

“Liberal” Transformations¹⁾ in Southeast Asia

YAMAMOTO Nobuto

Introduction
Liberal International Order?
Regional Order
Political and Economic Order
Democracy or Oligarchy
People's Voice?
Conclusion

Introduction

Over the past seven decades, the concept and institutional frameworks of liberalism have been widely recognized as deeply rooted in Southeast Asia, with political, economic, and social institutions progressively aligning themselves with liberal principles.²⁾ This “liberal” orientation in Southeast Asia can be traced back to the post-colonial era. Following World War II, the region became incorporated into the U.S.-led “liberal” international order within the Cold War paradigm.³⁾ Encouraged by U.S. regional policies, Southeast Asia actively embraced and advocated for the ideals and institutional structures of pseudo-

-
- 1) The original paper was prepared for the keynote address at the 4th Asia-Phil International Conference on 6 December 2019, at De La Salle University, Manila, the Philippines. In February 2024, I extensively revised the content of the original text and updated it in July 2024.
 - 2) I adhere to Michael Freeden's conceptualization of liberalism, which suggests that there exists a diverse array of ideas and interpretations of liberalism spanning the past two centuries. He emphasizes the importance of understanding ideologies in their historical and conceptual contexts (Freeden, 2015).

liberal democracy and capitalist economy.⁴⁾

If the U.S.-led liberal internationalism was a product of the Cold War era, its evolution in the post-Cold War era warrants examination. Specifically, the transformation of liberal ideas and institutions in Southeast Asia since the 1990s and its impact on individual citizens are of particular interest. A brief overview of recent political and economic developments since 2018 underscores the significance of these inquiries, shedding light on emerging national and regional liberal realities in the realms of politics and economics.

The first aspect concerns domestic politics, particularly electoral processes, serving as indicators of the functioning of democratic institutions in Southeast Asia. Between 2018 and 2024, significant elections occurred in six countries across the region. In Malaysia, the 2018 general election marked a historic shift, resulting in a change of government after 60 years of dominance by the United Malays National Organisation. Initially, this event signaled a potential trajectory toward democracy in the country. However, Malaysia has experienced political instability since 2018, witnessing the appointment of five different prime ministers and the organization of six elections at both state and federal levels. Coalition governments, comprising former political opponents, have contributed to greater political uncertainty. During this period, the opposition has made significant gains in elections at both state and national levels. Additionally, state elections held on 12 August 2023, revealed deepening ethnic and racial tensions within the country.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Myanmar conducted general elections on 8 November 2020, resulting in a decisive victory for the de facto national leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and her party, the National

3) I understand there may be objections to the use of the term "liberalism" in the early years of postwar Southeast Asia, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, it remains a historical fact that the United States, as a proponent of liberalism and democracy, dedicated itself to establishing a regional order aimed at combating the ideological struggle against communism and socialism. Therefore, I argue that the US-led liberal international order shaped the regional framework.

4) Yamamoto (2022) offers a comprehensive examination of the historical transformation of the regional order in Southeast Asia under the auspices of the United States' architected security and economic systems.

League for Democracy. However, the political landscape underwent a sudden transformation in 2021 when the military reasserted its influence in governance. Three months after the general election, on 1 February 2021, a military coup occurred, leading to the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and other prominent politicians from the National League for Democracy. The coup was met with strong resistance from the civilian population, sparking civil disobedience, protests, and enduring armed resistance against military rule. This setback severely impeded the democratization process, leaving Myanmar to confront an uncertain future.

The general election in Cambodia on 23 July 2023 was characterized by the exclusion of major opposition parties and candidates, further solidifying the dominance of the Hun Sen government and strengthening its authoritarian rule. Furthermore, Hun Sen appointed his son as his successor, thus consolidating power within the family dynasty. Although Hun Sen had previously announced his retirement from the premiership in 2023, he ultimately returned to office to be sworn in as Senate president in 2024. Meanwhile, in Thailand, the general election on 14 March 2023, witnessed progressive parties dominating, reflecting a clear rejection of the military-backed leaders who had governed since a 2014 military coup. However, the aftermath of the election was marked by political turmoil, culminating in a three-month deadlock before Thai lawmakers ultimately selected real estate tycoon and political newcomer Srettha Thavisin of the populist Pheu Thai party as the country's 30th prime minister.

The presidential election in the Philippines, held on 9 May 2022, witnessed Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., the son and namesake of the late Philippine dictator, securing a landslide victory. This marked a significant reversal of fortunes for a political dynasty that had been ousted 36 years earlier by the "People Power" revolution. In Indonesia, presidential and general elections were held on 14 February 2024. Prabowo Subianto, who declared his intention to continue Joko Widodo's policies and selected Widodo's eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, as his vice-presidential candidate, obtained nearly 58% of the popular vote based on various quick counts, though these results were not official, thus securing his five-year-term presidency starting from October 2024. The potential Prabowo administration is expected to form a broad coalition

dominated by major parties, potentially leaving minimal opposition in parliament.

Elections serve as fundamental indicators of the functioning of electoral democracy within a country. In this context, Indonesia and the Philippines have been recognized as having established democratic regimes, while Malaysia appears to have joined this democratic fold. However, it is noteworthy that Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar are characterized by authoritarian governance, marked by limited adherence to liberal values such as human rights, political participation, and civil liberties. Such regimes can be classified as electoral authoritarianism, a distinct form of authoritarian rule wherein elections, a cornerstone of liberal democracy, are manipulated to consistently favor the incumbent government, thereby legitimizing its authority (Case, 2010; Morgenbesser, 2017). Electoral authoritarianism is defined as "a new, distinctively authoritarian regime type in contrast to hybrid regimes and defective democracies" (Schedler, 2006: 4–5). Despite their authoritarian nature, Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar have continued to attract significant foreign direct investment and demonstrate robust economic development before the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the election results in Indonesia and the Philippines serve as illustrations of the enduring influence of oligarchy and political dynasties, prompting inquiries into the quality of democracy in both nations. In Indonesia, Widodo, as a political product of the democratization process following the fall of the Soeharto regime, appears to be laying the groundwork for a political dynasty. In October 2024, his eldest son will become the next vice president, while his second son, who leads a small political party, is being considered for a position as either a local government head or vice head in the November 2024 election. Additionally, his son-in-law, who holds the position of mayor of Medan, will run for the gubernatorial position in North Sumatra. Despite efforts to promote democratic principles in the aftermath of the quarter-century-long dictatorship, the persistence of entrenched political elites and oligarchs continues to exert significant influence over electoral outcomes. Similarly, in the Philippines, the victory of Bongbong Marcos, representing a prominent political dynasty, underscores the enduring dominance of entrenched

families in the country's political landscape. For the upcoming presidential election in 2028, Sara Duterte, the current vice-president and daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte, is widely regarded as the frontrunner to succeed Bongbong Marcos, according to various polls.

