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INDONESIA AND ASEAN CENTRALITY: THE COMING COLLAPSE OF COMPARTMENTALIZATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONALISM?

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I. ABSTRACT

Indonesia's economic vision is deeply tied with its international vision. Situated at a strategic geopolitical and economic crossroads, Indonesia sees that its economic development can only be built upon a stable and peaceful region, centered in ASEAN. Changing geopolitical landscape is threatening ASEAN Centrality. This article seeks to understand the resiliency of ASEAN Centrality in Indonesia's foreign policy and then assesses its trajectory by utilizing the concept of 'compartmentalized regionalism' to connect ASEAN Centrality (or centralities) at regional level and its centrality in Indonesia's foreign policy. It argues that ASEAN centrality in Indonesia's foreign policy is connected to the compartmentalized nature of ASEAN regionalism. ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture provides flexibility for Indonesia to act contextually in different dimensions of international relations with more weight and less cost. Potential collapse of the compartmentalization of ASEAN regional projects erodes ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture as well as in Indonesia's international vision.

II. INTRODUCTION: WINTER IS COMING

Indonesia's economic vision is deeply tied with its international vision. Situated at a strategic geopolitical and economic crossroads, Indonesia is aware that its economic development can only be built upon a stable

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and peaceful region. ASEAN is central to this vision, making the regional organization as the cornerstone of its foreign policy since the Cold War period. For decades, Indonesia relies on ASEAN Centrality to maintain peace and stability in the region and managing Great Power politics. The success in doing so has resulted in Indonesia's growth as one of the World's most important emerging economies.

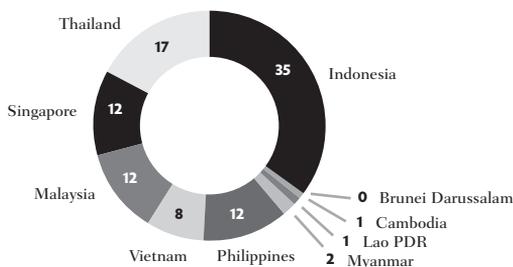
Unfortunately, amidst the changing geopolitical landscape, questions about 'ASEAN Centrality' in the regional order looms at the horizon. In the Post-Cold War era in 1990s, ASEAN set itself at the center of regional architecture in Southeast Asia and the wider East Asia. Convinced that its relative success in managing intra-ASEAN relations peacefully even during the height of Cold War could be the basis for similar arrangement in the wider context, ASEAN tried to shape the institutional arrangement in East Asia, a region strongly influenced by great power competition. ASEAN Regional Forum was established in 1994 and since then, various ASEAN and ASEAN-driven institutions were established to create multilateral framework to manage great power politics and introduce ASEAN values such as non-interference, informal consultations and consensus seeking (*musyawarah mufakat*), and peaceful resolution of disputes, to be the norms for regional order. Not only in the security sector, ASEAN also put itself at the center of regional economic cooperation arrangements, as seen in the enactment of various ASEAN+1 trade agreement that are expected to culminate soon in the establishment of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Despite its limitations, this ASEAN-centred regional order had been accepted, or at least tolerated, by great powers such as US, Japan, and China, to manage their relationship in the region. ASEAN Centrality became the key feature of regional order, providing the relatively weaker ASEAN countries to secure themselves from anarchical great power politics or an imposed hierarchical hegemonic order under a superpower. However, many scholars have observed that Great Powers' see their acceptance to ASEAN centrality is only a temporary necessity (Goh, 2012; Tow, 2012). With many American observers argued that China has 'done bidding its time' (Campbell & Rapp-Hooper, 2020), US is increasingly becoming more and more restless, as shown in Washington's strong statement against Beijing on South China Sea on July 13, 2020 (Secretary of the State of the United States of America, 2020). Many has predicted that 'winter is coming' for ASEAN Centrality in East Asian regional order or even in Southeast Asia.

The challenge to ASEAN centrality in is not only coming from the structural level, but also from how ASEAN member countries are perceiving the changes in international politics and the place of ASEAN in their foreign policy. ASEAN Centrality is strongly connected to the centrality of ASEAN in

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the foreign policy of ASEAN member countries. While the changing balance of power in the regional structure put enormous pressure on ASEAN Centrality, how ASEAN and its members are responding to such pressure would be the ultimate decider. In this context, Indonesia is pivotal. As the country with the largest demographic, geographic, and economic size in Southeast Asia, Indonesia plays an important role in setting ASEAN's response to the structural pressure caused by the changing geopolitical landscape.

FIGURE 1. GDP COMPARISON OF ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES, 2019 (PERCENTAGES)



SOURCE: Created by the author based on data from The World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2019&locations=ID-BN-KH-LA-MM-PH-VN-MY-SG-TH&start=2019&view=bar>

When President Jokowi took office in 2014, many expected that Indonesia would shift away from ASEAN. Influential people that shape Indonesia's foreign policy voiced their view to rethink ASEAN's centrality in its foreign policy. Rizal Sukma, a close advisor of President Joko Widodo, argued that "We used to say ASEAN is *the* cornerstone of our foreign policy. Now we change it to a cornerstone of our foreign policy" (Parameswaran, 2014). Nevertheless, despite the initial tendency to shift away from ASEAN to more bilateral relations, it seems that Indonesia doesn't really moving on. Observers still see that Indonesia is still the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy (Almuttaqi, 2017; Willis, 2017).

