

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

<https://www.e-ir.info/2025/03/26/asean-centrality-and-its-narratives-in-an-evolving-regional-order/>

BARBORA VALOCKOVA, MAR 26 2025

Despite increasing challenges to ASEAN centrality, the concept still has demonstrable effects on regional dynamics by shaping how actors frame their interests and engagement strategies. However, to minimize the rhetoric-reality gap, or in other words, the disconnect between formal endorsements of ASEAN centrality (functional narratives) and its practical undermining (undermining of ASEAN's actual central role), ASEAN needs to strive to adapt. Adaptation would increase its relevance and agency amid intensifying great power competition and complex transnational threats. The first section of this article establishes the significance of ASEAN's central role. In the second part, I evaluate the strategic deployment of the ASEAN centrality narrative by various actors. In the final section, I highlight areas where ASEAN should focus and adapt to maintain substantive centrality in regional affairs.

Importance and Effectiveness of ASEAN Centrality

The concept of centrality was formally institutionalized in the ASEAN Charter of 2007, which explicitly mandated maintaining “the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners” (ASEAN 2007, 4). This codification reflected ASEAN's growing awareness of the need to articulate its role amid the rapidly evolving regional architecture. From a theoretical standpoint, ASEAN centrality is understood through multiple lenses. Tan (2017) presents five interrelated conceptions: regional leader, regional convener, regional hub/node, regional driver of progress, and regional convenience. Other scholars analyzed conceptions such as leader, convener, convenience, necessity (Mueller 2019) and scope setter (Valockova 2021).

ASEAN centrality has yielded several notable successes. ASEAN's centrality is manifested in its role as the architect of regional security community institutions in Asia. ASEAN has established a dense network of institutional arrangements that collectively constitute the most comprehensive regional architecture in the Indo-Pacific. This institutional ecosystem has provided platforms for dialogue on sensitive security issues, economic integration, and socio-cultural cooperation (Caballero-Anthony 2014). From the mid-1990s through the early 2010s, ASEAN expanded its family of institutions to include the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).

This expansion positioned ASEAN as the primary platform for macro-regional dialogue, with the Association serving as the “steering wheel” of macro-regional processes (Koldunova 2025). ASEAN's institutional architecture is characterized by what has been termed a “multiplex regional architecture,” which maintains and develops a network of different groupings rather than allowing a single forum to control the region's political, economic, and security processes (SIIA 2015). This approach softens questions of inclusion and exclusion, diffuses competition for influence among different powers, and emphasizes community-building based on cooperation norms rather than power calculations (SIIA 2015).

ASEAN centrality has enabled the organization to play a crucial balancing role in managing relations between major powers, particularly the United States and China. As the only neutral broker with the convening power and credibility to organize multilateral dialogues, ASEAN has been able to mitigate the mistrust among the key powers of the region – China, the United States, Japan, and India (Acharya 2023). By preventing any external power from controlling the

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

Written by Barbora Valockova

regional agenda, ASEAN has been able to create a conducive environment for balanced and inclusive dialogue, enhancing stability and cooperation in the region.

ASEAN has played a significant role in shaping regional norms and socializing external powers into accepting these norms. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), initially designed for Southeast Asian states, has become a key normative framework for the wider region, with major powers including China, the United States, and Russia becoming signatories. Through its leadership in regional forums, ASEAN has promoted norms such as non-interference, consensus-based decision-making, and peaceful resolution of disputes. These norms have helped facilitate a more predictable and stable regional environment, despite the absence of binding security arrangements.

The intensifying strategic competition between the United States and China presents perhaps the most significant external challenge to ASEAN centrality. As both powers advance competing visions for regional order – through initiatives such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the US Indo-Pacific Strategy – ASEAN risks being marginalized or divided along great power fault lines (Laksmana 2020). China’s economic gravity and geographic proximity give it substantial influence within Southeast Asia. At the same time, many ASEAN states maintain security ties with the United States and seek its continued regional presence as a counterbalance to Chinese power. This creates a delicate balancing act for ASEAN, which must navigate between these competing interests while maintaining its autonomous role (Tan 2021).

Internal challenges within ASEAN further complicate the organization’s ability to maintain centrality. The diversity of political systems, development levels, and strategic orientations among member states makes cohesive action difficult, particularly on sensitive issues where external powers have significant stakes (Weatherbee 2019). The crisis in Myanmar following the February 2021 military coup has highlighted ASEAN’s limited ability to address internal challenges effectively. Despite the development of the Five-Point Consensus, ASEAN has struggled to influence the situation meaningfully, raising questions about its credibility as a regional actor (Jones 2023). Institutional capacity constraints also undermine ASEAN centrality. The ASEAN Secretariat remains relatively small and under-resourced compared to other international organizations (CIL 2015), limiting its ability to drive ambitious regional initiatives.