These trends underscore the challenges facing democratic governance in Southeast Asia, where the concentration of power among a few elite families can impede political competition and accountability. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the prevalence of national amnesia, particularly among young voters, concerning the nation's brutal recent history under dictatorships, contributes to the emergence of new political elites. Consequently, addressing the influence of oligarchy and promoting greater inclusivity in political processes are critical steps toward strengthening democracy in the region. This phenomenon evokes parallels with the developmental authoritarianism prevalent in Southeast Asia during the 1970s through the 1990s, a period characterized by significant obstacles to the ideals of liberal democracy within individual countries in the region.

The second aspect pertains to the regional economic landscape. Following a series of negotiations starting in 2012, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was ultimately ratified in November 2020. RCEP is a free trade agreement currently under negotiation among the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in addition to Australia, China, New Zealand, and South Korea.⁵⁾ It is often portrayed as a China-led response to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) initially proposed by the United States, which later withdrew from the agreement. The 15 countries involved in RCEP negotiations collectively account for approximately one-third of global GDP and nearly half of the world's population. The agreement aims to encompass trade in goods and services, as well as investment, intellectual property rights, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Notably, the primary constituents of RCEP are ASEAN members, underscoring Southeast Asia's pivotal role as a driving force in the global economy.

5) In the final moments, India opted out of participation in the RCEP, despite its engagement in negotiations over the past eight years.

Since the 1990s, ASEAN has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to establishing economic integration initiatives. In 1992, ASEAN members signed an agreement establishing the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), which effectively eliminated import quotas and significantly reduced import tariffs among signatory nations. Initially comprising six members—Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand—the bloc expanded its membership over the subsequent eight years to include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam, with each new member also becoming a signatory to AFTA. Furthermore, ASEAN intensified its efforts toward economic integration with nations beyond its borders. Throughout the 2000s, comprehensive free trade agreements (FTAs) were ratified with various countries outside the region, including China (2003), Japan (2008), Korea (2010), India (2010), Australia (2010), and New Zealand (2010). Leveraging both intra- and extra-regional FTAs, RCEP is anticipated to further bolster regional free trade activities for ASEAN. Free trade serves as a cornerstone of economic development for Southeast Asian countries and their counterparts.

The aforementioned cases underscore a dual trend in Southeast Asia since the 1990s: a combination of democratic processes and authoritarian practices in the political sphere, alongside a steadfast adherence to the established norm of free trade in the economic realm. Both democracy and free trade are rooted in the philosophy of liberalism. However, it appears that the policy of free trade does not inherently prioritize democracy; rather, it emphasizes the ability of member countries to engage in negotiations, ensure adherence to agreed-upon procedures, and execute trade agreements. Consequently, liberalism has permeated every facet of politics, economy, and society in Southeast Asia.

In contemporary discourse, liberalism is often equated with its economic counterpart, neoliberalism. Rooted in classical liberalism, neoliberalism emphasizes free-market competition or capitalism while advocating for limited government intervention through spending, regulation, and public ownership. This economic ideology encompasses a range of policies, including flexible labor markets, deregulation of financial markets, elimination of protective tariffs and subsidies on essential goods, privatization of state-owned industries and utilities, commodification of services, a shift from direct and progressive to indirect and

regressive taxation, and an emphasis on individual responsibility. Neoliberalism is promoted by major international financial institutions and the U.S. government, and it is frequently applied to the global economy (Harvey, 2005). As evidenced by the RCEP case, contemporary international liberalism dictates that governments are the primary legitimate actors in negotiating free trade agreements. Neoliberal arrangements are formulated at both regional and global levels. As a political endeavor, neoliberalism necessitates the establishment of specific institutions to pursue its policy objectives (Kashwan, Maclean, García-López, 2019). These institutional frameworks not only reflect governmental power but also shape regional and global power dynamics. Consequently, the neoliberal project reinforces governmental authority, leading to the development of diverse neoliberal arrangements tailored to the objectives of each government.

This presents a perplexing dilemma: as the principles of free-market capitalism proliferate and deepen their influence, they simultaneously necessitate an expansion of governmental power. Moreover, if we substitute the notion of governmental power with that of “good governance”, we find ourselves in familiar territory. Today, “good governance” is an expectation citizens hold of their governments, requiring transparency, accountability, and responsibility, among other attributes (Hydén and Samuel, 2011). These concepts are recognizable, as they stem from the ideology of neoliberalism and have evolved into norms in the twenty-first century. Thus, the question arises: how do we reconcile the amalgamation of free-market capitalism and governmental power in an era purportedly defined by liberalism?

This article endeavors to elucidate this dilemma and puzzle by examining the historical penetration and transformation of liberal ideas and institutions within the Southeast Asian region. It aims to delineate how these ideals have evolved over decades, shaping both regional and national political and economic landscapes. Through an exploration of historical transformations and contemporary developments, this article seeks to unravel the multifaceted manifestations of liberalism in Southeast Asia.

Liberal International Order?

Before delving into specific cases, it is prudent to reflect on a pivotal episode concerning liberalism at the outset of the 1990s. This period marked the dissolution of the Cold War international system, with the term “globalization” emerging as a prominent descriptor, particularly among American foreign policymakers and economists.

In the summer of 1989, a controversial yet widely read essay titled “The End of History?” was published in the American conservative journal, *The National Interest* (Fukuyama, 1989).⁶⁾ The author, Francis Fukuyama, had been a lifelong neoconservative until the younger Bush Administration; however, his perspective shifted following the Iraq War of 2003. At the time of writing the essay, Fukuyama was a researcher at the conservative global policy think tank, the RAND Corporation, and had emerged as a prominent scholar contributing to neoconservative policy formulation during the Ronald Reagan Administration.

Neoconservatism is a political ideology that emerged in the United States during the late 20th century. It is characterized by a fusion of conservative principles with a pronounced emphasis on assertive foreign policy, particularly in the promotion of democracy and American values abroad. The term neoconservative originally referred to individuals who transitioned from liberalism or leftist views due to disillusionment with what they perceived as the shortcomings of liberalism, especially in the domain of foreign policy. Notably, neoconservatives wielded significant influence in shaping foreign and military policies during the three Republican administrations, namely, the Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush administrations. Advocating for the promotion of democracy and interventionism in international affairs, they believed that global engagement would serve American national interests.

Fukuyama’s essay received a positive reception within the American

6) Three years following his essay, Fukuyama further elaborated on his argument by publishing the book titled *The End of History and the Last Man* (Fukuyama, 1992). Notably, at the time of the book’s publication, the Cold War had concluded, prompting Fukuyama to omit the quotation marks from the title.

neoconservative circle. In “The End of History?”, he delved into ideas rather than specific events. Fukuyama posited that the dominance of the liberal idea was not only evident but also beneficial for American power, even before the collapse of the Cold War international structure. He emphasized, “At the end of history, it is not necessary for all societies to become successful liberal societies; rather, they must relinquish their ideological claims to represent superior forms of human society”. Additionally, Fukuyama predicted “the end of mankind’s ideological evolution and the global proliferation of Western liberal democracy as the ultimate form of governance” (Fukuyama, 1989: 4).