This article seeks to understand the resiliency of ASEAN Centrality in Indonesia's foreign policy and then assessing its trajectory by utilizing the concept of 'compartmentalized regionalism' to connect ASEAN Centrality (or centralities) at regional level and its centrality in Indonesia's foreign policy. It argues that ASEAN centrality in Indonesia's foreign policy is connected to the compartmentalized nature of ASEAN regionalism.

ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture provides flexibility for Indonesia to act contextually in different dimensions of international relations with more weight and less cost. It provides a platform for Indonesia to fulfill its aspiration for leadership, but at the same time limiting its obligation to provide public goods by sharing the responsibilities through the compartmentalization

of the regional project. For ASEAN countries, the compartmentalization is also important to manage its relationship with Great Powers. The relatively separated development of regional architectures in each ‘compartment’ created multiple non-linear web of institutions which act as cushion when relations turn sour in a compartment (usually in the security compartment).

While Indonesia attempts to behave contextually in each compartment (for example: strong statement on Natuna issue, but very cooperative in economic cooperation), Great Powers such as China, Japan, and the US failed to appreciate the importance of the compartmentalized nature of ASEAN regionalism and tries to merge the compartments. The conflation between compartments threatens ASEAN Centrality at two levels that are mutually reinforcing. At regional level, the collapse of compartments threatens the centrality of ASEAN in regional architecture. At national level, the diminishing ASEAN Centrality makes ASEAN less effective for Indonesia, and thus erodes ASEAN’s position as the cornerstone of Indonesia’s foreign policy. Indonesia’s shift away from ASEAN would in turn further the erosion of ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture. Based on this logic, this article argues that the future of ASEAN Centrality rest on the ability of ASEAN Countries, and Indonesia is an important part of it, to maintain the relative separation between compartments of ASEAN regionalism.

STRUCTURE OF THE ARTICLE

To elaborate those arguments, this article is written in this following structure. First, it discusses the concept of ASEAN Centrality through the lens of “compartmentalized regionalism.” In this part, this article argues that there are multiple centralities of ASEAN due to the compartmentalized nature of ASEAN regional projects and that this compartmentalization is central to ASEAN Centrality in the region. The second part elaborates how the compartmentalized nature of ASEAN regionalism has been useful for Indonesia’s foreign policy. The third part describes how Great Powers failed to appreciate this compartmentalization and risking not only the erosion of ASEAN Centrality but also a collapse of regional order. It also explains why the collapse of the compartments would lead to the declining centrality of ASEAN in Indonesia’s foreign policy. Finally, this article ends with a concluding note.

III. ASEAN CENTRALITY AND COMPARTMENTALIZED REGIONALISM

What does ASEAN Centrality mean? In the Association’s official documents, the concept of ‘ASEAN Centrality’ is mentioned in the ASEAN Charter as one of the principles that must be adhered by ASEAN and its Member States. The concept is described in the Article 2 Paragraph 2 (m) of the Charter: “*the centrality of ASEAN in external political, economic, social and*

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cultural relations while remaining actively engaged, outward-looking, inclusive and non-discriminatory" (ASEAN, 2015). Nevertheless, the Charter does not elaborate specifically what centrality means and how it should concretely be manifested in ASEAN's external relations. This lack of exact definition provides the opportunities for various interpretations of the concept.

Some scholars equate centrality with leadership. Thus, ASEAN Centrality is understood as ASEAN's leadership role in shaping the regional architecture both in terms of institutions as well as norms. Some argues that this leadership role stems from the material structure: minimalist bargain among Great Powers in a Post-Cold War situation lead to the acceptance of ASEAN as the broker (Goh, 2012). Some looks at the normative leadership, which is the acceptance of ASEAN Way as the norm to follow in regional inter-state relations (Job, 2010). Some others use network understanding and focus on ASEAN's structural position as "the node in the cluster of networks" which places it as a central hub in the regional architecture (Caballero-Anthony, 2014). Of course, there are also scholars who are skeptical that ASEAN Centrality, understood as leadership, is real. They argue that ASEAN have limited capabilities to influence the behavior of major powers in the region (Weatherbee, 2014). However, some other scholars say that this weakness is actually also its strength, because the Great Powers are less suspicious towards ASEAN and thus making ASEAN acceptable to be the central actor in the region (Stubbs, 2014).

With those different opinions, which one is true? I contend that all of them are only partially true. Taking the assumption that power (and thus international relations) is contextual, this paper argues that the concept of ASEAN Centrality might means and manifests differently in different aspects (or 'dimensions') of international relations in the region and beyond. More specifically, it argues that there are multiple ASEAN Centralities due to compartmentalized nature of ASEAN regionalism.

To understand this, we need to understand the context, which is by understanding that ASEAN is a 'compartmentalized regionalism.' By compartmentalized regionalism, I refer to a "political project to reorganize a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines, which actually consists of multiple and separated/compartmentalized patterns of arrangements of the regional space(s) but combined and identified as a single project."¹ In shorter sentence, compartmentalized regionalism could be understood as "multiple regionalisms in one particular regional space under one name" (Choiruzzad, 2017).

¹ This definition is based upon Anthony Payne and Andrew Gamble's definition of regionalism (i.e. "state-led or states- led project designed to reorganize a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines") but with the acknowledgement that states are not the only actor involved as the drivers in such process (Payne & Gamble, 1996, p. 2).

