



## INDONESIA-ASEAN INSTITUTIONAL ROLES IN FACING THE CHALLENGE OF THE LIBERAL ORDER CRISIS

Reza Ardiansyah Pradana<sup>1\*</sup>, Wawan Budi Darmawan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Master's Student of International Relations; Universitas Padjadjaran; Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Department of International Relations; Universitas Padjadjaran; Indonesia

\*email: reza22004@mail.unpad.ac.id

### *Abstrak*

*Krisis tatanan liberal internasional telah mengurangi peran dan pengaruh Amerika Serikat di kawasan karena kepemimpinan Donald Trump. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa kompleksitas institusional ASEAN melalui manajemen rivalitas kekuatan besar antara Amerika Serikat dan Cina berhasil. Dengan menggunakan system dynamics terlihat kompleksnya pengaruh tatanan liberal internasional dengan membandingkan persepsi antar kawasan dan kerja sama keamanan yang telah dibentuk untuk menyeimbangkan pengaruh Cina serta menjelaskan peran Indonesia-ASEAN dalam merespons keadaan krisis. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini terletak pada bagaimana tekanan kekuatan besar akan berdampak lebih buruk dan berbahaya sehingga Indonesia-ASEAN, melalui nilai solidaritas, diharapkan akan terus mengelola persaingan kekuatan besar dan bersikap lunak terhadap ancaman yang dirasakan selama krisis tatanan liberal internasional.*

**Kata Kunci:** *institusionalisme ASEAN; krisis tatanan liberal internasional; manajemen rivalitas kekuatan besar; peran regional; persepsi ancaman*

### **Abstract**

The liberal international order crisis has reduced the role and influence of the United States in the region due to Donald Trump's leadership. This study shows that the institutional complexity of ASEAN through the great power rivalry management between the United States and China is successful. By using system dynamics, it can be seen the complexity of the influence of the liberal international order by comparing perceptions between regions and security cooperation that has been formed to balance China's influence and explain the role of Indonesia-ASEAN in responding to crises. The conclusion of this study lies in how the pressure of the big powers will have a worse and more dangerous impact so that Indonesia-ASEAN, through the value of solidarity, is expected to continue to manage great power competition and to be lenient towards the perceived threats during the crisis of the liberal international order.

**Keywords:** *ASEAN's institutionalism; great power's rivalry management; liberal international order crisis; regional role; threat perception*

## Introduction

After the Cold War, the Asian region entered a new phase marked by the clash of superpowers between the United States and China. The clash between the two occurs because of differences in perceptions between security logic and economic logic (Chen & Yang, 2013). The region that feels the heat of this clash or rivalry is East Asia, which is directly correlated with the Southeast Asian region. Regionally, several threats come from China to ASEAN, both regionally and for its member countries, the issue of the South China Sea dispute, the conflict between the United States and China, concerns about regional domination, and the calculation of economic gains and losses from China's threat to ASEAN (Goh, 2007).

The security logic of the United States is based on the experience of world wars and the conflict with the Soviet Union is very nuanced in alliance, while China's increasing military and economic capacity have triggered Asian countries to choose between bandwagoning or balancing which of course will involve external actors outside their region. Through this higher level of conflict, now the United States of America, as the holder of the post-Cold War hegemony, is experiencing setbacks on various fronts and various resistances have emerged from various countries. The decline of the hegemony of the United States is another name for the crisis of the American-led order and the liberal international order.

Liberals believe that the crisis is caused by disorder and disintegration between institutions, norms, rules, security, and trade (Haass, 2017; Ikenberry, 2018). Meanwhile, the perception of this threat is nothing but the clash between the ideologies and socialization methods of the two great powers, namely the United States and China. The increasing capacity and capability of China which adheres to an ideology opposed to the United States is a threat to the world and regional order, therefore discourses on this threat are often analyzed through the extent to which hegemonic stability is effective in maintaining world or regional order.

The paradox and dilemma that connects Indonesia-ASEAN with the liberal international order or the American-led order is the rivalry between the two great powers. The deep cooperation between Indonesia-ASEAN and China and the absence of the United States during Donald Trump's administration in Southeast Asia resulted in the discourse on the depth of the liberal international order crisis widening, efforts to

seek the role of the state and regional institutions to answer the extent to which the deep order crisis was caused by the institutional process in determining and formulating policies have drawn a lot of debate, both for realists, liberals, and constructivists.

Indonesia as a state actor and through its regionalism role with ASEAN always strives to maintain regional stability (Laksmiana, 2017). Deeper and closer economic cooperation with China, as well as Indonesia-ASEAN's, need for the United States regarding security, are linked to territorial threats in the South China Sea. Despite such circumstances, Indonesia remains committed both normatively and pragmatically to free and active politics and remains sensitive to the issue of rivalry between great powers that jeopardizes its security (Gindarsah, 2016).

Indonesia-ASEAN pragmatism is considered a serious threat to liberal circles because it has never taken a firm stance and position. This ambiguity is considered because the commitment of countries in Southeast Asia to liberalism and the leadership of the United States is very lacking. This discursive power seeks to as far as possible influence the attitude of Southeast Asian countries towards China during the liberal international order crisis.