Fukuyama’s optimism regarding liberalism and liberal democracy paved the way for the elder Bush Administration and subsequent administrations, including the Clinton administration, to pursue a new world order (Callaghan, O’Connor, and Phythian, 2019). From the perspective of the U.S. government, the liberal world order was perceived to be extending its reach globally. Fukuyama and other neoconservatives envisioned the United States as the architect of this new world order. With the collapse of communist regimes, the former Eastern bloc found itself compelled to transition to democratic political systems.

This optimism regarding liberalism reflects the confidence in twentieth-century U.S. global hegemony, which crystallized during the Cold War era. John Ikenberry characterizes this phenomenon as “liberal internationalism”, a political project operating within the framework of U.S. global hegemony. It is described as a pragmatic, opportunistic, and reform-oriented approach aimed at “advancing liberal democracy in a global context” (Ikenberry, 2020: xii–xiii). At its core, this political project revolves around the cooperation of liberal democracies to foster mutual relations. Originating as an American response to the Cold War international structure vis-à-vis the Soviet Bloc, liberal internationalists view cooperation as driven by shared values and interests, serving as both a defense against existential threats and a response to the mutual vulnerabilities inherent in modernity itself (Ikenberry, 2020: xii).

Fukuyama and Ikenberry’s writings both seem to presuppose the stability and prevalence of liberal democracy, envisioning a world characterized by liberal societies, a liberal world order, and liberal international relations. However, this presumption requires further examination. Liberal democracy

emerged as a prominent political model in the twentieth century, gaining widespread adoption only after World War II. Against the backdrop of the Cold War, where the Soviet Bloc or Eastern Bloc championed the concept of “people’s democracy” or “people’s republic”, the Western Bloc or U.S. Bloc sought to underscore the liberal dimension of politics and economics. Consequently, liberal democracy became the cornerstone of the Western Bloc’s ideological and institutional framework.⁷⁾

As the Cold War ended, liberal democracy emerged as the predominant and standard political regime in the 1990s. Concurrently, neoliberalism, or a market-oriented economy, supplanted socialist economic models and gained global prominence. Simultaneously, the United Nations, a quintessential liberal international organization, witnessed a significant expansion of its role in global affairs. Its involvement spanned human rights, humanitarianism, environmental issues, and even peacekeeping operations in conflict zones. As Ikenberry (2020: xii) contends, liberal internationalist cooperation persists in addressing existential threats and mutual vulnerabilities. This narrative encapsulates the liberal trajectory of the 1990s, which has endured into the twenty-first century, perpetuating the global liberal order.

It is intriguing to observe that, regardless of ideological orientation, the concept of liberalism has garnered widespread acceptance since the late twentieth century. Liberalism has evolved into a global currency, to the extent that globalization itself is often viewed as the “international face of neoliberalism” (Ward and England, 2007: 12). However, the narrative of liberalism and globalization in Southeast Asia presents a somewhat distinct tale.

Regional Order

For over half a century following the conclusion of the Asia-Pacific War, the United States played a pivotal role in shaping the order in Southeast Asia. It

7) Liberal democracy has not universally prevailed as the predominant form of democracy, even within Western European nations. Instead, many countries adopted variations such as social democracy or Christian democracy (Hogwood & Roberts, 2005).

emphasized the defense of liberal values in response to communist expansionism in the region. This emphasis on defending liberal values, though peculiar, demonstrated a continuity from liberal colonial discourses dating back to the nineteenth century (Knapman, Milner, and Quilty, 2018). Following Japan's defeat in 1945, the United States supplanted Britain as the regional and global hegemon, assuming a leading role in shaping politics in Southeast Asia. Initially, Southeast Asia was not considered a region of significant strategic importance for U.S. global strategy. However, as the post-colonial era dawned, the United States gradually assumed a more prominent role in the region. While initially collaborating closely with Britain as a junior partner, the United States took over the role of creating and stabilizing a regional order when Britain eventually withdrew as the regional hegemon due to financial constraints. The U.S.-led Southeast Asian order was characterized by bilateral security ties, multilateral groupings, substantial economic aid, and a "planned" economy. This American hegemony unfolded within the context of the Cold War in Asia. In turn, the Cold War in Asia exerted profound influences on domestic political, social, and cultural realities across Asian countries (Vu and Wongsurawat, 2009).

The emergence of local Communist uprisings and unrest in Indonesia, Malaya, Vietnam, and the Philippines in the late 1940s compelled the United States to become politically and economically engaged in the region. The pivotal moment came in October 1949 when China established a communist regime, intensifying the regional Communist threat and prompting increased U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. Against the backdrop of the Cold War against communism, the United States shifted its stance towards the region, recognizing it as a major strategic interest. From the 1950s onwards, it became imperative for the U.S. to reorganize the regional liberal order within the context of the global and regional Cold War. The creation of a "Free Asia" emerged as the primary American regional policy in Asia (Acharya, 2012: 105-148).

In alignment with U.S. policies towards Southeast Asia, a regional security architecture was established, comprising both multilateral regional defense organizations and a network of bilateral security arrangements. One such organization was the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), formed through the Southeast Asia Collective Defence Treaty signed in Manila on 8

September 1954 and became effective on 19 February 1955. Original members included Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The timing of SEATO's establishment held significance within the regional context, as the treaty was signed just two months after the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, marking the conclusion of the First Indochina War. SEATO formally expired on 30 June 1977, two years after the conclusion of the Second Indochina War or Vietnam War. SEATO emerged as a response to demands from the U.S. and Britain to defend Southeast Asia against communist expansionism (Fenton, 2012). A similar function was assumed by ASEAN in 1967, although it lacked its security arrangement.

Rather than relying solely on regional collective security arrangements, the United States pursued a pragmatic approach to addressing perceived communist threats through a network of bilateral security alliances stretching from Japan to Thailand. This network, known as the "San Francisco System", originated from the U.S. initiative to establish a regional bilateral defense network during the Japan peace conference held in San Francisco in September 1951. At the conference, the United States signed separate defense accords with Australia/New Zealand, Japan, and the Philippines. These accords were further complemented by additional bilateral defense pacts with South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand (Tow, 1991).

In the context of Southeast Asia, it is noteworthy to highlight the cases of the Philippines and Thailand, both of which held significant strategic importance in the U.S. military strategy due to their geopolitical positioning and perceived external threats, particularly from China and the Soviet Union. The Philippines, being a former U.S. colony, entered a series of treaties with the United States, including the 1947 Military Bases Agreement, the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, and the 1953 Mutual Defense Agreement. Throughout the Cold War, Subic Bay and Clark Air Base served as two pivotal U.S. installations aimed at containing communist threats in the region. However, the United States' basing presence was terminated in 1991. Subsequently, in February 1998, the U.S. and the Philippines concluded the Visiting Forces Agreement, which facilitated increased military cooperation under the Mutual Defense Treaty of

1951.