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The core of my conceptualization of ASEAN as a “compartmentalized regionalism” is the refutation of the commonly held assumption that the development of ASEAN is a linear process of “widening and deepening.” Both in the official or even scholarly narrative, the development of ASEAN is often depicted as resembling the development of living organisms: evolving from a simple creature into a more complex one. ASEAN was established in 1967 to manage the Cold War political and strategic environment. As time goes by and the Cold War slowly ended, it became more and more complex by including cooperation in other areas, mainly economic integration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2012; Yue, 1996). In this sense, both mainstream official and academic literature consider ASEAN’s economic regionalism as a continuation of ASEAN’s effort to manage regional political and strategic environment. I contend that this understanding does not tell the whole story. The concept of “compartmentalized regionalism” sees that ASEAN’s economic integration and ASEAN’s political and strategic regional processes are different regional projects, but later combined under a single banner of ASEAN. ASEAN’s economic integration did not spring as a continuation of Bali Concord I, but rather have its own biography and driven by different forces. Appropriating the Marxian term of “uneven and combined development” to different context, this conceptualization of ASEAN as “compartmentalized regionalism” argues that ASEAN regionalism is the result of uneven and combined developments of distinct regional projects.

Another core argument of this concept, and the consequence of seeing ASEAN regionalism as uneven and combined development of distinct regional projects, is that ASEAN must not be understood as a unitary problem-solving instrument established by and composed of ASEAN member states. In this context, it is worthy to mention that while most literatures are aware that ASEAN is not unitary and thus cohesion has always been the recurring theme of many literatures on ASEAN, most of them stop at the state as the most basic unit that forms ASEAN regional project. In this commonly held view, ASEAN is not unitary because of its member states are having different national interests. I would like to go further by reminding that even member states are not unitary entities.

As argued by State Transformation Framework literatures, states are continuously undergoing transformation, which represent changes in political-economy relations *within* and *beyond* the state. State is not seen as a unitary actor and a politically neutral problem-solving instruments, but as “institutional ensembles that reflect and embed historically evolving social relations” (Hameiri & Jones, 2016, p. 78). Furthermore, the prominence of national governance is not natural but socially and politically constructed

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historical product (Hameiri & Jones, 2016, p. 79). Because different scales of governance privilege different groups, social forces are continuously struggling to define a scale of governance that benefits them the most. Thus, governance may be ‘rescaled’ to new levels, including to regional level, following the evolution of social constellation. With this understanding, one can see that the establishment of ASEAN regional projects are not only shaped by states, but by the overlapping constellation of social forces at national and international level in Southeast Asia and beyond. However, because in the current historical phase state remains the most legitimate actor, these constellations of forces are using states as the platform for projection of their interest, including those manifested in ASEAN regional projects.

In short, the two main premises of “compartmentalized regionalism” are: (1) the development of ASEAN is not a linear process of widening and deepening, but is the result of uneven and combined developments of distinct regional projects merged but remain compartmentalized under the name of ASEAN regionalism; and (2) the establishment of ASEAN regional projects are not only shaped by states, but by the overlapping constellation of social forces at national and international level in Southeast Asia and beyond. I propose that these two premises are crucial in providing a better understanding of ASEAN regionalism and going beyond the limits of existing literatures on regionalism, both Old and New.

The first limitation to understand ASEAN regionalism is the tendency for linearity in the Old Regionalism literatures. This is understandable since early studies on regionalism corresponded to the development of Post-World War II in Europe. In this context, these studies are often at the same time considered as ‘political programs.’ These early approaches on studying regionalism, later often identified as “Old Regionalism,” were not only attempting to explain the phenomenon of regional integration, but also provide prescriptions to make it real, first in the European context but then expanded to elsewhere. One of the earliest approaches to study Regionalism is Federalism, which advocated for the formation of a new form of political structure at regional level to go beyond the conflictual nation-states. Tragic lessons from the two world wars and the quest to ensure peace in Europe were the drivers for this argument. Both as approach and political program, Federalism was very influential among early advocates of European integration project. However, Federalism’s insistence on ‘form’ was later criticized by Functionalist approach, which was often associated with David Mitrany. This approach argues that ‘function’ is more important than rather than the form. ‘Form’ (i.e. the international/supranational organization) can only be established based on ‘function’ (i.e. cooperation and activities around functional needs such as trade, production, welfare, and transportation) and not

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the other way around (Hettne, 2005). This argument was later in turn criticized by Neo-functionalism approach, which sees that functionalists overlook the importance of politics and argues that ‘functions’ are not merely technical but also inherently political, as “technical realm was in fact made technical by a prior political decision” (Hettne, 2005, p. 546) According to Neo-functionalists, integration is not merely driven by ‘functional automaticity’, but by process and the existence of purposeful actors. Function does matter, since increasing level of interdependence would start the process that will lead to political integration, but political decisions matter too. An important concept introduced by Neo-functionalists is the idea of ‘spill-over,’ which is “the way in which the creation and deepening of integration in one economic sector would create pressures for further economic integration within and beyond that sector and greater authoritative capacity at the European level” (Hettne, 2005).² One of the most prominent Neo-functionalists, Bela Balassa, postulated that regional integration take place in five stages: Free trade area will lead to customs union, customs union will lead to common market, common market will lead to economic and monetary union, and finally economic and monetary union will lead to political union (Balassa, 1961, 1987). It must be noted that despite being published in 1960s, and thus could be classified in the label of ‘Old Regionalism,’ Balassa’s concept remains influential in shaping our understanding and informing policy makers until today, including to ASEAN regionalism (Dieter, 2000, pp. 7–8). Despite various differences within the ‘Old Regionalism’ approaches, they tend to see regionalism as a linear and relatively mono-dimensional process. Tendency to linearity means that while debating on whether form or function is more important, they assume that regional integration process follow a specific unidirectional trajectory. This does not mean that the process could not regress or reversed, but the stages are connected as a series of milestones.