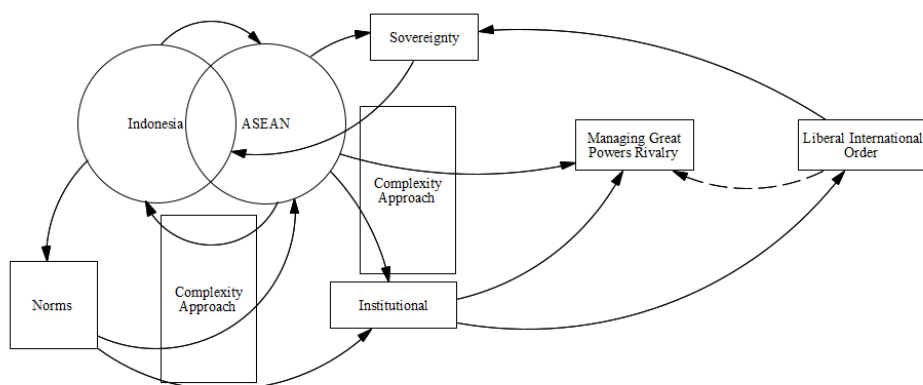
As a regional institution, ASEAN is a practical community that focuses on the realm of diplomacy, ASEAN members are culturally and historically never interested in their traditional external roles, and ASEAN's focus has always been on regional stability and regional security. ASEAN member countries spend a lot of time and energy creating institutional mechanisms that they do not want to protect ASEAN from harm and threats (Davies, 2016). Liberals believe that ASEAN will always build efficient and even trans-regional cooperation to ensure the sustainability of the ASEAN process (He, 2006).

Although the ASEAN process at decisive times did not satisfy Western and Southeast Asian citizens, activists, and academics themselves, ASEAN has always proceeded through formal diplomacy with an emphasis on institutional building. The threat during the current liberal international order crisis can be seen from how Indonesia-ASEAN is dealing with the rivalry of the great powers. The turning point of the mutually supportive roles between Indonesia and ASEAN can be seen after the 1997 financial crisis which became an institutional reform of traditional norms towards regional norms (Chandra, 2004; Ruland, 2009). At present, the great powers' rivalry

management is the scope for discussing the important role of Indonesia-ASEAN because ASEAN processes, ideas, and policies are always weighed against norms and respect for institutions.

ASEAN security management is nothing but a liberal security agenda that also involves external roles to maintain the stability of the hegemony that is carried out through institutional mechanisms and the complexity of multilateralism as its support (Dosch, 2007). ASEAN has always moved with norms to carry out the diplomatic process and order building, namely respecting equality between sovereign states, not using the use of force, not intervening, not getting involved in unfinished bilateral conflicts, seeking calm and light diplomacy, mutual respect, and tolerance (Haacke, 2003). Regarding system dynamics, Indonesia and ASEAN's process lies in the complexity of state sovereignty, institutions, norms, and the great powers' rivalry management.

**Figure 1: The Institutional Complexity of Indonesia-ASEAN Facing The Great Powers' Rivalry.**



Indonesia contributes to the spirit of norms in the ASEAN process through lessons on the history of the Asian-African Non-Aligned Commitment Conference and the establishment of ASEAN which is the real relevance of Indonesia's foreign policy for managing great powers' rivalry (Wicaksana, 2016). Indonesia plays a role in maintaining order in Southeast Asia by preventing great powers from playing and forming military alliances that threaten the existence of ASEAN (Narine, 2006). It can be concluded that in responding to this liberal international order crisis, Indonesia-

ASEAN will continue to strive to secure the region with the process of institutionalism and norms.

This study attempts to explain the role of Indonesia and ASEAN during the liberal international order crisis by considering the great powers' rivalry management which has implications for the region in policy terms. There is discursively strong evidence behind the relevance of regional life to the waning of the hegemony of the United States, Southeast Asian countries enjoy a lot of economic benefits under this post-Cold War order as well as from cooperation with China which at the time of Trump was less interested in getting involved (Emmerson, 2016).

Trump's absence in Southeast Asia is proof that their commitment to other countries from the United States is very lacking which is an implication of his populist policy and ignores the value of multilateralism (Rogin, 2021; Sulaiman, 2019). The data shows that the level of influence of the United States in Southeast Asia decreased from 30.5% to 20.7% while China's influence strengthened from 45.2% to 52.2% (Mun et al., 2020). The redistribution of regional power and the influence of great powers has resulted in a security dilemma between economic interests and fear of the threats being faced.

In this regard, Indonesia has a strategic position as an ASEAN leader to provide international public goods in the security and economic spheres and is involved in conflict management by promoting institutional development (Emmers, 2014). Many of the consequences of the liberal international order are related to ideological values and the process of democratization, the obstacles faced by many ASEAN countries are the special autonomy of each country in which there is a decline in the quality of democracy, Indonesia's weakness in the economic field even though it potentially has a great opportunity to play a big role in the global economic arena (Basri, 2012).

