

EDITORIAL

Is ASEAN Still Important? From Macro to Micro Economic Perspective

Warm greetings from the desk of editor in chief of Journal of ASEAN Studies (JAS). First of all, I would like to share good news on the acceptance of our journal, JAS, to be indexed in Scopus as indicated by the letter from the Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB) of the Scopus dated on 26th November 2020. Currently we are under the process of signing agreement.

JAS volume 8, no. 2, (2020) is presented to you when the world and especially, ASEAN member countries face the extraordinary challenges to humanities posted by COVID-19 pandemic. For almost 10 months, Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) as regional organization in Southeast Asia has been facing human security issues that disturb the stability and sustainability of the ASEAN strategic regional goals and programs, and thus, might delay its achievements. It has been detected that the demise of several thousand people died because of the pandemic in the region has shifted the regional orientation to more domestic and inworld looking. In these circumstances, the editorial board has selected six papers that underline various issues from macroeconomics to microeconomics in the region, from policing cyberspace to conflict resolution in Southeast Asia, and from Indonesia to China's foreign policies towards ASEAN, contributed by various researchers, academician and scholars from the region and beyond.

First article is on macroeconomic determinants of auto sales in five ASEAN countries, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, contributed by Suwinto Johan from President University, Indonesia. Johan examines the determinants of car sales in these ASEAN countries by looking at five macroeconomic variables i.e., consumer price index, gross domestic product per capita, changes in gross domestic product per capita, foreign exchange rate, and interest rate. By deploying the multilinear regression method with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to test the research model, Johan argues that the growth of GDP per capita does not influence car sales. However, he asserts that the previous period for inflation, gross domestic product per capita, interest rate, and the foreign exchange rate significantly influenced on car sales in five ASEAN countries. Second article is on microeconomics contributed by Myrtle Faye Laberinto Solina from the Philippines Open University. The author highlights the current demographics, roles, and experiences of women

involved in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and provides information on the current policies programs, and services. Using available secondary data, she compares and contrasts these MSMEs among ASEAN countries namely, the Philippines, Singapore, and Myanmar. Finally, she recommends measures to address the impeding factors in these countries.

Furthermore, technological advancement has triggered social networking sites become increasingly relevant in the study of democracy and culture in Southeast Asia. Fernan Talamayan from National Chiao Tung University Taiwan, has contributed to understanding policing cyberspaces, especially on online repression that has been practiced in the Philippine and Thailand. Talamayan examines the overt and covert policing of daily interactions in digital environments. Using Michel Foucault's notion of government and biopolitical power model, he discloses governmental technologies' disciplinary mechanisms. In doing so, he sheds light on the practice of active and passive self-censorship in which the former was driven by the pursuit of a moral self-image and the latter by state-sponsored fear.

The next article highlights issues on mediating civil conflicts in Southeast Asia. John Lee Candelaria from Hiroshima University, Japan pinpoints that Aceh and Mindanao conflict resolutions have given significant lessons. Candelaria identifies the kinds of mediation and qualities of mediators that lead to achievement of peace agreements in these two cases. The author focuses on path dependence, critical junctures, and periodization approaches in the comparative analysis of Aceh and Mindanao third-party mediation through a qualitative examination that involved comparative process tracing (CPT), a two-step methodological approach that combines theory, chronology, and comparison. Finally, he asserts that mediators as instrumental to the peace agreements of the Aceh and Mindanao conflicts are those who appease the commitment issues of the peace negotiation and ensure the trust and confidence of conflict parties. As such, according to him, mediators should be able to create relations of trusts among parties and a mediation environment where the commitment concerns are relieved through the promise of third-party monitoring.

Last two articles deal with Indonesia's and China's foreign policies towards ASEAN respectively. Mohamad Rosyidin and Shary Charlotte H. Pattipeilohy from Diponegoro university, Indonesia highlight Indonesia's foreign policy under Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) administration. Both argue that the diminished role of Indonesia in ASEAN, especially during the first term of Jokowi's presidency, is strongly influenced by causal beliefs held by Indonesian political elites and presidential advisors. Rosyidin and Pattipeilohy pinpoint that although there are varying ideas from one individual to another, they have similar characteristics in projecting that Indonesia should expand its concentric circle beyond ASEAN. They argue that ASEAN is intrinsically weak, and thus, can no longer accommodate Indonesian aspirations. This idea acts as a road map that defines Indonesia's national interests amid the dynamics of international politics in the 21st century as the authors argued.

Last article on Chinese military diplomacy to ASEAN, contributed by Lidya Christin Sinaga from Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), Jakarta. Sinaga examines the impacts of the military's growing role in China's foreign policy under Xi Jinping to its military diplomacy

in ASEAN. The author argues that Xi Jinping's leadership and his vision of China Dream, that is using military diplomacy as a pivotal tool for advancing its whole diplomatic goals, has been seen as a sign of growing assertiveness. As a result, while growing assertiveness has caused uneasy relationships between China and some ASEAN countries, China's military diplomacy which has different approach with ASEAN, has resulted in "ongoing negotiation without progress" for South China Sea dispute.

Finally, on behalf of managing editors, we are grateful to God the Almighty, and our highest appreciation goes to the CSAB Scopus, partners, paper contributors and reviewers for this inclusion of JAS in Scopus. We hope that by being indexed in Scopus our quality of the manuscripts published in JAS will be maintained and even better. All parties who supported the Journal from the Indonesian Association for International Relations (AIHII) and the Center for Business and Diplomatic Studies (CBDS) of the Department of International Relations, Bina Nusantara University deserve our highest appreciation.

Jakarta, 20 December 2020.

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Editor-in-Chief Journal of ASEAN Studies