Throughout its history, Thailand has maintained its independence by skillfully balancing its relations with external powers. Initially serving as a buffer country amidst the rivalry between Britain and France in the late nineteenth century, Thailand was compelled to adjust its diplomatic policy in 1954. The incursion of Ho Chi Minh's Vietnamese communist forces into large areas of Laos prompted the Thai government to join SEATO, aiming to deter potential Viet Minh forays into its territory. As the Vietnam War escalated, the United States and Thailand solidified their relationship with the Thanat-Rusk communiqué in 1962. However, with the end of the Cold War, Thailand's security concerns shifted towards more local issues. While the U.S. defense tie remains a part of its overall strategy, it no longer holds the dominant position. Nonetheless, the bilateral military training exercise known as Cobra Gold, initiated in 1982, continues to enhance coordination between the armed forces of the U.S. and Thailand, encompassing both hostile military operations and humanitarian efforts. In the twenty-first century, Cobra Gold has expanded to include 27 nations, as of 2020, incorporating countries such as Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and other South Asian and Pacific Ocean nations. Furthermore, another significant development in the U.S.-Thailand strategic alliance occurred in 2003 when the U.S. designated Thailand as a major non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally. This designation was reinforced in 2012 with the pronouncement of the Joint Vision Statement for the Thai-U.S. Defense Alliance, which serves as the foundation for U.S. security commitments to Thailand (Emmers, 2020).

Over the decades, the United States has assumed a hegemonic role in the region, characterized by its provision of military security, endorsement of stability, promotion of open markets, and cultivation of alliances and political partnerships. In essence, the United States exported security while importing goods, shaping a distinctive form of liberalism in Southeast Asia as a result of its post-war engagement in the region.

Political and Economic Order

Creating “Free Asia” in the 1950s and beyond necessitated a specific political formula. To “contain” communist threats, the United States persuaded its allies to host its overseas military bases in Asia, including Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. However, it became evident that military might alone was insufficient to address domestic communist threats in Southeast Asia.

When the United States committed itself to “underdeveloped” regions, the so-called modernization theory gained prominence within the American academic community. This theory seeks to elucidate the process by which a “traditional” society evolves into a “modern” one. It posits that as societies develop, economic growth and social change reinforce each other, eventually leading to the establishment of democracy. Influential modernization scholars, such as W.W. Rostow, notably argued that societies transitioning from traditional to modern forms would follow a similar trajectory. Rostow, an American economist and foreign policy adviser to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, authored the seminal work *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* in 1960, which became a foundational text in various fields of social science (Chirot and Hall, 1982: 82).

According to the modernization theory, the United States implemented extensive economic aid to the region, accompanied by political and military support for individual governments. One notable case was Thailand, which served as a front line against Vietnamese communist forces. In 1957, a military coup d'état occurred, leading to Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat replacing Pleak Phibunsongkhram (also known as Phibun) as prime minister. The United States not only backed the Sarit administration but also provided substantial economic and military assistance. Developing the Thai economy was deemed essential in addressing the domestic communist threat (Glassman, 2020). Moreover, both the U.S. government and private institutions offered scholarships to talented young Thais to study economics at American colleges. Upon completing their studies, these individuals returned to Thailand and embarked on careers as economic technocrats and advisers to the government (Stifel, 1976; Baker and Pasuk, 2014).⁸⁾ They were well-versed in the economic policy “language” and “grammar” utilized

by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.⁹⁾ Consequently, Thailand adopted an anti-communist developmental authoritarianism approach.

Since the 1960s, the United States has explicitly supported developmental authoritarianism in Southeast Asia. Comparable political regimes emerged in Indonesia (under Soeharto's New Order, 1967–1998), Singapore (under Lee Kuan Yew's leadership or the PAP government, 1965–present), Malaysia following the racial riots of 1969 (1969–2018), and during the second Marcos administration in the Philippines (1972–1986). With U.S. engagement, a new local ruling class emerged in each country, facilitated by the development of military-industrial complexes (Glassman, 2018).¹⁰⁾ Under developmental authoritarianism, each government successfully attracted foreign direct investments and achieved high economic performance. Their economic policies were stable and open to the global market. To maintain this stability, substantial resources were allocated to controlling the population, which experienced limited political freedom. This was necessary to assure foreign investors of the government's stability and strength.

With the exception of the Philippines, which underwent the “people's revolution” in 1986, developmental authoritarian governments in the region survived the economic crisis of the 1980s and became increasingly integrated into the global economy (Robison, Higgott, and Hewison, 1987). Economic policy elites adeptly managed the crisis with guidance from their donors. Faced with the economic turmoil experienced by Latin American countries, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the U.S. Treasury

8) They were commonly referred to as the “Berkeley Mafia” in the context of Indonesia, or by different monikers depending on the universities they attended in the U.S. The autonomy and influence of economic technocrats in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines have been explored by various scholars (Raquiza, 2012; Amir, 2012; Fakhri, 2020; Simpson, 2008; Claudio, 2017).

9) In the post-World War II era, both the World Bank and IMF embraced Keynesian economic principles and disseminated them on a global scale, effectively establishing what is known as global Keynesianism (Mosley, 1998).

10) Tadem (2019) provides an analysis of the ascent and fall of technocrats and a power elite in the Philippines.

devised a new plan, later termed the “Washington Consensus”.¹¹⁾ This consensus encompassed a set of neoliberal or free-market economic policies, designed and endorsed by international financial institutions. The Washington Consensus advocated structural reforms for developing countries grappling with economic crises in the 1980s. It encouraged the adoption of policies such as free-floating exchange rates, free trade, privatization of state-owned enterprises, relaxation of regulations on foreign direct investment, and the removal of barriers restricting competition. Additionally, it included political conditions such as anti-corruption measures, transparency in policymaking processes, and the promotion of free and fair elections. These structural reform programs mandated that governments adopt a set of neoliberal policies both politically and economically. The same “remedy” was prescribed to Southeast Asia.

Accepting structural reform programs, Southeast Asian nations became increasingly exposed to the global financial market, marking the onset of globalization in the region. The implementation of structural reforms proved successful in each country, resulting in impressive economic performance. In 1993, the World Bank lauded these achievements by publishing a book titled *The East Asia Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*. This publication analyzed the impact of neoliberal public policies on the remarkable economic growth, enhanced human welfare, and more equitable income distribution in the region. It specifically examined the experiences of eight high-performing Asian economies, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

Neoliberal economic arrangements necessitate both regional and global frameworks, and in Southeast Asia, ASEAN has played a pivotal role in this regard. Initially formed in 1967 as an anti-communist regional organization, ASEAN comprised Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines as its original five members. The geopolitical landscape at the time compelled these authoritarian governments to establish ASEAN. However, by the conclusion of the Vietnam War in 1975, regional dynamics had shifted significantly. ASEAN member nations had demonstrated substantial economic

11) The term “Washington Consensus” was initially introduced by economist John Williamson in his seminal article from 1990 (Williamson, 1990).

development in the first half of the 1970s, prompting the organization to hold its inaugural summit meeting in 1976. This meeting resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, alongside agreements on various industrial projects. Seventeen years later, in 1993, ASEAN commenced the establishment of its free trade zone, known as the AFTA.