The commitment to the ASEAN institutional process lies in Indonesia's respect for the aspect of ASEAN centrality which is a form of synergy between the interests and roles for the benefit of its member countries (Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Sharing interests is the norm to reduce the nature of anarchy and deep competition, this is also related to great powers' management outside the liberal norm simply because China adheres to an ideology that is contrary to the

United States. At a higher level, liberal orders try to uphold rules-based orders to secure the market and security.

Seeing ASEAN as a small region from the Asia Pacific and the Indo-Pacific concept, Indonesia is committed and offers openness and an inclusive attitude to build the Indo-Pacific (Ha, 2019). Indonesia and ASEAN will always be in the gathering of normative consensus to avoid the vortex of rivalry that is happening through the scheme of multilateralism, mutual security, and economic development (Acharya, 2011). Although it is discursive, the liberal international order has a structure that seems to be able to assess state behavior, the system dynamics approach will examine the extent of the transition until the crisis occurs, its relevance to its influence, and how to respond to it.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Regional Institutions**

To understand the role of Indonesia and ASEAN, the two categories sometimes have to be separated and unified. In the process, Indonesia is an individual actor and leader of ASEAN regional institutions. In addition, Indonesia's process is not monolithic in determining its foreign policy but can be represented through ASEAN (Abbondanza, 2022). Indonesia cannot be separated from its inherent status, namely as a middle power or a separate rising power as a given reality and its international ideals. Although hindered by certain statuses and capabilities, Indonesia continues to play a role as a driver of regionalism in ASEAN by being oriented towards norms and a commitment not to use the use of force in handling problems (Shekhar, 2018).

The English school research agenda to understand Indonesia and ASEAN lies in system-level dynamics that separate membership, actor-hood, and types of security (Ba, 2020). Skeptical as well as rational, Indonesia-ASEAN always tries to avoid international assumptions in favor of the United States or China. Referring to the analysis of membership, ASEAN is an institution consisting of countries with medium-small power which is rationally impossible to balance the power of China.

The actor-hood analysis shows the most likely threats and potentials to describe ASEAN domestically and regionally. This inclusion in the liberal security agenda is considered very good for reducing or even eliminating conflicts by working together

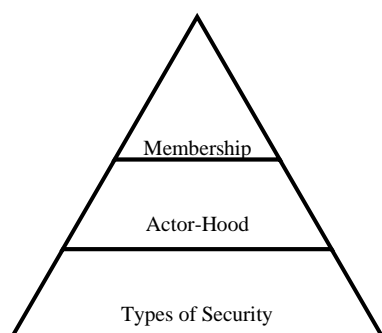


and sharing interests. Multilateralism in this case is a strategic policy for the great powers' rivalry management and the fact that the level of interdependence of one country with another is different. The spirit of membership towards actor-hood Indonesia-ASEAN is sponsored by a shared commitment and norms that will output policies that are nuanced in solidarity.

Indonesia has been trying through ASEAN institutions to secure an international and regional environment that is conducive to economic development by trying to reduce security competition internally and as far as possible to isolate itself from rivalry with great powers (Emmers, 2009). This attractive policy is continuous with Indonesia's foreign policy which is constructively formed due to the status of middle power and ensures Indonesia's international identity through free-active politics (Anwar, 2010). Indonesia-ASEAN pragmatism during the liberal international order crisis was discursive, while its rationality lay in the policy output to avoid conflict.

The historical roots describe Indonesia-ASEAN lie through the centrality of ASEAN which is inspired by non-aligned commitments, namely the choice to be neutral and deepen South-South cooperation. The behavior in the system-level dynamics model of the English school shows that comparisons can be made by referring to history and indications that have occurred, giving birth to types of security. A comparison that can be made to describe ASEAN is by comparing it with the dynamics of East Asia which shows security behaviors through the models of Australia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and China.

**Figure 2: Prism of Understanding the English School's System-Level Dynamics to Understand the Role of Indonesia and ASEAN.**



Concerning the liberal international order and the management of rivalry with several great powers, Indonesia holds a double-agent position which internally has

doubts about its commitment to liberal democracy but on a regional and international scale, it always appears to be a promoter of liberal values and commitments such as democracy (Agensky & Barker, 2012). Indonesia's participation as a promoter of liberal and democratic values is seen from Indonesia's participation in multilateral peace projects and is always relational, generative, and agentive.

### **Management of Rivalry**

The dynamics that ASEAN feels are a consequence of the traditional assessment of international relations which are usually contributed by realist and liberal thinking related to the balance of power, liberal order, and hegemony. As a regional organization with small-medium powers, ASEAN will rationally always handle security issues through normative diplomacy in which the great powers' rivalry management will cooperate as much as possible with many major powers (de Castro, 2022).

The output carried out by ASEAN in the South China Sea chaos shows that this indication is correct because ASEAN does not choose the hard or use of force path but uses sectoral diplomacy by establishing a Code of Conduct or 'CoC' with China to reduce the regional chaos. The interesting thing about ASEAN is that there is no thought of making a hard alliance with the United States for bandwagoning and balancing efforts, this shows that ASEAN still values and even upholds the concept of strong solidarity and non-intervention.