Another limitation to understand ASEAN regionalism is the tendency for mono-dimensionality, which refers to the tendency to see regionalism as something that is happening in a single or at least ‘unified’ dimension, such political or economic dimension, which is seen as apparent in Old Regionalism. A new wave of studies on regionalism which started in the 1980s brought different perspective. Unlike Old Regionalism which was strongly shaped by European experience, these newer literatures admit the diversity and multi-dimensionality of regionalism (Hurrell, 1995). According to Hettne and Soderbaum, these newer literatures focused on the concept of ‘regionalism’ and

2 The use of ‘European’ here is understandable because Old Regionalism mostly focusing on Europe, which is also empirically the first project of regional integration. Later, ‘European level’ in this definition also often applied to other regional project.

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‘regionalization’ instead of ‘regional integration’ and ‘regional cooperation’ (preferred by earlier studies of regionalism) because those concepts are considered more appropriate for capture the multidimensional features of contemporary regionalism (Hettne & Soderbaum, 2008, pp. 65–66).³ However, is the word ‘multidimensional’ sufficient to understand ASEAN?

Hettne argues that ‘old regionalism’ was a “Cold War phenomenon” and has specific objectives while ‘new regionalism’ is a consequence of “more comprehensive, multidimensional societal process” (Hettne, 2005, p. 549). If this characterization is used to understand ASEAN, ASEAN is both old and new regionalism. ASEAN was established in 1967 with a strong Cold War context but then established new elements of the regional project in 1990s. On political and security issues, ASEAN fits with the description of old regionalism due to its Cold War origin and the continuing importance of the states. However, the same could not be said about the evolution of many features of ASEAN regionalism after 1990s. One could argue that ASEAN is closer to the ‘new regionalism’ because its ‘comprehensive and multidimensional’ nature, referring to the existence of three equal pillars of ASEAN Community. However, ‘comprehensive and multidimensional’ assumed integrality of the dimensions, indicated by the existence of a unified pattern/rules of arrangement, similar proponents and a single logic on which the regional project is operating. This might not sufficient to explain the frequent disconnection between the economic, political-security, and socio-cultural ‘pillars’ of ASEAN Community and the focal point agencies of each pillar in each country.

In this context, ‘compartmentalized regionalism’ understands ASEAN as not only multi-dimensional but compartmentalized. Despite being promoted as a single integrated project, the “dimensions” have distinct arrangements, proponents and logic. ASEAN regionalism is composed of at least two separate regional projects. One is in the political-security dimension (in the recent development manifested as ASEAN Political Security Community pillar in ASEAN Community) and the other one is in the economic dimension (manifested in the ASEAN Economic Community pillar). The two have distinguishable arrangements, proponents and logics that are separated but identified politically as a single integrated project. The third official pillar, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community pillar acts as the mechanism to politically identify the two distinct regional projects as a single project by giving these two projects a single ASEAN identity. It is important to note that although the two can be identified as different regionalism projects, it does not

3 It must be noted that not all scholars agree to this division between the Old and the New. According to Warleigh-Lack, the view that Old Regionalism is not multi-dimensional and separated economic and politics is wrong (Warleigh-Lack, 2008, pp. 45–46).



mean that the two are completely separated. They are separated but combined. In short: compartmentalized (Choiruzzad, 2017).

Taking this assumption, ASEAN Centrality means and applies differently in different compartments. In the political-security compartment, ASEAN Centrality means cohesion of ASEAN members in their external relationship, especially with Great Powers, as well as the primacy of ASEAN values and ASEAN-driven institutions in managing inter-state relations in the region. In the economic compartment, ASEAN Centrality means ASEAN economic integration and the prominence of ASEAN in shaping economic agreements between ASEAN member states and external actors which would benefit ASEAN member countries, such as by attracting Foreign Direct Investment, opening new markets, or integrating ASEAN member states economy into global value chain. Of course, the two are mutually connected. However, the distinction and separation of the two is also important.

IV. HOW COMPARTMENTALIZATION MAKES ASEAN CENTRAL IN THE REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE AND IN INDONESIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

In his 2019 book, *ASEAN's Half Century: a Political History of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, Donald E. Weatherbee argues that throughout its political life since 1967, ASEAN had experienced three reinventions: (1) 1976: When security was indisputably the primacy concern; (2) 1992: When ASEAN refocused on economic integration; and (3) 2007: when it adopted the ASEAN Charter (Weatherbee, 2019). I would like to give a different take on this supposedly “reinventions.” When ASEAN started to gear towards economic integration in early 1990s, it was not a reinvention. It actually did not change the existing ASEAN regional project which was primarily aimed at maintaining regional peace and security. What really happened was the institutionalization of another regional project, merged under ASEAN's name, which was aimed for economic integration. Thus, rather than a reinvention, it was the establishment for another compartment. If ASEAN was a house, the house was not rebuilt. Another house was built beside the existing house and then put in a single address. The old house remained intact while a new house was built. This is what I call “compartmentalized regionalism.” The address is ASEAN. The two houses are the “compartments.”