The organization’s consensus-based decision-making has often resulted in lowest-common-denominator outcomes, particularly on contentious issues such as the South China Sea disputes. ASEAN’s inability to form a unified position on China’s assertive actions has highlighted the constraints of centrality when member states have divergent strategic interests (Limsiritong, Springall and Rojanawanichkij 2019). Moreover, ASEAN-led forums have been criticized for being “talk shops” that produce declarations but lack enforcement mechanisms. The gap between normative aspirations and practical outcomes has thus raised questions about the substantive impact of ASEAN centrality beyond procedural influence (Jones and Smith 2007).

The emergence of minilateral groupings and alternative frameworks represents another significant challenge to ASEAN centrality. Arrangements such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) between the US, Japan, India, and Australia, and the AUKUS security partnership between Australia, the UK, and the US could potentially bypass ASEAN-led mechanisms in addressing regional security challenges (Chong 2024). These developments reflect a growing “dissatisfaction with ASEAN centrality” among some external powers (Nagy 2023) and perception that ASEAN-led processes may be insufficient to address regional challenges. Furthermore, ASEAN members’ views on these new groupings differ, creating potential internal divisions that could undermine ASEAN centrality and “be exploited by external powers” (Koga 2022, 12).

Strategic Deployment of the ASEAN Centrality Narrative by Different Actors

To add to the assessment of and debate about ASEAN centrality, I propose to evaluate ASEAN centrality through the lens of strategic narratives. Strategic narratives represent a powerful tool in international relations, functioning as constructed accounts that shape perceptions and influence behavior. As Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle (2013, 5) explain, strategic narratives draw together “the most salient of international relations concepts, including the links between power and ideas; international and domestic; and state and non-state actors”. These narratives are not merely descriptive but performative—they actively work to construct a particular understanding of reality that serves

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

Written by Barbora Valockova

specific interests. Therefore, it is a useful framework to examine the rhetoric-reality gap related to ASEAN centrality.

In the case of ASEAN, centrality has been used as a strategic narrative tool serving several functions such as identity construction and legitimation. This instrumental and utilitarian aspect of ASEAN centrality implies that the concept can serve particular interests to advance specific agendas, resulting in either promoting or undermining ASEAN centrality.

ASEAN collectively deploys the centrality narrative as a means of self-preservation and to maintain relevance in a region dominated by larger powers. As Koldunova (2025) contends, “ASEAN centrality is interesting and necessary, first of all, for ASEAN itself as a condition for self-preservation as an independent centre of power amid rapidly changing international configurations.” The narrative helps ASEAN position itself as the “core of regionalism in East Asia and the Asia Pacific” (Severino 2007, 406) despite being composed of middle and smaller states. ASEAN officially articulates centrality through formal documents like the ASEAN Charter. This deployment serves to maintain ASEAN’s “legitimacy and credibility, which further enhances its capacity to play a leading role” (SIIA 2015, 2) in regional affairs.

Individual ASEAN members deploy the centrality narrative differently based on their national interests and hedging preferences. Some members prioritize alignment with China, while others lean toward the United States, creating internal friction that undermines the unity necessary for effective centrality (Das 2024). The Philippines, for example, has sought “closer defence cooperation with the United States and other external powers to defend its legitimate maritime claims against Chinese encroachment” despite “quiet discontentment and criticism from some ASEAN members” (Yaacob 2024). This demonstrates how individual member states may strategically bypass the centrality narrative when it fails to serve their security interests.

Another case in point is the Myanmar junta who has completely failed to adhere to its rhetoric regarding the Five-Point Consensus. Despite Senior General Min Aung Hlaing formally agreeing to the Five-Point Consensus in April 2021, the junta has shown no genuine commitment to implementing any of its five points (Wahyuningrum 2025). In consequence, as Singapore’s Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen noted, “Myanmar’s behaviour risks undermining the ASEAN Centrality that we have painstakingly built over the past two decades” (*Channel News Asia* 2024).