The hegemony of the United States in Indonesia and ASEAN is very complex from both security and economic aspects. History records that post-Cold War Indonesia was in an international as well as internal dilemma because at that time the neoliberal globalization market faced Indonesian neoconservatism (Steger, 2005). This dilemma affects international pressure and domestic will remain an important issue for Indonesia-ASEAN. This practical pragmatism is still supported by the independence of Indonesia and the international political doctrine called free-active politics (Sukma, 1995).

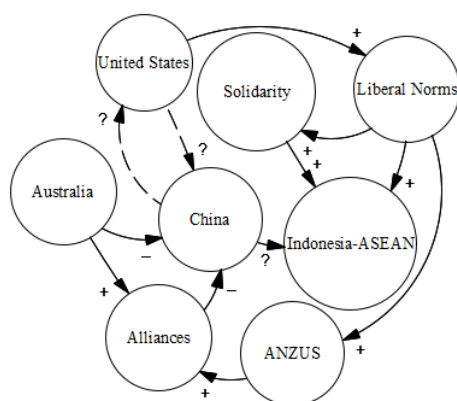
Types of security involving ASEAN can be compared between the ASEAN-Centric and ANZUS-Centric processes and between the differences in security and economic mindsets between Indonesia and Australia which began in 2010 when China began to rely on an assertive attitude and diplomacy in the South China Sea. ASEAN-Centric and ANZUS-Centric both see China as a threat, with different narratives



between maritime security against the liberal international order and the hegemony of the United States in the Asian region.

ANZUS, represented by Australia, considers that the United States has always been committed to maintaining the liberal international order in Southeast Asia with a tangible expression, namely building alliances to guard against threats from China (Jennings, 2013). The ANZUS genealogy is none other than a time when the liberal international order model of the United States still favors its pivot program with the logic of security management through the formation of alliances during the Barack Obama era. ASEAN certainly views this differently, for ASEAN its assertiveness and even China's interference in the South China Sea are considered paradoxically disturbing ASEAN solidarity and the sovereignty of ASEAN member countries without having to do the hard balancing.

**Figure 3: Differences in the Security Logic of ANZUS and ASEAN in Responding to Threats from China.**



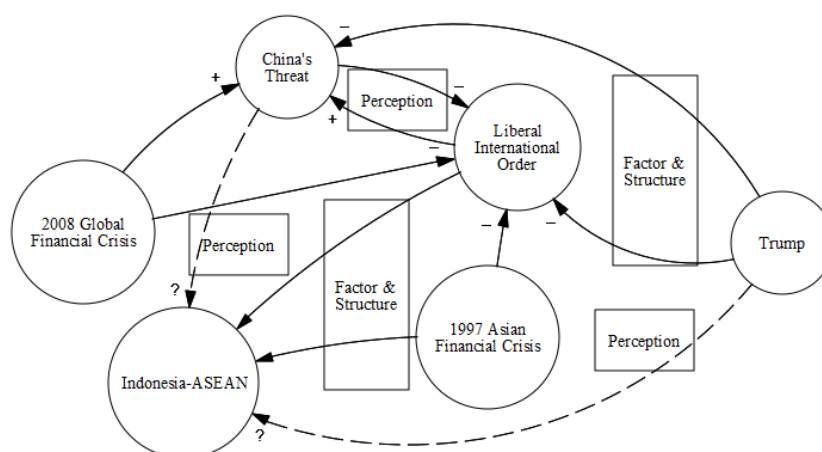
### Research Method

This study focuses on the search for the role of Indonesia-ASEAN and the consequences of the liberal international order crisis that has resulted in the structure and behavior of Indonesia-ASEAN as well as its external consequences. A crisis is an important element of contemporary political, economic, and social life that can be studied through systems thinking and system dynamics methodologies to analyze crisis management and prevention (Armenia et al., 2022). System thinking and system dynamics are tools to find out the sources of a crisis and the factors that cause the need for a resolution or prevention.

A crisis is a situation when the basic structure, values, and rules of the system are in jeopardy, and responsibility is needed to make decisions under pressure and uncertainty on important issues (Perrow, 1984). The crisis of the liberal international order is uncertain in that it has a structure and values that are oriented toward the behavior and policies of the United States after the Cold War. This impact occurs systemically in the international system as well as the ASEAN regional system. This factor is nothing but caused by the heating up of the situation and the different status between balancing and hegemonic order.

The liberal international order is a study that can be perceived, as the definition of crisis is the human perception of the system from what happened to the decision-making process taken (Milburn et al., 1983). The consequence of the study of system dynamics is how perceptions affect objects and subjects in international politics. Weak states or middle power are often used as objects rather than subjects and their foreign policy is considered a reflexive form rather than a fluctuating movement in the understanding of the balance of power (Eun et al., 2022). Starting from this understanding, the system dynamics method will explain the important role of the crisis that occurred.

Figure 4: Factors, Structures, and Perceptions Related to the Liberal International Order.



The factor that caused the liberal international order to experience a deepening crisis was marked by the increasing capability of China which was perceived as threatening by the West. This causal factor can be seen from the countries in the international system that take a stance to seek alternative great powers other than the United States in

the security and economic fields. This economic factor can be seen in international life after the 2008 global financial crisis (Breslin, 2011). This additional perception comes from Joe Biden who argues that Trump's policies must change and the United States must improve relations with the American-led order as the United States' global mission (Biden, 2020; Wright, 2020).