The primary promoters of this new project were quite distinct from established actors in the previous ASEAN regional project. Some observers argued that in the beginning, ASEAN economic integration project has been largely driven by private sector, especially by the activities of Japanese Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and overseas Chinese business, while states play a rather reactive role (Stubbs, 1995). Pressures from external forces

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also mattered, as other observers see that ASEAN's decision for commencing Common Effective Preferential Tariff was related to the pressures from international financial institutions, particularly IMF and World Bank, to liberalize ASEAN member states' domestic market (Cuyvers et al., 2005). Of course, since the state was still the legitimate actor in international relations, states also played an important role. ASEAN members states, especially state apparatuses in the economic sector, saw the importance of ASEAN economic integration to face the emergence of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European free trade area (Cuyvers et al., 2005), as well as the rising attractiveness of China for FDI (Hill & Menon, 2010). External economic powers such as Japan and China actively participated in the project, especially after the 1997/1998 Asian Crisis. Japan even helped to establish and sustain ERIA (Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia), a think tank that is very influential in shaping the blueprint for ASEAN economic integration.

Since it is driven by the need for economic integration, which to some extent compromising state sovereignty, this new compartment has a different arrangement and logic. Differences in the wording of the ASEAN Political and Security Community Blueprint (APSC Blueprint) and ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint (AEC Blueprint) tell this story. While the APSC Blueprint emphasized the importance of the principles contained in the ASEAN Charter ("The APSC Blueprint is guided by the ASEAN Charter and the principles and purposes contained therein"), the AEC Blueprint goes directly to mention that "the Leaders agreed to hasten the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015 and to transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital." Rather than referring specifically to the principles in the ASEAN Charter, AEC blueprint mentioned that "ASEAN shall act in accordance to the principles of an open, outward-looking, inclusive, and market-driven economy consistent with multilateral rules as well as adherence to rules-based systems for effective compliance and implementation of economic commitments." It is true that this statement is in line with the Article 2 Paragraph 2 point (n) of the ASEAN Charter, added by view words (additional characteristics are explicitly added: open, outward-looking, and inclusive). Of course, one can argue that this is only a trivial matter about the choice of words or the background of the drafter. However, I contend that this illustrates that the two compartments are operating on different principles in organizing the regional space (Choiruzzad, 2017). In the 'political-security compartment,' sovereignty and non-interference are generally considered as non-negotiable. That is why ASEAN observers are pessimistic about the effectiveness of ASEAN's democratization agenda or human rights

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promotion. Meanwhile, in the economic compartment, it seems that sovereignty can be compromised, although of course only through uneasy negotiation and flexible implementation. The AEC Blueprint does not emphasize sovereignty, but states that ASEAN member states shall adhere to “rules-based systems for effective compliance and implementation of economic commitments.” Rather than reinvention, in which principles and institutional arrangements are reformulated, what really happened was the establishment of a separate “compartments.” The existing arrangements, oriented at security issues, remains intact, while a new set of regional initiatives geared for regional integration commence.

How could different principles of the organization of regional space exist in a single regional project? One would expect that the existence of different and often contradictive principles would lead to the demise of a regional project. I argue that ASEAN creatively manage this contradiction by creating “compartments” under ASEAN regionalism. By keeping the functional separation between the economic and political security compartments but combining them as “pillars” for ASEAN Community, ASEAN made the existence of these distinct projects push the idea of ASEAN integration project forward. ASEAN could go this far because of the relative balance and distance between the two compartments. APSC and AEC could go hand in hand ironically because the two are not completely integrated.

The compartmentalization (combined-but-separated) between the two compartments was crucial since the beginning, when ASEAN countries need to manage the changing geopolitical landscape after the end of the Cold War. ASEAN countries show different strategies in dealing with the 1990s situation in different compartments.

In the security compartment, ASEAN strongly clenched to the centrality of ASEAN in the expanded regional security arrangements. Leading ASEAN diplomats fiercely argued that discussions of security must remain within ASEAN’s orbit and resist any efforts that would lead to the amalgamation of the region. When the idea of ASEAN Regional Forum was proposed, ASEAN leaders frequently expressed their concern about ASEAN centrality. As a result, ARF creation in 1993 sealed ASEAN centrality. It is agreed that ASEAN would host and set the agenda for ARF meetings. ASEAN members also secured position in every ARF intersessional study groups as one of the co-chairs (Bae, 2016, pp. 168–171).

A different situation could be observed in the economic compartment. ASEAN members decided to join APEC in 1989, although demands several conditions such as collective position of ASEAN and the acceptance of consensus as the principle of APEC. However, ASEAN leaders would later see that APEC deviated from this commitment by pushing rapid institutionaliza-

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tion and liberalization (Bae, 2016, pp. 171–178). When crisis happened in 1997/1998, this disappointment was becoming more apparent since their Pacific counterpart (i.e. the US) did not seriously help them to manage the crisis. As Mahathir Muhammad said: “APEC has come to dominate the East Asian economy, but was either unwilling or powerless to help the East Asian countries during the economic and financial turmoil” (Bae, 2016, p. 174; Chin, 2003, p. 407). This disappointment led to the revival of East Asian regionalism, which led to the establishment of ASEAN Plus Three (APT) and other initiatives which continue until today such as the AEC and other ASEAN plus mechanisms.