Signing free trade agreements represents the establishment of a state-initiated trade framework. By 1993, the original five members of ASEAN had already reformed their political and economic systems in line with neoliberal arrangements guided by the IMF and World Bank. These neoliberal arrangements prioritized the market economy. Throughout the 1990s, the original ASEAN nations demonstrated strong economic performance. However, when ASEAN expanded its membership to include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam by the end of the 1990s, the economic disparities among ASEAN nations became apparent. Consequently, the four latecomers were also required to adopt neoliberal policies to align with various regional economic arrangements and catch up with the rest of the ASEAN member states.

It is ironic to note that the relative success of Southeast Asian nations in adjusting to the globalizing political and economic landscape can be attributed to the existence of strong and stable developmental authoritarian regimes in the region, along with the formation of robust political and economic coalitions. As a result, neoliberalism as a political project has firmly taken root in Southeast Asian countries. This form of neoliberalism can be seen as a variant of traditional conservative political ideas, characterized by a hyper-capitalist perspective on the production and distribution of wealth.

Democracy or Oligarchy

However, the region suffered an unexpected blow at the end of the 1990s with the onset of the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Integration into the global market proved to be a vulnerable point for countries in the region. The crisis originated in Thailand, where its currency, the baht, collapsed against the U.S. dollar. Subsequently, the monetary and financial crisis spread to Thailand's neighboring countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, and South Korea. While

Thailand managed to survive with massive loans from China and acceptance of severe conditions imposed by the IMF, Malaysia was aided by the Japanese government without IMF intervention. Indonesia, however, experienced significant political upheaval and social unrest, culminating in the collapse of the three-decade-long Soeharto regime in May 1998. This collapse paved the way for the democratization of the country's political system. The era of developmental authoritarianism, which had prevailed since the 1960s, appeared to be ending, and the regional order transformed with the rise of China and the shifting position of the United States. It seemed that the age of democratization had arrived in the region.

This regime shift toward democracy is closely associated with trade liberalization, which became imperative for each government. By this time, neoliberal policies and institutions had become deeply embedded in individual countries. During the process of democratization, there was a strong emphasis on installing fair, free, and open elections, which led to several expected as well as unexpected turns in the political landscape.

First, the demise of authoritarian regimes opened the door to a democratic atmosphere that demanded responsible and accountable governance. The political economy of each country in Southeast Asia has given rise to "a range of social forces that act strategically to contest for power through efforts to promote different kinds of institutional reform" (Rodan and Hughes, 2014: v). The critical and outspoken civil society that emerged under authoritarian regimes continued to play a watchdog role over government performance. In countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia, governments began to involve civil society in policymaking processes.

Second, unforeseen conditions during the transition to democratic governance led to undemocratic outcomes. This occurred because democratization opened a new market known as politics, where a small group of extremely wealthy and well-connected individuals began to secure significant positions in public offices. While these individuals may be formally elected and some may even be active in civil society, the issue arises from their networks, which often exhibit continuity from the previous regime (Shiraishi and Abinales, 2005). These networks have been reinforced by neoliberal arrangements over

time, highlighting that neoliberalism tends to favor the interests of the rich, the established, and the powerful. As noted by Rodan and Hughes (2014: v), “morally conservative ideologies are much more important than liberalism and democracy in shaping demands for accountability and responses to them”.

Among other new trends, a new type of politician has emerged since the 1990s: businesspersons who transition into politics.¹²⁾ Typical examples include Thaksin Shinawatra, who served as the Prime Minister of Thailand from 2001 to 2006, and Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia from 2014 to the present. Through elections, they often bring their families into politics, establishing their dynasties. In this manner, elections can become political machines used to reproduce oligarchical networks. Political parties strive to maintain their vested interests, and politicians prioritize their reelection. This situation has resulted in the emergence of much-criticized oligarchies in many Southeast Asian countries (Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019; Ford and Pepinsky, 2014; Hadiz and Robison, 2004; Quimpo, 2009; Simbulan, 2006; Winters, 2011).

Third, due to neoliberal economic policies since the 1980s, the economic administrative apparatus has continued to hold a strong position within governments. This apparatus is crucial for maintaining steady economic development and fostering internationally cooperative economic relations. Despite internal economic disparities, ASEAN inaugurated the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in January 2016. The AEC aims to establish a single market and production base for the free flow of goods, services, investment, capital, and skilled labor within the region. The AEC hopes to attract increased investment opportunities from multinational corporations. It remains unclear if the AEC’s ambitious goals can be fully achieved, but the

12) During the era of developmental authoritarianism, the military played a significant role in politics in countries such as Indonesia and Thailand. However, a new breed of politicians emerged, drawing inspiration from American electoral practices. They introduced innovative tactics in their political campaigns, including the appointment of professional campaign managers, establishment of public relations teams, utilization of media campaigns, and emphasis on appealing to public opinion (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). These novel political strategies gradually became conventional and contributed to the rise of populism during election periods.

effort itself demonstrates ASEAN's deep engagement in neoliberal global economic circumstances (Macdonald, 2019). Nevertheless, Southeast Asian governments still engage in partial trade and investment liberalization. They selectively maintain protective tariffs and non-tariff barriers, despite pledging to join the global capitalist economy and adopting economic reform agendas to enhance competitiveness. These ambivalent attitudes towards economic liberalization, both regionally and nationally, have been facilitated by preferential and gradual trade cooperation agreements among ASEAN states through regional and bilateral institutional frameworks that do not encompass comprehensive liberalization and reform agendas (Carroll, Hameiri, and Jones, 2020).

Fourth, the presence of China has become increasingly evident in many facets of society over the past two decades (Storey, 2013). The Asian financial crisis paved the way for China to expand its influence in the region. Since then, China has made aggressive investments in Southeast Asia, leading to a significant increase in its economic influence. For example, to enhance ASEAN-China economic relations, the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) was established in 2002. The ACFTA commits all participating nations to ongoing market liberalization efforts. As a result, the proliferation of "cheap" Chinese products in local markets has been notable, with citizens enthusiastically consuming them. Additionally, numerous large-scale public projects funded by Chinese official aid have been initiated, providing job opportunities for many workers. Since 2014, Chinese investment in the region has surged due to the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative by the Chinese government (Emmerson, 2020).

With the turn of the twenty-first century, Southeast Asia witnessed a dream of democratization, aspiring to build liberal democracies in the region. However, a significant and somewhat contradictory development occurred, ironically facilitating a form of neoliberal democratization in relevant countries. This was driven by regional security concerns, particularly in the aftermath of the U.S.-led "War on Terror". In 2002, the U.S. government identified Southeast Asia as the second front in its war on terror. A series of terrorist attacks orchestrated by groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda, such as Jemaah Islamiyah, occurred in

Indonesia and the Philippines from 2002 to 2005.