External powers sometimes use rhetorical support for ASEAN centrality as a deflection strategy. The case in point is when China and the United States publicly endorse ASEAN centrality while simultaneously pursuing actions that potentially undermine it. Both countries have reiterated their support for ASEAN centrality and established comprehensive strategic partnerships with ASEAN in recent years. However, their competitive strategic investments in the region often create “more challenges than opportunities for ASEAN” (Zhang 2023). This pattern aligns with what Das (2024, 57) describes as a paradox where the shifting dynamics compel nations to collaborate, but this “collective effort inadvertently facilitates the pursuits of hegemonic powers in advancing their own agendas.” External powers thus sometimes effectively use ASEAN centrality as a rhetorical shield while pursuing policies that may undermine regional cohesion.

China deploys the ASEAN centrality narrative while simultaneously sidelining it through bilateral approaches when navigating contentious matters, particularly those involving territorial claims with ASEAN member states. This undermines ASEAN centrality because such “manipulation of divisions among the ASEAN member states further weakens the solidarity necessary to effectively counter China’s actions” (Das 2024, 57).

Moreover, while publicly supporting the Code of Conduct negotiations, China has historically used delaying tactics: “Beijing’s strategy had been to frustrate ASEAN by doing nothing, except talk and talk about a ‘declaration’ of conduct” (Kassim, 2019). Furthermore, China’s actions in the South China Sea directly contradicted its rhetoric. Throughout 2024, China “markedly stepped up its intimidation, harassment, and coercion against Philippine Navy, Philippine Coast Guard, and civilian vessels” (Thayer 2025). This suggests rhetorical support without substantive commitment.

The United States have consistently recognized and supported ASEAN centrality in various official documents and

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

Written by Barbora Valockova

statements while developing alternative frameworks that potentially undermine it, which contradicts its public support for ASEAN centrality. The Quad and AUKUS operate independently of ASEAN leadership and the “absence of Southeast Asian representation in the US-led Quad meetings raises questions about ASEAN’s standing in discussions that are pivotal to the region’s future, which is a notable paradox for the idea of ASEAN centrality” (Das 2024, 57). Therefore, Quad and AUKUS have “fuelled debates about the viability of ASEAN’s model of inclusive cooperation” (Teo 2023). They introduce competitive dynamics in regional institution-building and potentially dilute ASEAN’s convening power because “although the Quad members explicitly expressed their strong support for ASEAN centrality, there has yet to be any clear policy outlined on the distribution of institutional roles between them” (Koga 2022, 12).

For ASEAN, the centrality narrative legitimizes its leadership role despite limited material capabilities. For external powers, it legitimizes their regional engagement by presenting it as supportive of regional norms. However, it can also be bypassed or used to deflect criticism of actions and mechanisms that might undermine regional unity and ASEAN’s role. Therefore, ASEAN centrality can be a double-edged sword.

Beyond the Narrative: Sustaining the Substance of ASEAN Centrality

Scholars and analysts remain divided on the question of ASEAN centrality. While some are more skeptical (see for example, Beeson (2022)), others highlight the value in ASEAN centrality (see for example, Koldunova (2025)). I argue that in the long term to mitigate the risk of an increasing gap between rhetoric (centrality as a functional narrative) and reality (substantive centrality), ASEAN should seek adaptation in three areas.

To sustain its centrality, ASEAN should pursue institutional reforms that enhance its responsiveness, effectiveness, and cohesion. This could include strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat’s resources and mandate, developing more flexible decision-making mechanisms for urgent issues, and improving implementation monitoring for ASEAN agreements (SIIA 2015; Cogan 2022). Enhanced coordination among ASEAN-led mechanisms could reduce fragmentation and duplication while creating clearer division of labor among these forums (Sundram 2025). This would strengthen ASEAN’s ability to manage complex regional challenges through complementary institutional processes.

ASEAN centrality depends fundamentally on the organization’s ability to maintain strategic autonomy amid great power competition. This requires a nuanced approach to external relations that resists exclusive alignment with any single power while engaging constructively with all (Anwar 2019). In particular, through its ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) adopted in 2019, ASEAN responded strategically to competing regional visions. By articulating its own conception of regional order based on inclusivity, transparency, and ASEAN centrality, ASEAN has attempted to reclaim narrative control (Kliem 2019) and position itself as an independent actor rather than a passive subject of great power competition. ASEAN should continue to develop this approach by identifying specific areas where it can exercise leadership based on its comparative advantages – such as promoting inclusive economic architecture, maritime cooperation, and non-traditional security issues.