The different strategies in the two compartments show that ASEAN dealt with the development in the two sectors differently because they involve different stakeholders. By separating the two but maintaining the connection between them to some degree, ASEAN created flexibility by creating different arenas of interactions with great powers. By doing so, ASEAN’s political-security arrangement can remain the dominant mode of interaction in East Asia in the political-security dimension, but at the same time ASEAN could benefit from the economic opportunities coming from a controlled pace of economic integration with the global economy. Compartmentalization of ASEAN’s regional project helped ASEAN to get the benefit of the Post-Cold War economic growth without connecting willingness to integrate to the global economy to submission to Great Power-centered regional order.

Another strategy that was frequently employed by ASEAN or ASEAN member countries is “Inter-compartment balancing act.” When tension occurs in the political security compartment, such as in the issue of the South China Sea, ASEAN or ASEAN member countries give concessions in the economic sector to reduce and manage the impact of the tension. Thus, one can see that compartmentalization is also important to manage its relationship with Great Powers. The relatively separated development of regional architectures in each ‘compartment’ created multiple non-linear webs of institutions which act as cushions when relations turn sour in a particular compartment (usually in the security compartment). As a result of ASEAN’s position in this complex network of institutions, ASEAN placed at the center of regional order both in economic and political-security dimensions.

Compartmentalization of ASEAN regionalism does not only secure ASEAN Centrality at the regional architecture, but also makes this institution central for Indonesia’s foreign policy. I argue that ASEAN centrality in Indonesia’s foreign policy is connected to the compartmentalized nature of ASEAN regionalism. ASEAN multiple centralities in the regional architecture provides flexibility for Indonesia to act contextually in different dimensions of international relations with more weight and less cost.

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Veteran observers or even ASEAN diplomats often commented on Indonesia's position in ASEAN as constrained or incomplete leadership (Emmers, 2014). Indonesia's large geographic, demographic, and economic size is not translated into a full leadership in ASEAN. Jakarta is often depicted as "binding its own hand" in order to maintain the cohesiveness of the Association and to prevent insecurity from other relatively smaller members. Many associated this tendency to the experience of Indonesia's aggressive foreign policy towards its neighbors in the 1960s (the "Konfrontasi"). Post-1966 Indonesia government sees that Indonesia's image as responsible international actor is crucial for mobilizing resources for economic development, and thus very careful not to provoke anxieties among its regional neighbors. If Indonesia aggressively act as a strong leader of ASEAN like Germany in the EU, Jakarta is afraid that the consensus-based ASEAN could not be sustained. While this explanation contains some truth, as perceptions and historical experience do matter, there is also another calculation that is often neglected. That calculation is connected to the centralities of ASEAN at regional level and the compartmentalization of ASEAN regional projects.

Indonesia's constrained or incomplete leadership does not only stem from the Indonesian prudence to maintain cohesion. It also comes from the fact that Indonesia's large size is not only its strength, but also its weakness. The country's huge geographical and demographic size, as well as its archipelagic nature and diverse population, have been a source of continuous internal security threat (Laksmana, 2011). Jakarta has domestic priorities and need to mobilize resources for domestic purposes, such as national integration and economic development. Indonesia still aspire to be a regional leader or even a global player, but because the resources are allocated for more pressing domestic issues, Jakarta had to manifest regional leadership with minimal cost.

ASEAN compartmentalization provides a platform for Indonesia to fulfill its aspiration for leadership and at the same time limiting its obligation to provide public goods by sharing the responsibilities through the compartmentalization of the regional project. This calculation (fulfilling its leadership aspiration and role but limiting its responsibility) has led Indonesia to pursue limited and sectorial leadership rather than complete and full leadership in all sector in ASEAN. Many observers have captured this tendency. Ralf Emmers, for example, argues that Indonesia's leadership "has so far also been limited to the political and security spheres, leaving other sectors, like the economy, to others" (Emmers, 2014). This can only possible with ASEAN's compartmentalization. Compartmentalization makes Indonesia can still claim to be ASEAN leader to external actors as well as to its patriotic domestic audience. If the ASEAN regional projects were completely unified

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under same principles and arrangements, Indonesia must pay higher cost for the international public goods necessary to maintain its leadership position in the region. If the regional projects were completely separated, for example by the prominence of APEC, Indonesia's claim for regional leadership is weak because of the existence of another arrangement in which Indonesia is not the leader.

Domestically, the compartmentalization of ASEAN is also instrumental to hold together the fragmented state bureaucracy and their international interaction. As many State Transformation Framework proponents would argue, globalization has brought fragmentation, decentralization, and internationalization of state apparatuses (Jones, 2018). Different ministries are having their own domestic stakeholders and international connections. For example, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Trade, or Ministry of Industry frequently have different ideas on how to interact with external powers because they have different domestic and international network. The compartmentalization of ASEAN regional project helped to manage these differences while at the same time maintaining the sense of unity among state apparatuses. The differences do not become a problem because they have their own 'compartments' that are institutionalized through ASEAN mechanisms.

With centrality and compartmentalization embedded in ASEAN regionalism, Indonesia is interacting with Great Powers contextually in accordance to the situation in each compartment. For example, Indonesia issued a very strong statement towards China on the Natuna issue, but at the same time invites Beijing's investments in various important projects in the country. Unfortunately, many Great Powers do not understand the importance of compartmentalization and look at security and economic sectors as a single arena.