As a response, counter-terrorism security arrangements and institutionalization became top political priorities. The U.S. and Australian governments, in particular, collaborated to bolster anti-terrorist security measures in Indonesia and the Philippines. Meanwhile, Singapore and Malaysia utilized their internal security acts to contain terrorist activities and plots.¹³⁾ Consequently, the political discourse gradually shifted from democracy or democratization to stability and social order.¹⁴⁾ Under this new security paradigm, a new national and regional security order began to take root from the mid-2000s onwards. Despite these security concerns, embedded neoliberal projects continued to thrive at both domestic and regional levels, reflecting the complex interplay between security imperatives and neoliberal economic agendas.

People's Voice?

Under developmental authoritarianism, economic performance thrived in Southeast Asia from the 1980s onwards. Concurrently, there emerged a shift in societal dynamics with the adoption of neoliberal policies from the Washington Consensus. A new segment of society, known as the “new rich”, began to form (Goodman and Robison, 1996). This group comprised the middle class and consumers who represented emerging markets for Western products such as processed foods, computer software, educational services, and media content.

The new rich not only consumed Western products but also embraced the

13) It is noteworthy that Singapore was the first country to release its white paper in 2003 detailing the government's strategies for thwarting terrorist plots (Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs, 2003). By January 2002, the Singaporean government had announced the apprehension of Jemaah Islamiyah affiliated members within the country in December of the previous year—through coordinated but separate simultaneous raids with the Malaysian authorities—marking the onset of frequent reports on terrorist-related activities until March 2002 (Yamamoto, 2016a).

14) In the mid-2000s, policymakers and scholars shifted their focus toward social order and control (Yamamoto, 2016b). This trend led to an increase in the study of oligarchy, as mentioned earlier in this section.

values of freedom and individuality associated with the neoliberal Washington Consensus. By 2020, a second generation of the new rich had emerged in urban Southeast Asia, composed of both upper and middle classes (see also Shiraishi and Pasuk 2008). This demographic segment became the primary consumers of new products and technology and had easy access to global public culture and ideas facilitated by social media platforms. While some individuals from this group became active in NGO activities, others remained politically disengaged. Nonetheless, their emergence marked a significant socio-economic transformation in Southeast Asia, driven by the adoption of neoliberal economic policies and the associated cultural shifts towards consumerism and individualism.

Indeed, the shift towards neoliberal policies in the 1980s, guided by advice from institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, brought about changes in political currents within developmental authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia (Ford 2012). There was an increasing emphasis on procedural and rights-based rule of law, signaling a departure from the previous regime's tight control over personal freedoms. This shift created space for new voices advocating for pluralism and greater accountability of those in power. These new voices emerged against the backdrop of a changing political and social landscape, where the push for personal freedom gained traction. The promotion of procedural democracy and the rule of law became integral parts of the discourse, leading to a growing demand for greater political participation and protection of individual rights. This marked a significant departure from the authoritarian tendencies of the past and paved the way for a more open and pluralistic political environment in Southeast Asia.

The period following the Asian financial crisis and political regime changes saw a significant increase in social activism across Southeast Asia, driven by various crises and growing awareness of inequality within national boundaries. Workers, peasants, and other marginalized groups began to raise their voices, contributing to a more vibrant public discourse.

One notable development during this time is the emergence of transnational networks among activists, allowing them to establish connections with counterparts in developed countries. The widespread availability of

smartphones, particularly since 2008, has further facilitated communication and information-sharing among citizens, transcending traditional boundaries imposed by mass media (George and Venkiteswaran 2019).¹⁵⁾ With the rise of social media platforms, political engagement has taken on a new dimension, blending elements of entertainment and consumption.¹⁶⁾ Elections, in the case of Indonesia, have become highly anticipated events, often dubbed “*pesta demokrasi*” (democracy festival),¹⁷⁾ as citizens actively participate in the political process. This shift reflects a broader trend towards increased civic engagement and the democratization of political discourse in Southeast Asia.

The discontent with neoliberal and oligarchical political and economic systems in Southeast Asia has led to growing protests and expressions of dissatisfaction among citizens. Recent elections in countries like Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines have seen widespread protests, with citizens taking to the streets to challenge the electoral process or contest the election results. These protests reflect a deep-seated distrust in the formal electoral process, which many perceive as favoring the wealthy and well-connected. Some protesters question the legitimacy of the electoral outcomes, feeling that their aspirations are not represented by the existing political parties or electoral system. As a result, they seek alternative channels to voice their concerns and demands, often resorting to street demonstrations and other forms of non-institutional political activism. This phenomenon highlights a crisis within liberal democracy, particularly in its reliance on elections and parliamentary systems to uphold democratic principles. The disconnect between citizens and political institutions underscores the need for meaningful reforms to address systemic inequalities and restore trust in the democratic process.

15) This trend has spurred the emergence of various forms of social activism. However, it is also worth noting that the dissemination of disinformation through social media platforms has the potential to incite social unrest and disorder (Sinpeng & Tapsell, 2020).

16) Simultaneously, there exists a peril associated with social media usage. While individuals believe they are selecting their preferred information, algorithms embedded within platforms dictate much of the content they encounter (Lim, 2017).

17) It is ironic that the term “*pesta demokrasi*” (democracy festival) was originally coined by the authoritarian Soeharto regime in 1982 (Pemberton, 1994: 5).

The responses of Southeast Asian governments to public discontent have varied widely. Some governments have adopted a conciliatory approach, as seen in Indonesia's response to protests against proposed revisions to the criminal code and fuel price hikes. Others have taken a more authoritarian stance, such as the Cambodian government under Hun Sen, which banned opposition parties and imprisoned opposition politicians ahead of both the 2018 and 2023 general elections.

Across the region, the priority for governments remains maintaining social order and promoting economic development. While these goals may align with some liberal values, such as stability and prosperity, they often come at the expense of human rights and democratic principles. Issues related to human rights are often sidelined or ignored by governments in Southeast Asia, as they focus on maintaining power and economic growth. This approach reflects a pragmatic view of governance that prioritizes stability and development over individual freedoms and rights.

The trend of executive power overshadowing the legislature and judiciary in Southeast Asia over the last decade is indeed concerning. This concentration of power often reflects the influence of oligarchical networks, where a small group of wealthy and well-connected individuals hold significant sway over government affairs. As a result, despite citizens' efforts to voice their concerns, their grievances may not always be effectively addressed by the government. One notable consequence of this imbalance of power is the lack of meaningful dialogue between citizens and the government. While citizens may raise their voices through protests, social media, or other means, there may be limited avenues for constructive engagement with government authorities. This can lead to a sense of frustration and alienation among the populace, as their concerns go unaddressed while the government continues with its usual operations.

