

PANEL 2

Reconsidering Relations between Southeast and East Asia

1. Mutual Perceptions between South Korea and Southeast Asian Nations

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How do the people in South Korea perceive the countries and people in Southeast Asia and vice versa? To answer this, we conducted national sample online survey in South Korea as well as in six Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. For South Korea and each of the Southeast Asian countries, we measured how respondents think of each other in terms of the two dimensions of stereotype content (warmth and competence), how much they like or dislike each other, and the Bogardus social distance. As reference points to compare Southeast Asians' perceptions about South Korea, we also asked how they think of Japan and China along with South Korea. In terms of perceiving as warm and competent, Southeast Asians do so the Northeast Asian counterparts in the order of Japan, South Korea, and China. On the other hand, South Koreans think of much more highly Singapore than other Southeast Asian countries. In terms of how much they like their neighbors, South Koreans' preferences for Southeast Asia on average stand around 62 out of 100, whereas the latter's for the former are as high as 81 out of 100, displaying a 20 points gap between the two. In terms of the Bogardus scale too, there is a wide perception gap between how South Koreans think of Southeast Asia and vice versa. The people in Southeast Asia tend to show a greater willingness to accept South Koreans as their friends, colleagues, neighbors, and family members. We also asked respondents how they evaluate their current life status using the Kantril ladder to measure the life satisfaction. Using this measure, we seek to estimate how one's feelings of life satisfaction affect their perceptions of and attitudes toward people from the other region, and to investigate how the size of those effects varies across countries.

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2. Cooperating under Tension: The ASEAN-China Coalition in the UN General Assembly

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Coalitions, no matter how long they last, are fundamentally the results of choices of states with different national interests. For example, the Group of 77 (hereinafter the G77) and the People's Republic of China (hereinafter China) have co-sponsored quite a few resolutions at the United Nations General Assembly (hereinafter the UNGA) over the last thirty years, but respective G77 members had experienced geopolitical tensions with China. The coalition may co-sponsor drafts on the protection of the environment, but they may also be opponents in delineating the territories where environmental measures are to be taken. Do such tensions have influence on the extent of cooperation regardless of the issue areas, and if so, how?

While earlier studies have depicted the G77-China coalition as sturdy due to their common past of political and economic marginalization, not much has been said about the intra-coalition tension. As China asserts to change the allegedly "American-centered" order with its Global South counterparts, it is essential to capture their relation in light of the debates on the liberal international order.

This paper focuses on the geopolitical tension between China and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter ASEAN) among the G77 states to delve into the intricate politics among coalescing states. Firstly, it combines existing data on rivalry and UNGA voting/sponsorship to quantitatively investigate whether geopolitical tensions have any influence on cooperation. Secondly, it conducts a case study to see whether the identified pattern of interactions actually exists among ASEAN and China.

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3. Speeding Where? High-speed Railways in Southeast Asia and Sino-Japanese Competition

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Japan and China are competing over Southeast Asia's High-Speed Railway (HSR) market. Japan, known for its advanced Shinkansen system, views it as a source of revenue for its shrinking local market and is looking to export it, whereas China, proud of its own HSR system, is as eager to export it along with surplus of coin and human resources. The export of China's HSR correlates with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is a huge project to connect about 70 countries to China, through sea and land, and is likely to change the geopolitics of Eurasia. A notable example for this competition is in Indonesia, where Japan received the HSR project in its earlier stage, but it was later given to China under a PPP scheme. The two countries have also been competing in India, and Thailand.

This paper analyzes the Sino-Japanese HSR competition in Southeast Asia and this competition's wider economic and strategic implications. Based on interviews with officials,

governments reports, and fieldwork survey, this paper shows that both Japan and China use HSR projects not only in order to tie aid-receiving countries and gain greater influence through aid loans, but given that HSR is a symbol of advancement, also to increase their overall soft power reputation. Despite calls to work together, both Japan and China view the HSR projects as a zero-sum game, which increases the overall tension between them.

Keywords: Infrastructure, High-speed railway, Japan, China, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Thailand, International Relations, Development Assistance, Development Aid, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

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Discussant

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Jung Hoon Park is a research professor at the Institute of East Asian Studies, Sogang University. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the National University of Singapore in 2021. His research interests include not only comparative democratization, political party systems, and political Islam in Asian developing democracies, but also South Korea-ASEAN relations. His research has appeared Journal of East Asian Studies, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Asian Studies Review, and Asian Journal of Comparative Politics.

Discussant and Moderator

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Edo Andriesse is a professor of development geography at Seoul National University. He teaches a wide range of human geography courses at undergraduate and graduate level. His research interest is coastal, rural development in Southeast Asia focusing on topics such as upstream seaweed value chains, coastal governance, rural inequality, and the relationships between social capital and local political economy.