

Globalization and Its Counter-forces in Southeast Asia

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Edited by Terence Chong



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FOREWORD

It is a cliché now to talk about a globalized world or that globalization is changing the way we live. It is a cliché because it is an everyday reality which we cannot escape. If globalization is an inescapable reality, then its consequences and side-effects are long-term problems that the academic and policy-making communities have to think our way out of.

For it is no longer enough to accept the fact that globalization has stitched the world closer together or that it has forced different creeds and religions to jostle for the same shrinking space. The conflict and contradictions that are part and parcel of the prosperity and progress that globalization bring must demand the attention of our best minds.

It is in this context that this volume is presented. A diverse group of scholars on Southeast Asia has been assembled to offer a multi-dimensional perspective and critique of globalization as it entrenched itself deeper into the region. The insightful and original offerings of these scholars will be useful to students of Southeast Asia, globalization and various social science disciplines in the years to come.

ISEAS takes pride in presenting this volume. It thanks the Swedish School of Advanced Asia-Pacific Studies for its contribution and the thoroughly enjoyable collaborative experience.

K. Kesavapany
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Singapore

PREFACE

This book is the product of two different workshops on globalization in Southeast Asia held at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). The first was jointly organized by ISEAS and the Swedish School of Advanced Asia-Pacific Studies (SSAAPS). Entitled “Globalization and its Counterforces”, the workshop took place from 23–27 February 2004, and was generously funded by SSAAPS. Eleven of the sixteen chapters in this book were from papers presented at this workshop.

The second workshop, entitled “Cultural Globalization in Southeast Asia”, an ISEAS initiative, took place a year later on 8 June 2005. Funded by ISEAS, the workshop looked at the social and cultural dimensions of globalization and contributes five chapters to this book.

Although the two workshops were conceived and executed a year apart, the rationale for combining selected papers from both workshops quickly became apparent. The first workshop dealt principally with the political and security issues of globalization, while the second investigated its social and cultural dimensions. By placing the intellectual endeavours and original research of the different scholars side by side, it was possible to present a holistic picture of globalization and its consequences in the region. Hence, instead of working towards two separate publications, it was decided that publishing papers reflecting the political, economic, security, social, and cultural dimensions of globalization all in one volume offered the reader a more complex interpretation of globalization.

While the workshops sought to cover the region as comprehensively as possible, no papers on Brunei were presented for lack of appropriate scholarship. Furthermore, newer ASEAN countries like Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar are not discussed in separate chapters but studied as a collective.

As with any project, this book and its preceding workshops would not have been possible without the help of many people. I would like to thank all

the chapter contributors for their insightful and stimulating contribution, not to mention their patience as this book underwent the editorial process.

The support and encouragement of Mr K. Kesavapany, Director of ISEAS, was instrumental in executing the two workshops and this book. ISEAS Deputy Director Dr Chin Kin Wah also offered sound advice and encouragement. Special thanks must go to Professor Thommy Svensson, Director of SSAAPS, whose interest in the region enabled the first workshop to materialize.

I am also grateful to Dr Derek Da Cunha whose expertise and intellectual rigour contributed immensely to the editing process. I thank Professor Chua Beng Huat who kindly agreed to make the opening remarks for the second workshop. Lastly special thanks must go to Betty Kwan whose patience and administrative skills ensured that the workshops ran smoothly, and the ISEAS Publications Unit whose highly professional input made the editing process so much easier.

Terence Chong
Editor

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