Addressing this issue requires efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote transparency and accountability in governance, and ensure that the voices of citizens are heard and respected. Additionally, fostering a culture of dialogue and collaboration between government officials and civil society organizations can help bridge the gap between the state and its citizens, leading to more responsive and inclusive governance.

Conclusion

In the era of neoliberalism and globalization, institutions reflecting neoliberal principles have become prevalent at various levels of governance. These institutions operate at the international, regional, and national levels, shaping policies and practices related to governance and economic management. At the domestic level, governments face significant challenges in governing society within the framework of market-oriented capitalism. They must navigate how to effectively regulate markets while also meeting the diverse demands of their citizens. This balance is crucial for ensuring economic growth and social stability.

Internationally and regionally, collaboration among governments is essential to engage with the neoliberal capitalist economy. FTAs are a primary example of inter-governmental agreements that directly impact people's daily lives. When governments sign and implement FTAs with their counterparts, they commit to opening and deregulating their markets and economies under the terms of the agreement. This often involves reducing tariffs, eliminating trade barriers, and promoting investment flows between countries. Overall, the rise of neoliberal institutions underscores the interconnectedness of governance and economic policies in the contemporary world. Governments must adapt to the imperatives of global capitalism while also addressing the needs and concerns of their citizens to ensure sustainable development and prosperity.

In the context of Southeast Asia, ASEAN plays a significant role in promoting neoliberalism through its advocacy of free trade and open market policies among its member states. Despite political changes that may occur within individual member countries, the institutional arrangements established to pursue neoliberal policies remain intact. This continuity enables oligarchical networks to maintain their influence, even as democratization efforts are ostensibly underway in Southeast Asian nations. However, many citizens in the region do not perceive neoliberal policies as beneficial to them. They voice their concerns about the entrenched socio-economic disparities perpetuated by these policies and challenge the influence of oligarchical networks. This discontent among citizens reflects a growing awareness of the need for greater

accountability and transparency in governance.

Despite these challenges, there is hope in the age of neoliberalism, as citizens increasingly recognize their role in the policy-making process and seek to actively participate in shaping governance decisions. By engaging with political processes and advocating for their interests, citizens can exert pressure on governments to address socioeconomic inequalities and prioritize the needs of the broader population. As for the governability of governments in Southeast Asia, the continued pressure from citizens and civil society organizations presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Governments must navigate the demands of neoliberal economic frameworks while also responding to the aspirations of their citizens for more inclusive and equitable governance. Effective governability in this context requires governments to strike a delicate balance between market-driven policies and social welfare considerations, all while fostering greater transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 served as a critical test of government governability in Southeast Asia and globally.¹⁸⁾ Except for Singapore, which had previous experience with the SARS crisis in 2003, most countries in the region were ill-prepared to effectively contain the pandemic. The rapid spread of the virus drastically altered daily life for people across the region, with disproportionate impacts on the poor and marginalized populations. The pandemic highlighted the limitations of neoliberal policies and institutions in responding to a crisis of such magnitude. National governments were forced to implement new regulations and seek international collaborative support to contain the spread of the virus and mitigate its impacts. In many cases, the traditional mechanisms of neoliberal governance proved inadequate in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by the pandemic.

Despite the shortcomings of neoliberalism in addressing crises, its ideas and institutions continue to influence governance in Southeast Asia. This raises

18) Yamamoto (2023) compiles a five-country case study on the initial impact of COVID-19 in East and Southeast Asia, encompassing Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

significant questions regarding the alignment of neoliberal values with the imperatives of crisis response and management. During times of crisis, core liberal values such as liberty, equality, solidarity, respect, identity, justice, and community often face strain as governments prioritize emergency measures and collective action over individual freedoms. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the urgent need for a reevaluation of governance frameworks in Southeast Asia and beyond, ensuring they are resilient and adaptive in the face of unforeseen challenges. This necessitates a reassessment of the balance between market-oriented policies and social welfare considerations, along with a renewed emphasis on democratic accountability, transparency, and citizen participation in decision-making processes. While the response to the COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly raised significant questions about the role of governance in safeguarding liberal values, the outcomes of various national-level elections during and after the pandemic do not seem to support this notion. Instead, there appears to be a consolidation of oligarchical governance or oligarchical democracy in many Southeast Asian nations.¹⁹⁾

References

- Acharya, Amitav. 2012. *The Making of Southeast Asia: International Relations of a Region*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Amir, Sulfikar. 2012. *The Technological State in Indonesia: The Co-constitution of High Technology and Authoritarian Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1988. "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams". *New Left Review*, 169: 3-31.
- Aspinall, Edward and Ward Berenschot. 2019. *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.
- Ba, Alice D. and Mark Beeson, eds. 2018. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: The Politics of Change, Contestation, and Adaptation*. Third edition. London: Palgrave.
- Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit. 2014. *A History of Thailand*. Third edition.

19) Vergara (2020) provides insights into understanding the current political trend of oligarchical governance or oligarchical democracy.

"Liberal" Transformations in Southeast Asia

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Burchell, Graham. 1991. "Peculiar Interests: Civil Society and 'Governing the System of Natural Liberty'". In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 119-150.
- Callaghan, John, Brendon O'Connor and Mark Phythian. 2019. *Ideologies of American Foreign Policy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Carroll, Toby, Shahar Hameiri, and Lee Jones. eds. 2020. *The Political Economy of Southeast Asia: Politics and Uneven Development under Hyperglobalisation*. 4th edition. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Case, William. ed. 2010. *Contemporary Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia: Structures, Institutions and Agency*. New York: Routledge.
- Chirot, Daniel and Thomas D. Hall. 1982. "World-System Theory". *Annual Review of Sociology* 8(1): 81-106.
- Claudio, Lisandro E. 2017. *Liberalism and the Postcolony: Thinking the State in 20th-century Philippines*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1972. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Emmers, Ralf. 2020. "Power Transition and Traditional Allies in Southeast Asia". In *America's Allies and the Decline of US Hegemony*, edited by Justin Massie and Jonathan Paquin. London: Routledge, pp. 110-125.
- Emmerson, Donald K. ed. 2020. *The Deer and the Dragon: Southeast Asia and China in the 21st Century*. Stanford: The Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University.
- Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica. [cited 10 February 2024] Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neoconservatism>.
- Fakih, Farabi. 2020. *Authoritarian Modernization in Indonesia's Early Independence Period: The Foundation of the New Order State (1950-1965)*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Fenton, Damien. 2012. *To Cage the Red Dragon: SEATO and the Defense of Southeast Asia, 1955-1965*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Ford, Michele ed. 2012. *Social Activism in Southeast Asia*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Ford, Michele and Thomas B. Pepinsky eds. 2014. *Beyond Oligarchy: Wealth, Power, and Contemporary Indonesian Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program.
- Foucault, Michel. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics*. Trans. by Graham Burchell. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freeden, Michael. 2015. *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1989. "The End of History?". *National Interest* 16: 3-18.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
- Gargarella, Roberto. 2010. *The Legal Foundations of Inequality: Constitutionalism in the Americas, 1776-1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- George, Cherian and Gayathri Venkiteswaran. 2019. *Media and Power in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gershman, John. 2002. "Is Southeast Asia the Second Front?". *Foreign Affairs* 81(4): 60-74.
- Glassman, Jim. 2018. *Drums of War, Drums of Development: The Formation of a Pacific Ruling Class and Industrial Transformation in East and Southeast Asia, 1945-1980*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Glassman, Jim. 2020. "Lineages of the Authoritarian State in Thailand: Military Dictatorship, Lazy Capitalism and the Cold War Past as Post-Cold War Prologue". *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 50(4): 571-592.
- Goodman, David and Richard Robison. eds. 1996. *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonald's and Middle Class Revolution*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Gottfried, Shelly. 2019. *Contemporary Oligarchies in Developed Democracies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hadiz, Vedi and Richard Robison. 2004. *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets*. London: Routledge.
- Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hogwood, Patricia and Geoffrey K. Roberts. 2005. *European Politics Today*. Second edition. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hydén, Göran and John Samuel. 2011. *Making the State Responsive: Experience with*