The system dynamics methodology is based on the why question, namely tracing the history and behavioral data, then how to change it, and finally modeling. Behavior can be described through the role and causes of policy-making to prevent a crisis. The framework of system dynamics is a real-world model in which the perception in contemporary liberal international order discourse is a perception that can be explained through the presence of quantitative data and qualitative explanations in this study.

## Discussion

### *Policy Implications for Indonesia-ASEAN in the Liberal International Order Crisis*

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only resulted in global health threats but has also resulted in the strengthening of rivalry between the United States and China. The strengthening of this rivalry has implications for Indonesia-ASEAN policy going forward starting from several possibilities that may occur, namely the concern that the power of the United States and China will push the countries in Southeast Asia into the orbit of one of the two and the concern that the United States will be absent again to balance the situation. in Southeast Asia (Sulaiman et al., 2021).

This perception of concern shows that Indonesia as the informal leader of ASEAN will find it difficult to play a role in balancing the interests of the two great powers. ASEAN is encouraged to produce a common policy that can accommodate the aspirations of each member's national interests to ensure regional stability, especially in responding to the South China Sea issue. This balance of power must be interpreted as a state after the redistribution of power which makes the situation enter into disequilibrium and threatens the surrounding countries.

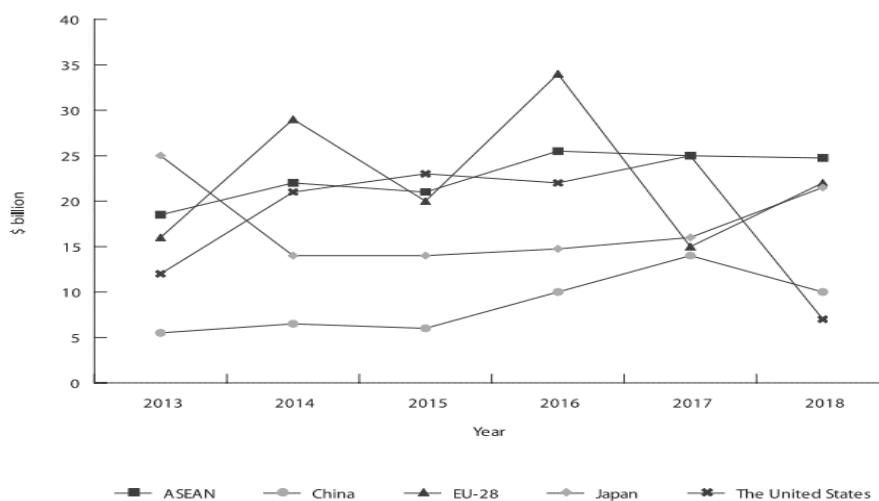
This concern is the rhetorical style of the United States to raise the perception of threats when facing a clash with China in the trade war, the United States considers the rise and assertiveness of China in the region to be antithetical to the liberal values of the

international order and has an interest in creating a world that is contrary to liberal values (Roemer, 2019; The White House, 2017). This perception is exaggerated when it is associated with the absence of the United States itself in the Trump leadership era and data on military and economic strength that show the United States still occupies the first position. China's policies are suspected and considered contradictory because domestic politics intersects with liberal regional policies, giving rise to the perception of threats.

Referring to the data, the United States economy compared to China is at \$20.49 billion compared to \$13.41 billion in GDP (Silver, 2020). While the military budget alone, the United States is still ahead in the budget of \$ 649 billion compared to China which spent \$228 billion (Robertson, 2019). The data has not been added to the experience of war and the United States' strategy if an open war begins by involving troops and weapons technology, the conclusion that the power leads to war will be won by the United States.

Two logics come from the United States and the European Union countries represented by Britain and France to balance China's power in Southeast Asia with hard and soft power methods. However, the problem lies in the term hard balancing which is always in sync with the balance of power and efforts to increase the capability of military forces and bandwagoning with one of the great powers. Indonesia-ASEAN certainly cannot do this because of commitments and normative functions that drive the institutional process.

**Figure 5: Data on Foreign Investment in the Southeast Asia Region (Lim, 2020).**



The reduced role of the United States in the economic sector is also compared to the absence of the United States' military role in the South China Sea dispute. But diplomatically, the United States will always support ASEAN regarding the dispute with moral considerations and uphold a liberal security agenda. It is rationally difficult to imagine that China will carry out dangerous actions using the use of force because it will disrupt its trade lanes in the region (Chalk, 2013). This narrative shows that the South China Sea threat is discursive and perceived rather than real, Southeast Asian countries need the economic sector rather than military security.

The European Union itself does not carry out hard balancing to balance China's power in the East Asia region as predicted by neorealists, the European Union prefers to increase strategic economic cooperation with several central countries in the Asian region such as Japan, South Korea, and even with several member countries. ASEAN by not rebalancing against China (Beesley et al., 2017; Giugliano, 2018). This evidence shows that the European Union does not interpret the liberal international order crisis or the American-led order as a perception of an excessive crisis with military security policies but for economic interests.

