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THE EU AND ASEAN: A RESILIENCE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: As in the present international circumstances governance and regulation shifts to the regional level, conventional wisdom suggests that approaches of regional actors to the concept of resilience differ significantly. In reality, however, more similarity than difference is evident. To explain this puzzle, the authors turn to the narrative of resilience developed by the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as points of similarity and difference. Starting from an outline of the resilience narrative in the EU, the paper further proceeds to revealing its specific features from an ASEAN perspective to finally draw lines of comparison between those two approaches. While selected papers address approaches to resilience in the EU and ASEAN, none has gone beyond merely describing them separately. As a result, understanding of how resilience is interpreted in various regions, and how these interpretations may be synergized remains stagnant. More than that, assessments of resilience-related issues, if explored individually, may be misleading and incomplete. The paper eliminates this shortcoming and offers new insights into the conceptualization of the resilience narrative from a regional perspective by comparing two influential multilateral dialogue venues, namely, the EU and ASEAN. This factor accounts for the academic novelty of the research. The findings indicate unexpected commonalities between the EU's and ASEAN's interpretations of resilience across different lines of comparison. The authors argue that these points of synergy may be an important unifying component in relations between various regional actors, as a new wave of globalization appears and gains traction.

Keywords: *EU, ASEAN, resilience, goal-setting, practice, comparison, globalization*

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ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ МЕР ПО ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЮ СТРЕССОУСТОЙЧИВОСТИ В ЕС И АСЕАН

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Аннотация: По мере того, как в современных международных реалиях управление и регулирование смещаются на уровень регионов, принято считать, что подходы различных региональных акторов к понятию «стрессоустойчивость» кардинально отличаются. Однако в реальности эти подходы имеют больше сходств, чем различий. Пытаясь найти объяснение этому явлению, авторы рассматривают нарративы о стрессоустойчивости, разработанные Европейским Союзом (ЕС) и Ассоциацией государств Юго-Восточной Азии (АСЕАН), равно как сходства и различия между ними. Проведя обзор эволюции понятия «стрессоустойчивость» в ЕС, работа раскрывает его характерные черты в интерпретации АСЕАН, сравнивая эти два подхода. Хотя отдельные работы анализируют подходы ЕС и АСЕАН к стрессоустойчивости, до сих пор не проводилось попыток выйти за описание каждого из них в отдельности. В результате отсутствует прогресс в понимании того, каким образом понятие стрессоустойчивости интерпретируется в различных регионах, и как эти интерпретации могут быть увязаны между собой. Важнее иное: оценки вопросов, связанных со стрессоустойчивостью, в том случае если эти вопросы исследованы изолированно друг от друга, могут быть ошибочными и неполными. Настоящая работа устраняет этот недостаток и предлагает новый взгляд на понятие стрессоустойчивости с точки зрения его интерпретации региональными акторами на примере ЕС и АСЕАН. Этим определяется научная новизна проведенного исследования. Его результаты демонстрируют неожиданные сходства между интерпретациями стрессоустойчивости в ЕС и АСЕАН по ряду параметров. С точки зрения авторов, эти сходства могут послужить существенным консолидирующим компонентом в отношениях между различными региональными акторами по мере того, как новая волна глобализации появится и наберет темп.

Ключевые слова: ЕС, АСЕАН, стрессоустойчивость, целеполагание, практика, сравнение, глобализация

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Since recently, the concept of resilience is gaining popularity across different regions, grasping attention of the global academic and political community. Although extant studies have offered descriptions of how various international actors, most importantly, multilateral dialogue venues, develop their interpretations of what resilience is, what areas it covers, and what tasks it must resolve, they do not answer the nagging questions of their points of similarity and difference. Amidst the trans-nationalization of global trends and increasing fragmentation of global governance and regulatory mechanisms, this task is increasing from both an academic and a practical perspective.

In these circumstances, much food for thought is provided by the examples of the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). To trace their approaches to the resilience narrative, synergizing the goal-setting and the operationalizing level, is a timely and relevant exercise.

The EU Approach

In official EU documents, resilience is specified as the ability of an individual, family, community, country or region to withstand, cope, adapt and recover quickly from stresses and shocks, such as violence, conflict, drought and other natural disasters, without affecting long-term development. Resilience can be built at different levels, with grassroots communities and individuals playing an important role. The reason stems from their vulnerability to natural disasters or financial crises, or the threat of violence and terrorism. Resilience is also seen as a form of “self-governance” that emphasizes the “local” and the “personal” in the capacity building process.