V. GREAT POWER POLITICS AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE COMPARTMENTS

The year 2012 sent an important warning for ASEAN Centrality in the region. That year, for the first time in the 45 years of ASEAN, ASEAN foreign ministers failed to agree a Joint Communique in their high-profile annual meeting. The failure was caused by Cambodia's rejection towards the draft proposal from the drafting team consisting of Marty Natalegawa from Indonesia, Anifah Aman from Malaysia, Albert Del Rosario from the Philippines, and Pham Binh Minh from Vietnam. The proposed draft includes all matters discussed by the foreign ministers, including about the friction between the Philippines and China at Scarborough Shoal and the claims of the Vietnam Exclusive Economic Zone that overlaps with Chinese claims. Many suspect

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Cambodia's rejection is strongly connected to Chinese influence on the country. It is not a secret that China is very actively involved in the development of the Greater Mekong Subregion and became an important patron for Cambodia's economy (Bower, 2012).

This situation was not the first and the last symptoms of ASEAN's difficulty in responding to the increasingly assertive Great Powers. Echoing the Realist predictions on the impact of systemic change due to the shift in the balance of power, the rise of China and the responses of its rivals had led to instability in the ASEAN-centered regional order. The tensions in South China Sea is only one symptom of this systemic shock. Afraid that they could not count on ASEAN to keep their rivals in check, Great Powers started to rethink their acceptance on ASEAN centrality. As Amitav Acharya argued, US, China, and Japan had accepted ASEAN Centrality as a mutually accepted way to engage the strategic and economically important region without provoking external and internal resistance. However, this mutual acceptance is now fading away with the increasingly aggressive China and US actions (Acharya, 2017, pp. 275–277).

Not only that the Great Powers are no longer taking ASEAN Centrality as the most effective way to engage the region, the increasing tensions among Great Powers also led to the decline in the cohesion of ASEAN member countries. With ASEAN cohesion eroded, ASEAN Centrality is also threatened. While the Great Power politics in 1960s led to the cohesion of ASEAN member states, the emerging Great Power Politics threatens to dismantle it (Ciorciari, 2017).

In general, policymakers and scholars who observe East Asia closely recognized that ASEAN Centrality is threatened by the heightened competition between the Great Powers. Adding to this picture, I would like to argue that the reason for this diminishing centrality is the collapse of its fundamental base: compartmentalization. While ASEAN Member states attempt to manage their interaction with Great Powers by behaving contextually in each compartment, the Great Powers such as China, US, and Japan are acting as if they are playing in a single arena.

The increasingly assertive China under Xi Jinping places an economic development cooperation termed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at the core of its “peaceful rise” diplomacy. In this BRI vision, Southeast Asia is an important part. Among the six economic corridors envisaged by the BRI, two corridors cut through Southeast Asia, namely the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor and the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor (ESCAP, 2017). Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, an official document issued by Chinese National Development and Reform

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Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce, also locates Southeast Asia as an important part, as the document mentioned five routes for BRI: (1) Central Asia-Russia; (2) Central Asia- West Asia; (3) mainland Southeast Asia-South Asia-Indian Ocean; (4) South China Sea-Indian Ocean; and (5) South China Sea-South Pacific Ocean. At least three of them are passing through Southeast Asian countries (Chan, 2017, p. 42). President Xi Jinping even chose the Indonesian House of Representative as the stage to announce Beijing's proposal for 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (Chan, 2017, p. 47). China and Chinese think tanks frequently stressed that BRI is a development cooperation designed to address the pressing problem of infrastructure development in developing countries and as a platform for cooperation in various sectors (ESCAP, 2017; Haibing, 2019). Positive sounding terms like "collaboration," "shared benefit," and "equal partnership" decorates Beijing's official documents and statements on BRI and other initiatives (Mobley, 2019, p. 56).

While ASEAN countries see the benefit of the BRI, as well as other Chinese economic cooperation initiatives such as AIIB, ASEAN countries also worried that this cooperation could undermine their position vis-à-vis China in political-security dimension such as in the issue of South China Sea. Among ASEAN countries, the reactions are mixed, with various degrees and combination of positive and negative assessments (Chan, 2017; Sevilla Jr., 2017). In general, ASEAN countries are aware that they must strike a balance. They must optimize the economic benefit from the economic cooperation offered by Beijing but not letting that to be their weakness in the political-security front. In short, ASEAN countries attempt to maintain the "compartmentalization" of their cooperation with China: economic cooperation should stay as beneficial economic relations and must not erode their bargaining position in the political-security dimension.

Nevertheless, maintaining this compartmentalization is difficult. In the Philippines, which has territorial dispute with China in South China Sea or West Philippine Sea, China's promised support for infrastructure development have led to a softer stance from Manila. President Duterte even signed deals with Beijing for joint oil and gas development, which provoked criticisms from his domestic rivals that the President is acknowledging China's "unlawful co-ownership" in the West Philippine Sea (Jiang, 2019). The President also promised to not pushing the implementation of the result of the arbitration proceeding on South China Sea by his predecessor (Deng, 2018). What happened in the Philippines is still moderate compared to what is perceived to happen in Cambodia, a country categorized by the American scholar David Shambaugh, as a "capitulationist" state which is dependent on China and become a virtual "client-state" for China (David Shambaugh, 2018,

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pp. 100–102; Mobley, 2019, p. 60). Chinese money made Cambodia one of the world’s fastest growing economies but at the same time also making Cambodian observers see that Cambodia is willing to do anything for China and thus often dubbed as “a province of China” (Mobley, 2019, pp. 60–61). In this context, Indonesia is still seen as an outlier among ASEAN countries by trying to maintain distance from both China and the United States (David Shambaugh, 2018, pp. 100–102; Mobley, 2019, p. 60). This practical reality shows that Beijing is not hesitating to disrupt the compartmentalization between Political-Security and Economic dimensions. As Chinese scholar Yan Xuetong mentioned, “China will decisively favor those who side with it with economic benefits and even security protections. On the contrary, those who are hostile to China will face much more sustained policies of sanctions and isolation” (Mobley, 2019, p. 57; Xuetong, 2014).