The security logic because the threat is not contained in the evidence of the European Union, even the strengthening of the military power of France and Britain in the Asia Pacific region is considered only to push back China's military assertiveness in the chaos of the South China Sea (Heydarian, 2018; Scimia, 2017). The push to expand inter-regional cooperation between the European Union and some regional institutions such as ASEAN shows that this cooperation is to benefit rather than to compensate. The cooperation between South Korea and the European Union is clear proof that the economic diplomacy of the European Union and East Asian countries cannot match the great influence of the Belt Road Initiative.

The strengthening of rivalry between the United States and China in the deepening discourse of the liberal international order crisis and concerns that the two powers will pull ASEAN and several ASEAN member countries into orbit needs to be carried out by deepening roles based on norms and expanding trans-regional cooperation. In addition, because of ASEAN's centrality to the award-equal sovereignty, there needs to be significant differences and similarities between national interests and regional interests.

Indonesia-ASEAN reaffirmation of the liberal security agenda can be rooted in the institutional complexity to reduce the nature of anarchy and concerns about China's interference during the liberal international order crisis. Although there are many paradoxes regarding ASEAN's liberal security agenda from the domestic aspect of these member countries, it is still possible for Indonesia-ASEAN to continue to play a role as promoters of democracy and regional stability. Even in practice, Indonesia is not a loyalist to the liberal international order and the American-led order which will build its security instruments through the formation of alliances or siding firmly with one of the great powers (Medcalf, 2014). The promotion of Indonesia-ASEAN peace is to respond lightly to perceived threats and cooperate with the United States and China.

Responding to concerns over the absence of the United States as in the Trump era creates the impression that naturally, Indonesia-ASEAN as small-medium powers need great power to maintain an equilibrium balance against China. The meeting point of this proof lies that what is meant by rebuilding the liberal international order is indeed in sync with the American-led order and even the American hegemony order. It is necessary to reconsider whether stability is discursive or by the real-world model.

It should be understood that what ASEAN needs is economic cooperation to achieve its interests. China's assertiveness in the South China Sea case has proven to be reduced through ASEAN's institutional complexity through the Code of Conduct or 'CoC'. This evidence shows that Indonesia-ASEAN is quite independent of the influence of great powers with the logic of the alliance model of the United States, ANZUS, and its hub-and-spokes.

The threats faced by ASEAN so far are discursive-perceptual as the liberal international order crisis which is nothing but a threat to the hegemony of the United States in the region. The assertive threat from China cannot be the main motive for affirming and rearranging the liberal security agenda because the idea believes in the strength and institutional complexity that will reduce conflict and maintain a peaceful state with the presence of a hegemonic state. The liberal international order can be used as reference material to balance conditions that are considered illiberal, disrupt institutions, and as a process of check and balance between domestic, regional, and global.



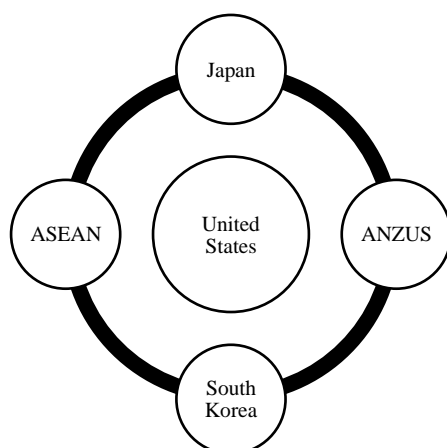
### *Indonesia-ASEAN Responds to Great Powers Through Institutional Complexity*

The hegemony of the United States towards Southeast Asian countries needs to be juxtaposed with the historical experience that accompanies the security and economic journey that has been passed by diplomatic relations between the United States and ASEAN. The disappointment of Southeast Asian countries towards the hegemony of the United States is a form of protest because the concentration of United States power focuses on the military and liberal ideology as a reference for regional behavior procedures (Beeson, 2004).

The less-than-optimal presence of the United States in Southeast Asia is due to the economic impact which is now being replaced by the role of China. This impact stems from global and regional doubts about the management of the United States after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the 2008 global financial crisis, and the overemphasis on the war on terror policies with the motive of maintaining a liberal security agenda.

The US security architecture in East Asia is built on a hub-and-spokes correlation that allows the United States to act as a security guard with the logic of its alliance. The terms and conditions that made this possible are memories after the defeat of World War 2 and after the Cold War for Japan, where the influence of the ideological struggle was very large between communism, fascism, and liberalism (Meijer, 2020). These terms and conditions are also supported by the capability and capacity of 'spoke' countries to provide benefits in the form of market provision and commitment to rules-based orders to the United States which will later provide security guarantees to the region.

**Figure 6: The Hub-and-Spokes Relationship between the United States and Countries and Regions.**



Australia and Japan as US security alliances share the same view as ASEAN in responding to China's assertive actions as a threat. However, the realist approach colors the nuances of Australia and Japan while ASEAN seeks to implement and promote constructivist values to manage the rivalry of great powers in today's contemporary phenomena. The difference in strategic views between the United States and China lies in the extent to which the effectiveness and efficiency of security and economic work.