The concept of resilience was formally introduced by the EU in June 2016 in the document “Shared Vision, Common Action. A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for EU Foreign and Security Policy”. Meanwhile, resilience is not limited to the country or the community level. It includes national, regional and global dimensions. Simultaneously, it encompasses the economic, political, energy, food and environmental areas at different levels in the EU, its regions and member states. Thus, a “resilience chain” that encompasses “social resilience, national resilience, community resilience, resilience in neighboring countries and regions, and resilience in other countries and regions around the globe” appears.

This vision is substantiated by policy actions. For instance, the EU uses its economic strength to assist poor countries. Programs “Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience” (SHARE – 2012) and L'Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience are of special note. In 2011, the Horn of Africa was

hit by a 60-year drought, which was followed by famine. The European Commission honored its commitment to help those countries to overcome their problems by means of the SHARE instruments. Specifically, the EU set several objectives, namely, to expand viable economic opportunities, strengthen institutional governance, sustain human, social capital, and improve health, nutrition and water security. The strategy aims to establish a food security reserve and distribution system, and involves local farmers, local authorities, national governments and regional institutions. To date, the EU has contributed €313 million in humanitarian aid to the Horn of Africa for this strategy¹.

Apart from this direction, L'Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience addresses problems encountered by Sahelian and West African countries that suffer from recurrent food crises. Through the strategy, the EU announced that resilience priorities had been adopted in ten of the seventeen participating countries with €1.5 billion of financial allocations².

Another case in point is Vietnam that is often hit by floods and other natural disasters. The EU has funded a natural disaster preparedness course for schools, which has taught nearly 500,000 students and over 15,000 elementary school teachers how to prepare for and respond to disasters. At the same time, the EU, in terms of resilience building, tends to focus on political and labor issues linking them to money allocations. The example of Cambodia that experienced the EU economic pressure after the general elections in 2018 is representative³⁴.

Notably, the EU implements its resilience-related policy through affiliate organizations⁵. Examples include mostly migration-related measures taken by the European Investment Bank. In Africa, the EIB's ACP Migration Package offers short-term and long-term financing, helps impoverished communities, by, for instance, developing ICT infrastructure, resolves miscellaneous humanitarian issues.

In 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU established the Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF) with a capitalization of €723.8 billion (€385.8 billion for loans and €338 billion for grants). The RRF has helped the EU achieve its climate neutrality goal by 2050, contributing to the digital transformation and employment opportunities in European countries.

These practices have improved the EU's risk management capacity, as well as the resilience narrative per se. More than that, it has added consistency to the EU's approach to cooperation with other international actors.

To substantiate this point, suffice it to point to resilience-building instruments developed by the EU in recent years. Take, for instance, cooperation between the EU, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), WFP (UN World Food Programme) and other international organizations, which resulted in establishing the Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group (RMTWG) and country-level promotion of resilience-focused analytics.

Specifically, since 2008, the EU has worked with organizations like FAO on resilience measurement instruments to help recipient countries combat crises like food insecurity and malnutrition. As a result, the platform Food Security Information Network has become operational. It can provide decision-makers with more clarity on when, where, and how to intervene at risk, how to target the most vulnerable groups of populations, how to detect and assess the impact of interventions against threats, and how to assess the efficiency of these measures. Another outcome is presented by the standardization of resilience measurement instruments and assessment systems, as well as by increased coordination of efforts across the EU-related organizations and their departments.

Although the term “resilience” originated in Western countries as reflection of and response to the current global disturbances, this narrative is not limited to the EU. In fact, the concept of resilience was independently and comprehensively developed by ASEAN.

The ASEAN Approach

In ASEAN, the concept of resilience originated from the “national resilience” narrative introduced by Indonesia⁶. Originally a political slogan coined by President Suharto in the 1960s, the term “national resilience” meant national will and determination. In the years that followed, national resilience was elevated to the level of political vision. President Suharto interpreted “national resilience” as an inward-looking concept that refers to Indonesia’s self-identity and ability to cope with external threats with by undertaking necessary social reforms. “National resilience” moves beyond the military dimension per se and includes ideological, political, economic and sociocultural components. Developing economy, maintaining military independence, and avoiding involvement in Cold War ideological conflicts were the main ways to enhance “national resilience”.

ASEAN’s concept of resilience envisioned a shift from “national resilience” to “regional resilience”. In 1972, Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik first proposed the regional resilience narrative at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. According to him, “regional resilience can enhance

the ability of each member country and its people in all areas of national endeavor to resist and defeat all kinds of external interference and negative impacts that are detrimental to their coordinated development” and that the main way to achieve regional resilience is through coordination and security cooperation among regional countries⁷. ASEAN norms are premised on national resilience and regional resilience.