- Democratic Governance Assessments*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- Ikenberry, G. John. 2020. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kashwan, Prakash, Lauren M. Maclean, Gustavo A. García-López. 2019. "Rethinking Power and Institutions in the Shadows of Neoliberalism". *World Development*, 120: 133-146.
- Knapman, Gareth, Anthony Milner, and Mary Quilty eds. 2018. *Liberalism and the British Empire in Southeast Asia*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Lim, Merlyna. 2017. "Freedom to Hate: Social Media, Algorithmic Enclaves, and the Rise of Tribal Nationalism in Indonesia". *Critical Asian Studies* 49(3): 411-427.
- Macdonald, Roderick. 2019. "Southeast Asia and the AEC: An Introduction". In *Southeast Asia and the ASEAN Economic Community*, edited by Roderick Macdonald. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-37.
- Morgenbesser, Lee. 2017. *Behind the Façade: Elections under Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Mosley, Paul. 1998. "The World Bank, 'Global Keynesianism' and the Distribution of the Gains from Growth". In *Development Economics and Policy*, edited by David Sapsford and John-ren Chen. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 377-388.
- Pemberton, John. 1994. *On the Subject of "Java"*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Postill, John. 2014. "A Critical History of Internet Activism and Social Protest in Malaysia, 1998-2011". *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 1(1-2): 78-103.
- Quimpo, Nathan G. 2009. "The Philippines: Predatory Regime, Growing Authoritarian Features". *The Pacific Review* 22(3), 335-353.
- Raquiza, Antoinette R. 2012. *State Structure, Policy Formation, and Economic Development in Southeast Asia: The Political Economy of Thailand and the Philippines*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Regilme Jr., Salvador Santino F. 2023. "Constitutional Order in Oligarchic Democracies: Neoliberal Rights versus Socio-Economic Rights". *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 19(1): 126-143.
- Robison, Richard, Richard Higgott, and Kevin Hewison. 1987. "Crisis in Economic Strategy in the 1980s: The Factors at Work". In *South East Asia in the 1980s: The*

- Politics of Economic Crisis*, edited by Richard Robison, Kevin Hewison and Richard Higgott. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, pp. 1-15.
- Rodan, Garry and Caroline Hughes. 2014. *The Politics of Accountability in Southeast Asia: The Dominance of Moral Ideologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rostow, W.W. 1960. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Shiraishi, Takashi and Patricio N. Abinales eds. 2005. *After the Crisis: Hegemony, Technocracy and Governance in Southeast Asia*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.
- Shiraishi, Takashi and Pasuk Phongpaichit eds. 2008. *The Rise of the Middle Classes in Southeast Asia*. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.
- Simbulan, Dante C. 2006. *The Modern Principalia: The Historical Evolution of the Philippine Ruling Oligarchy*. Manila: University of the Philippines Press.
- Simpson, Bradley R. 2008. *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs. 2003. *White Paper on the Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism*. Singapore.
- Sinpeng, Aim and Ross Tapsell eds. 2020. *From Grassroots Activism to Disinformation: Social Media in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute.
- Stifel, Laurence D. 1976. "Technocrats and Modernization in Thailand". *Asian Survey* 16(12): 1184-1196.
- Storey, Ian. 2013. *Southeast Asia and the Rise of China*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Tadem, Teresa S. Encarnacion. 2019. *Philippine Politics and the Marcos Technocrats: The Emergence and Evolution of a Power Elite*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Tan, Andrew T.H. 2011. *Security Strategies in the Asia-Pacific: The United States' "Second Front" in Southeast Asia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- The World Bank. 1993. *The East Asia Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*. Washington: World Bank.
- Thompson, Mark R. 2020. "Explaining Duterte's Rise and Rule: "Penal Populist" Leadership or a Structural Crisis of Oligarchic Democracy in the Philippines?". *Philippine Political Science Journal* 41(1-2): 5-31.
- Tow, William T. 1991. *Encountering the Dominant Player: U.S. Extended Deterrence*

- Strategy in the Asia-Pacific*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tyner, James A. 2007. *America's Strategy in Southeast Asia: From the Cold War to the Terror War*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Vergara, Camila. 2020. *Systemic Corruption: Constitutional Ideas for an Anti-Oligarchic Republic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Vu, Tuong and Wasana Wongsurawat. eds. 2009. *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ward, Kevin and Kim England. 2007. "Introduction: Reading Neoliberalism". In *Neoliberalization: States, Networks, Peoples*, edited by Kim England and Kevin Ward. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 1-24.
- Weiss, Meredith L. 2020. *The Roots of Resilience: Party Machines and Grassroots Politics in Southeast Asia*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.
- Williamson, John. 1990. "What Washington Means by Policy Reform". In *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?*, edited by John Williamson. Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, pp. 7-20.
- Winters, Jeffrey A. 2011. *Oligarchy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yamamoto, Nobuto. 2016a. "Genkan-guchi made Yattekita Terrorism: Singapore, 2002nen 1gatsu" [Terrorism has Landed on Our Doorstep: Singapore, January 2002]. (in Japanese) *Journal of Law, Politics, and Sociology* 89(2): 113-136.
- Yamamoto, Nobuto. 2016b. "Dai-Ni Sensen toshite no Tonan-Ajia: Tai-Tero-Senso no Tonan-Ajia-ka" [Southeast Asia as the Second Front: Southeast Asianization of the War on Terror]. (in Japanese) *Journal of Law, Politics, and Sociology* 89(3): 35-67.
- Yamamoto, Nobuto. 2022. "Cooperation and Competition: The Dynamics of Regional Order in Southeast Asia". *Journal of Law, Politics, and Sociology* 95(5): 1-28.
- Yamamoto, Nobuto ed. 2023. *The COVID-19 Pandemic and Risks in East Asia: Media, Social Reactions, and Theories*. London: Routledge.