The United States and its allies in East Asia formed the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or 'Quad' and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific or 'FOIP' while China tried to increase its influence in the region with economic motives, namely through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank or 'AIIB' and the Belt Road Initiative or 'BRI'. In practice, the Quad failed because it put too much emphasis on the logic of an alliance that seemed to want to make a new NATO for Asia (Madan, 2017). This logic is also used by Australia in carrying out ANZUS through the logic of alliance with the motive of maintaining the liberal international order and seeing China threaten the leadership of the United States in the Asian region to be prevented.

In the decision-making process, there are quite strict limits due to the different motives between Indonesia and ANZUS as well as with ASEAN. The alignment of formal partners with ANZUS and Indonesia-ASEAN has been hampered due to differences in sub-strategic studies on contemporary maritime issues that refer to the chaos in the South China Sea (Kelton & Willis, 2019). ANZUS trilateral cooperation is an alliance logic that incurs minimal costs by adhering to the post-Cold War security idea where alliance formation must focus on the building process (Tow, 2015). This is a real clash with ASEAN values, norms, and practices which maintain stability in a non-aligned spirit.

The cost of establishing minilateral or trilateral in ANZUS is considered the cheapest and most effective because of its adaptive nature in building rules-based orders and can deepen forms of cooperation with others using the screening method through liaison countries (Glosserman & Snyder, 2015; Tow, 2019). However, several attempts at regional security projections from the United States for Asia were deemed to have failed because the United States + 3 namely Japan, India, and Australia were considered

unsuccessful in recruiting new members for their alliance (Jung et al., 2021). Indonesia-ASEAN managed to go beyond the object by becoming a subject that played a role beyond the threat perception built by the United States and its allies.

All of the United States' regional security motives are none other than the rise of China and its assertiveness. Indonesia faces a strong challenge of uncertainty from China which during the Obama era was successfully suppressed due to its Asian pivot program (Graham, 2013). This evidence shows that Indonesia's middle power status still requires great power to balance but not with a firm alliance. The institutional process that Indonesia seeks is through discursive and institutional complexity with ASEAN in dealing with China under the influence of the liberal international order crisis discourse. The deepening of the liberal international order crisis was due to the attitude of the United States' foreign policy during the Trump era which tried to withdraw and focus on domestic strengthening by ignoring many international and regional agendas outside the region (Colgan & Keohane, 2017). This influence is another discourse of the complex and complex crisis of the liberal international order. The fact that it turns out that the value of international liberalism is experiencing a declining performance covers many fields of study, from politics where populism has reduced the spirit of democracy, to economics where the challenges to neoliberal life have disappointed many, especially after the 2008 global financial crisis, and security which is considered threatened through the rise of China.

The influence of this liberal international order on ASEAN is a tug-of-war between justifications for domestic and regional behavior. However, a separate study only revolves around moral rather than strategic matters. The liberal international order boundary is not strong enough to have an impact on the compliance of ASEAN countries with the United States.

ASEAN did not escape from this discourse considering that some ASEAN member countries did not heed the values of democracy for their politics and some closed ranks with China. ASEAN has gone through several important phases to explain its response to regional-global dynamics from various aspects, for example, the change in ASEAN institutional norms after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the war on terror policy which demonstrated the compliance of ASEAN countries, especially Indonesia to the United States in combating terrorism, pivot Asia in the era of Obama's leadership,

which is considered successful, Trump's absence both in the security and economic fields and finally the hope and reality of Biden's leadership.

Realists consider that the power of liberal hegemony is fading because naturally international relations will always operate with a realist mindset, the dream of liberalism will fade when faced with international realities that encourage each country to think about a balance of power rather than benefits, and Trump shows this proof by prioritizing the United States itself (Mearsheimer, 2018). In an era of regional uncertainty and concerns about the absence of great power to play a stabilizing role in the region, the United States will continue to strive to build a security architecture in the Pacific (Brooks et al., 2013). In this respect, ASEAN is different from the two security proposals, ASEAN is putting all its efforts into the idea of soft power as an international subject.

The United States' security architecture in the Pacific is nothing but the promotion of a liberal international order and an economy supported by a belief in rules-based orders to benefit its interests. ASEAN sees this threat in terms of norms and seeks to deal with it by respecting ASEAN's institutional procedures. ASEAN solidarity and norms will always be developed when the current situation seems to attract Indonesia and ASEAN to enter the orbit of the United States or China (Engel, 2019).

ASEAN institutions will always maintain norms that have been rooted in ideas and history (Stubbs, 2008). Indonesia contributes to the spirit of a foreign policy originating from Bandung or the Asia-Africa Conference by encouraging solidarity which adopts emancipation values and a liberal security agenda (Phillips & Hiariej, 2016). The difference in responding to the liberal security agenda between Indonesia-ASEAN and several alliance countries lies in the extent of loyalty to the United States. Australia sees the presence of the United States in Southeast Asia must be with alliance security management and is an imperative form of Obama's Asian pivot model.