China is not the only Great Power to dismiss the compartmentalization of economic and political-security dimensions. Not only attacking China’s economic cooperation initiatives such as BRI as having geopolitical motives, the US also attempts to contain the perceived expansion of Chinese sphere of influence. Obama administration introduced the term “pivot to Asia” and promised for a “rebalancing policy,” while at the same time also tried to maintain cooperation with China in areas deemed beneficial. However, the rise of Donald Trump has led to a more aggressive US response, with the endorsement of “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” strategy (Kurlantzick, 2018; Swaine, 2018). In the previous strategy of rebalancing, China is seen as both a potential partner and competitor that must be “selectively deterred” but also must be integrated into the liberal international order, Trump’s policy views China in a black and white manner as the threat to international order and to US interests (Swaine, 2018). Aside from developing stronger political-security cooperation, Washington also seeks to counter China’s influence through economic development initiatives. For example, Washington reinvigorated the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) to engage with Mainland Southeast Asia, especially Mekong Subregion where China has emerged as a dominant player. In the LMI meeting in August 2019 in Bangkok, the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo iterated US’ commitment to be an active player in the Mekong subregion through various social and economic projects, from education to sanitation to infrastructure development. Not stopping at promising to help, the US Secretary of State also criticized China’s behavior in the subregion, from dam building to extra-territorial patrolling and rewriting of existing rules on river governance. He also promised that the US and its partners would provide an initial fund of \$29.5 million USD to develop regional electricity grids, as well as \$14 million USD for combating transnational crime (Busbarat, 2019).

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US' most important partner in East Asia, Japan, also pursue similar policies, although in a more careful manner. Trying to not provoking Beijing, Tokyo attempts to “hedge against the risk of unilateral actions by China to forcefully change the regional order” but at the same time willing “to engage China in mutually beneficial areas” (Shiraishi, 2016). In line with US strategy, Japan also strengthens its presence in Mekong Subregion through Japan-Mekong Cooperation and by supporting existing subregional mechanisms such as the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya- Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) (Busbarat, 2019). Responding to China-led initiatives, in May 2015 Japan declared that it will provide \$110 billion support to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for developing ‘quality infrastructure’ in Asia (Kameda, 2015).

As elaborated above, Great Powers’ behavior in the region which entangle political-security and economic dimensions has led to the potential collapse of the compartmentalization of ASEAN regional projects. The conflation between compartments threatens ASEAN Centrality at two levels that are mutually reinforcing. At regional level, the collapse of compartments threatens the centrality of ASEAN in regional architecture, since compartmentalization is one of the most important pillars that sustain ASEAN Centrality by allowing ASEAN member states to behave contextually in different dimensions.

At national level, the erosion of ASEAN Centrality makes ASEAN less effective for Indonesia, and thus erodes ASEAN’s position as the cornerstone of Indonesia’s foreign policy. Indonesia’s shift away from ASEAN would in turn further the erosion of ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture, making the region very prone to power politics driven by Great Power rivalries. If this happens, the peace and stability in the region will surely be jeopardized. Since economic development is only possible in a stable and peaceful environment, a region dominated by Great Power politics is not a promising environment for an emerging economy like Indonesia. Escaping from Middle Income Trap itself is already a daunting task. Doing that amidst unstable environment is impossible.

If this trend continues and Indonesia and other ASEAN countries could not reestablish the clear demarcation between political-security and economic dimensions of regional international relations, they will be in a situation illustrated by ancient Indonesian proverb: “When elephants fight, the mousedeer dies amidst the battle” (“*Gajah-gajah bertarung, pelanduk mati di tengah-tengah*”).

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

For now, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia in general, is one of the world's engine of growth. It has successfully built a castle of economic development despite multiple crisis in 1997/1998 and in 2000s. However, this castle is built upon a thin layer of ice named peace, which is anchored in ASEAN Centrality. The future might not be so kind. The future of ASEAN Centrality rest on the ability of ASEAN Countries, and Indonesia is an important part of it, to maintain the relative separation between compartments of ASEAN regionalism which creates a diversified pattern of relations between ASEAN member states and the Great Powers in different dimensions of International Relations, and thus creating constraints for Great Power-driven relationship patterns.

This is also a problem of self-fulfilling prophecy. If Indonesia sees that it is worthy to defend ASEAN Centrality and able to mobilize collective ASEAN response to the increasing Great Power tension and the collapse of the compartmentalization, ASEAN can remain at the center of the regional architecture. There is a hope in that. Chinese intellectuals such as Zhang Zhexin has pointed out that the unpredictability of Great Power relations has led China to place more emphasis to ASEAN and regarding Southeast Asia as central to its diplomacy (Zhexin, 2016). Xi's focus to economic cooperation could also provide a brake to China's assertiveness in South China Sea (Nie, 2016). Thus, if managed well, ASEAN member countries can collectively define favorable patterns of interaction between them and the Great Powers.

Failure to do so will condemn ASEAN Centrality to irrelevance. Without ASEAN Centrality at regional level, Indonesia will lose the reason to maintain ASEAN as the cornerstone of its foreign policy. If that happens, Indonesia must reimagine its economic and international visions for the 21st Century.

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