Building regional resilience relies on regional security and economic cooperation. For example, in 1963–1966, Indonesia's relations with Malaysia and Singapore deteriorated sharply. On the one hand, Malaysia and Singapore relied on extra-regional powers to ensure their security. On the other hand, Indonesia's leadership ambitions forced Malaysia and Singapore to view Indonesia as a regional “hegemon”. As a result, the Suharto administration made a revision of Indonesia's relations with Malaysia and Singapore to ensure regional resilience. Simultaneously, Malaysia and Singapore gradually changed their views on regional security, prioritizing economic development and social harmony.

In the early 1970s, the regional resilience narrative was integrated into ASEAN's attempts to make Southeast Asia an area insulated from the great power rivalry. Adopting the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia (ZOPFAN) Declaration in 1971⁸, ASEAN attempted to operationalize its regional resilience vision. Notably, the association tried to dissociate itself from great power contradictions (although it had to manage them while resolving the Cambodian issue).

After the Cold War, the regional resilience narrative was closely linked to ASEAN's efforts to implement intra-ASEAN multilateral economic projects and Asia-Pacific multilateral venues focusing on economic and political-security issues. In the former regard, ASEAN projects like AFTA, AIA and other are worthy of note. Remarkably, early and mid-1990s witnessed ASEAN's intention to move beyond AFTA and develop cooperation in the “AFTA Plus” format⁹, specifically, to create an economic eco-system that moves far beyond stimulating trade exchanges per se. In the latter, ASEAN's attempts to develop multilateral projects in the frameworks of ASEAN+3 and later on East Asia Summit are of special significance. At the present point in time, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, ASEAN's flagship multilateral project, has a clearly pronounced resilience-related component.

In more specific terms, examples of ASEAN's resilience narrative are in overabundance. Suffice it to point to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance (ACHA), Monitoring Re-

sponse System (DMRS), as well as numerous measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, to mention just a few initiatives. Remarkably, however, the resilience narrative has not undergone a conceptual revision, as ASEAN remains just a sum of its member states with underdeveloped supra-national mechanisms.

The latter factor is especially important since ASEAN has to adopt its Asia-Pacific multilateral venues to the Indo-Pacific narrative. For the association, it is a serious challenge, as the evolution of Indo-Pacific Region as a multilateral project, from both a political-security and an economic perspective, adds to contradictions between China and the US, to the disadvantage of ASEAN-led multilateral security dialogue. Since recently, these contradictions have embraced the digital dimension: the US-China technological rivalry shifts penetrates major regional multilateral initiatives.

To exacerbate the problem, ASEAN has to support its projects of economic regionalism with digital instruments. This is exemplified by numerous initiatives adopted since 2000: E-ASEAN Framework Agreement (2000), ASEAN Framework on Personal Data Protection (2016), ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 (2021), to mention just a few. At the same time, however, owing to a relatively weak trans-national component, as well as to ASEAN principles of cooperation, the association cannot deal with this task from both a goal-setting and a practical perspective.

In the years to come, the digital resilience narrative will increase in significance, as the association has to perform the coordinating role in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). This task is easy, as the RCEP uses advanced practices of regulating, for instance, electronic commerce. In fact, the RCEP e-commerce provisions are similar to those of CPTPP¹⁰. Plus to that, Chinese electronic commerce platforms operating across the RCEP area have an important advantage, namely, the scale factor. In their turn, neither ASEAN, nor its individual member states, possess important assets necessary for e-commerce regulation: infrastructure, software and advanced ICT skills. In those circumstances, for ASEAN to coordinate the e-commerce-related cooperation between the RCEP members, as well as the RCEP in general, becomes a challenging task.

Be as it may, the resilience narrative looms all the larger in ASEAN's order of priority. The association seems to understand that regional resilience, understood in terms of capacity-building, is the vital prerequisite for international competitiveness. Similar to ASEAN security-related vision, which is comprehensive in terms issues and levels of addressing them, its resilience strategy is all-embracing and result-oriented. If

so, ASEAN's is likely to further develop this topic from a goal-setting and a practical perspective.

Comparing Two Approaches

A retrospect of the resilience narrative developed by the EU and ASEAN allows distinguishing points of their similarity and difference. Several points are noteworthy in this regard.