After passing through the Trump era, many ASEAN leaders hoped for improved relations between the United States and countries in the Southeast Asian region. The statistical report shows that there is an increase in expectations from 52.7% to 63.1% for improving relations with the United States rather than deepening relations with China (Seah et al., 2021). This situation was followed by Biden's decision not to rule out

cooperation with China despite supporting several opponents in disputes with China including ASEAN in the Uyghur case and maritime disputes (The White House, 2021).

Reinforcing the role of the United States and changes to ensure a liberal international order with the leadership of the United States in the region are indeed not easy given the distance from alliances and transaction costs are not cheap (Grabowski, 2021). This fact is a challenge as well as an opportunity for Indonesia-ASEAN to show their role because the stabilization carried out by the United States is now soft rather than hard. The perception of threats will continue to color the landscape of the Southeast Asian region as a discursive narrative so that Indonesia-ASEAN has the opportunity to expand its role institutionally and widen the influence of norms and foundations for good history lessons for the world.

During this liberal international order crisis, diplomatic dangers can occur between Indonesia-ASEAN and China if the alliance logic and security perception of the United States pushes hard for Indonesia-ASEAN to be very confrontational with China (Murphy, 2014). This possibility shows that the independence and institutional complexity of Indonesia-ASEAN in responding to the perceived threat of the United States and its allies is the safest. The attitude of multilateralism, widening cooperation towards Asia-Pacific and South-South needs to be developed as an addition to the peaceful-stable dynamics for a safe region and can manage the rivalry between great powers.

Historical experience shows that ASEAN has succeeded in ensuring regional stability by continuing to implement the model of institutional complexity. The post-Cold War situation that continues to show uncertainty must be understood for Indonesia-ASEAN to what extent the regional world and the mechanism of trans-regional cooperation and with many major powers provide benefits for Indonesia-ASEAN not to involve themselves in a tug-of-war discourse with regional hegemony and rivalry. great powers. The experience of the economic crisis, security from terrorism, and now the threat to regional security in the maritime area shows that the Indonesia-ASEAN decision remains oriented towards norms, not the will to fluctuate in the face of the balance of power.

## Conclusion

Although the threat of regionalism to the Indonesia-ASEAN institutional process lies in the South China Sea dispute, the institutional process has succeeded through its complexity to manage the rivalry of great powers during the Trump era. The decision not to follow the logic of alliance to face China is the safest way to deepen diplomatic and multilateral relations with many major powers. Challenges from outside against Indonesia-ASEAN are discursive and perceptual, so the decision to respond lightly is a reasonable thing for regionalism to work.

The deepening crisis of the liberal international order affects the effectiveness and efficiency of the United States' leadership and influence in the Southeast Asian region, which has weakened over time. The complex process of Indonesia-ASEAN has succeeded in showing independence, although statistically there is hope and need for the United States to balance the regional equilibrium. In future projections, ASEAN and its member countries can learn from the waning influence of the United States by conducting effective and efficient cooperation without incurring large costs compared to the interests that have been fulfilled.

With the spirit of norms and solidarity, Indonesia-ASEAN provides a view on international relations related to avoiding the vortex of conflict by developing the value of multilateralism while respecting the institutional process so that all countries comply with these norms and values. Along with the liberal Indonesia-ASEAN security agenda facing challenges from the domestic environment related to the waning commitment of some member countries to democracy, there is still a politics of domestic violence and issues regarding human rights.

Trans-regional cooperation and many major powers in the region prove that ASEAN still has a good impact on its member countries when the United States under Trump's leadership chooses to be absent and less interested in regional issues. This shows that ASEAN's pattern of interaction and what Indonesia has contributed in the form of enthusiasm and historical lessons related to non-alignment and the possible conditions after Biden's election for the United States provide new hope.

The dynamics of objects and subjects in the study of international relations can not only be discussed through a reflective scheme of the foreign policy of weak and middle countries, but behavior and beliefs towards complex norms, habits, and



institutional processes can be used as a reference that the balance of power and influence does not have to be balancing but actuating. The concentration of studies to understand the benefits and threats to Southeast Asia is important to relate to internal development rather than just threats from the external environment.

Indonesia's interests through ASEAN however cannot only focus on security, reflecting on China's ability to expand its economic power as well as its assertive stance in the South China Sea shows that ASEAN must be a hospitable home for its member countries by following rules-based orders. The expansion of this institutional role must then be able to become regionalism which can make variations of multilateralism not seems artificial and overlapping for Indonesia's interests through East Asia and Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific regions.

After succeeding in not getting into the geopolitical vortex and the pejorative justification of the international system led by the United States after the Cold War, Indonesia needs to reconsider strategic studies from both security and economic aspects together with ASEAN, because basically, the task of establishing a regional institution including ASEAN is as a whole normative to reduce dependence on big powers, widen the balance, and most important thing is to build solidarity to reject conflict in the region.

What can be learned from the crisis of the liberal international order is how, in practice, Indonesia must continue to support the pillars of rules-based order by not opening up the possibility of conflict from dangerous behavior such as entering into alliances, but in a dialogical way and remaining in its stance in defending values and norms from the Bandung conference and the aim of establishing ASEAN as an effort to develop the economy and to socialize the region and the world that this is something that needs to be pursued together despite being competitive.

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