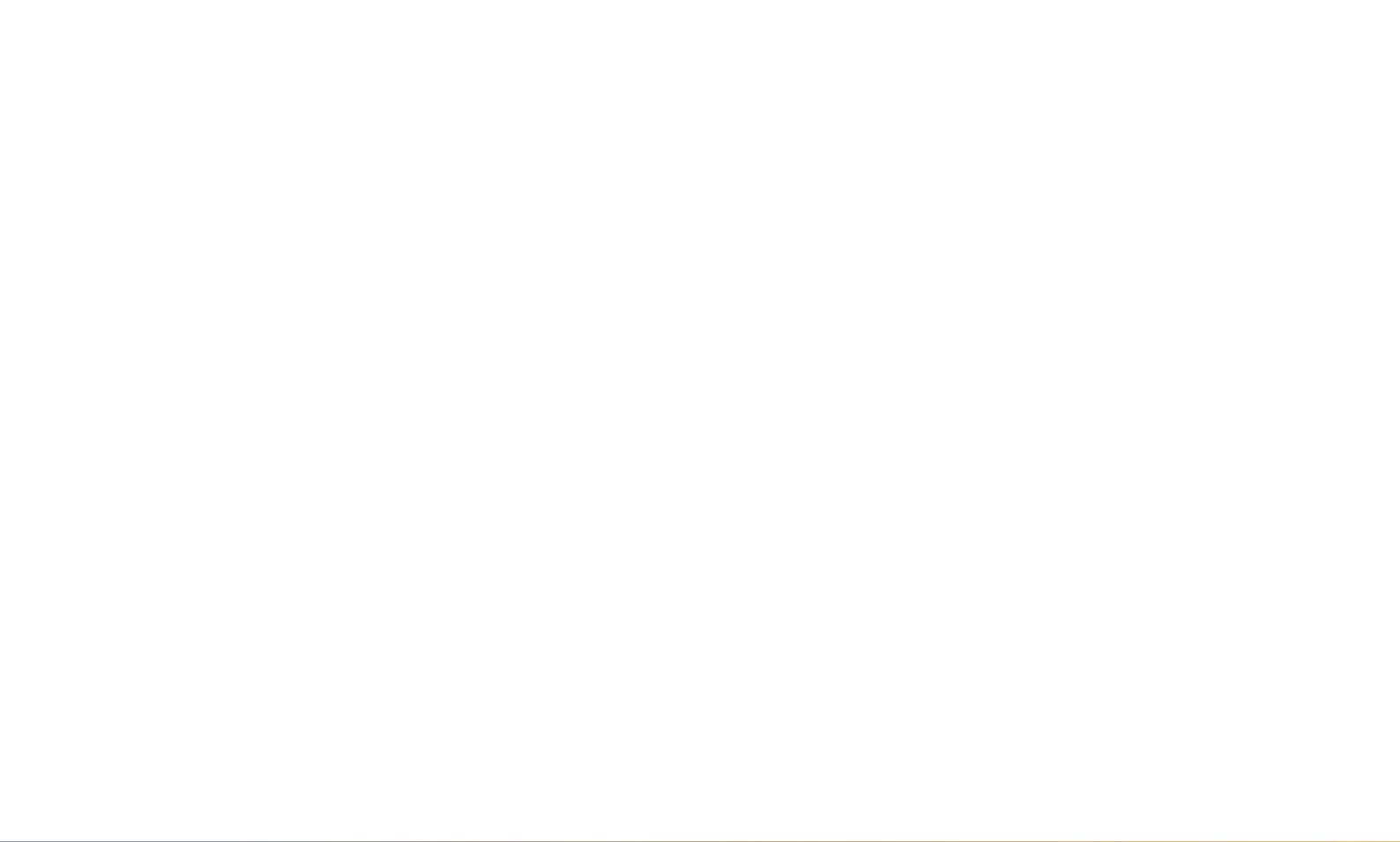
The objective of the ASEAN Studies Program is not merely only to conduct research and discussion within academic and government circles, but also to strengthen public awareness by forming a strong network of civil society in the region that will be able to help spread the ASEAN message. With the establishment of ASEAN Studies Program, The Habibie Center aims to play its part within our capabilities to the ASEAN regional development.

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