Concerning similarity, primarily, a security-related focus matters. For both the EU and ASEAN security is a top priority, while instruments for enhancing ability to address national and regional crises are of paramount significance. It is exemplified by the EU Internal security strategy and ASEAN's miscellaneous documents. In addition, for both the EU and ASEAN security is seen as a comprehensive eco-system that covers multiple areas, including politics, economy, socio-cultural aspects and that involves the local, the national and the regional level.

No less importantly, both the EU and ASEAN prioritize the internal dimension of resilience. Concerning the EU, this is demonstrated primarily by the EUGS (European Union Global Strategy) which prioritizes expanding contacts with regions outside Europe. In its turn, the association develops its flagship project the ASEAN Community as its top priority. Remarkably, the three pillars of the ASEAN Community (economic, political security and socio-cultural) reinforce each other. In fact, the ASEAN Economic Community aims to make Southeast Asia a seamless area of economic and commercial activity integrated in the global economy, the ASEAN Political-Security Community and the ASEAN Sociocultural Community create favourable political, cultural and ideological conditions to achieve this objective. Even the RCEP has a clearly pronounced intra-ASEAN direction, as the association, as the RCEP coordinator, aims to attract extra investment and technologies from its RCEP partners in order to enhance capacity-building of ASEAN member states and international credentials of ASEAN as an international actor. In light of this, the EU resilience narrative reflects the EU common security concept and approach to security cooperation, and does not run counter to ASEAN's vision.

Lastly, both the EU and ASEAN see regional autonomy as a fundamental pre-condition of maintaining security. Although in the present circumstances, as the EU approach to the Ukraine issue demonstrates, the EU autonomy is not as clearly pronounced as it might be, nevertheless, it has been and remains an important priority. Suffice it to mention that the EU maintains energy cooperation with Russia despite the US pressure. Concerning ASEAN, regional autonomy as a pivotal component of the resili-

ence was apparent once this narrative came into existence. Notably, regional resilience was conceptualized simultaneously with ZOPFAN Declaration. Importantly, after the Cold War ASEAN completely re-organized its vision of resilience: while in the Cold War, the association tried to isolate the region from great powers interference, in the post-bipolar period it tried to elaborate on mechanisms of engaging those powers to create a system of regional checks and balances. Nevertheless, the regional autonomy has been and remains a cornerstone of ASEAN resilience-related vision and policy actions.

Differences between the EU and ASEAN, in terms of their approaches to regional resilience, are not many. The most important concerns their willingness and readiness to export this narrative. The EU exports its vision of resilience to other regions, as well as possesses necessary instruments to substantiate it. Examples include various programs of assistance implemented by the EU and the EU-affiliated structures in other countries and regions. In its turn, ASEAN does not aim to export its vision of resilience or resilience-related instruments like, for instance, economic assistance. The association neither implements, nor aims, relevant programs in other regions premised on its vision of what resilience. More than that, the association does not aim to allocate precious resources, mainly financial, on issues irrelevant to ASEAN. In this regard, suffice it to remind that the ASEAN Economic Community has only partially succeeded in making Southeast Asia an attractive area for trans-national production and business activity. The reasons are numerous, but the most important concerns exceedingly expensive trans-national infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia.

Encouragingly, although the difference in the EU and ASEAN's approaches to regional resilience is serious, points of similarity prevail. This factor is very important in the present international circumstances, despite the fragmentation of global institutional and regulatory framework, multi-lateral dialogue venues in different regions has elaborated on experience to share. Points of similarity is a major prerequisite for dialogue regardless the on-going global developments.

Conclusion

The resilience-building narrative in the EU and ASEAN demonstrates several broad trends. There is a trend of increasing universalization of the concept of resilience in different regions. As the de-globalization gains traction, and the regulation of global economic, political and security processes shifts to the level of regions, the grass-root cooperation comes to

increasing prominence. In light of this, the universalization of resilience-related issues and approaches, as exemplified by the EU and ASEAN, becomes an important strategic asset.

This factor is relevant not only to the EU and ASEAN, but to other regions and regional organizations as well. Many of them may differ from the EU and ASEAN significantly, but the tasks that those organizations address resemble, at least partially, those encountered by, for instance ASEAN. In those circumstances, selected components of ASEAN's experience can be used by other multilateral dialogue venues, to the advantage of the global community.

Not only present, but also future implications of this congruence matter a lot. The present-day entropy of international relations will eventually end, and a new interest in globalization will emerge. Although it is impossible to predict on what foundation the new globalization will be premised, resilience-related components are likely to be of paramount significance in the priorities of their participants. In order to make their cooperation effective, their visions of resilience will have to be synergized. The EU and ASEAN experience has ample chances to become an "assemblage point" of this synergy.

ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРАХ

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