Rather than viewing minilateral arrangements as inherent threats to ASEAN centrality, ASEAN could adopt a more proactive approach to engagement with these frameworks. This could include developing formal consultation mechanisms with groupings like the Quad, proposing joint initiatives on shared concerns, and exploring ways to connect minilateral arrangements with ASEAN-led processes (Khoe 2023; Chong 2024). In addition, ASEAN could develop more concrete implementation mechanisms for the AOIP (Hussain 2019) that demonstrate how external initiatives can align with ASEAN-centered regional architecture.

Enhancing ASEAN centrality, however, is a daunting task because it involves overcoming implementation barriers. First, institutional reforms encounter resistance due to sovereignty concerns. Proposals to strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat and develop more flexible decision-making mechanisms confront the deeply entrenched “ASEAN Way” of consensus-based diplomacy. Member states would need to “do away with the preeminence of sovereignty” (Cogan 2022) to move toward greater coherence—a difficult concession given the diverse political systems and historical experiences within ASEAN. Second, strengthening strategic autonomy is complicated by economic

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

Written by Barbora Valockova

dependencies. With China being ASEAN's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years (*Bernama-VNA* 2024), many member states face economic pressures that constrain their strategic options. Addressing these economic vulnerabilities would require enhancing alternative partnerships and reducing dependencies—a long-term process necessitating sustained political will. Finally, engaging with minilateral arrangements requires overcoming internal divisions about their strategic implications. The Quad and AUKUS have caused division among member states on whether these frameworks complement or undermine ASEAN centrality. Developing a unified approach to these arrangements would require reconciling divergent security perspectives among members who variously prioritize alignment with China or the United States.

Conclusion

ASEAN centrality has been a significant achievement maintaining peace in the region. By establishing itself as the hub of regional multilateralism and the primary convener of inclusive dialogue, ASEAN has exercised an influence disproportionate to the individual capabilities of its member states. At the same time, ASEAN centrality has become a powerful narrative tool wielded by various actors for strategic purposes. ASEAN member states and major powers use it to frame their interests and engagement strategies. Therefore, in the current geopolitical landscape, ASEAN centrality is “neither predetermined nor guaranteed,” (Koldunova 2025) requiring consistent efforts to preserve its relevance amid shifting power dynamics.

We have seen that ASEAN centrality sometimes functions as a strategic narrative that can be deployed by various actors for their own purposes, creating a significant gap between rhetoric and reality. To minimize the rhetoric-reality gap and boost the credibility of ASEAN centrality, ASEAN should adapt while preserving the core principles that have underpinned its approach to regional engagement. The path forward requires balancing continuity and change – ASEAN should maintain its fundamental commitment to its values while developing more robust institutional mechanisms, enhancing its strategic autonomy, and engaging proactively with external initiatives. As such, formal endorsements of ASEAN centrality (functional narratives) are more likely to be accompanied by practical implementation and substantive commitment. Then, as ASEAN Sec-Gen, Dr Kao Kim put it, ASEAN will “become a real centripetal force.” (LKYSPP 2024).

References

- Acharya, Amitav. 2023. “ASEAN Centrality Still Key to Managing Regional Conflicts.” *East Asia Forum*, December 6, <https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/12/06/asean-centrality-still-key-to-managing-regional-conflicts/>.
- Anwar, Dewi Fortuna. “ASEAN Centrality and the Evolving US Indo-Pacific Strategy.” *Pacific Forum* 19(4): 3-4, https://pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/issuesinsights_Vol19CR4_USASEAN_0.pdf.
- ASEAN. 2007. “Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.” November 20, Singapore.
- Beeson, Mark. 2022. “Decentered? ASEAN's Struggle to Accommodate Great Power Competition.” *Global Studies Quarterly* 2(1): 1-9.
- Bernama-VNA. “China Remains ASEAN's Largest Trading Partner for 15 Consecutive Years.” *Bernama*, August 11, 2024. <https://bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2328096>.
- Caballero-Anthony, Mely. 2014. “Understanding ASEAN's Centrality: Bases and Prospects in an Evolving Regional architecture.” *The Pacific Review* 27(4): 563–584.
- Channel News Asia. 2024. “Myanmar's Behavior Risks Undermining ASEAN Centrality: Ng Eng Hen.” November 20, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/defence-minister-ng-eng-hen-asean-myanmar-conflict-behaviour-4759681>.
- Chong, Byron. 2024. “Navigating Minilateralism: Challenges and Opportunities for ASEAN.” *ASEAN Bulletin*,

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

Written by Barbora Valockova

September 30, <https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/cag/publications/center-publications/publication-article/detail/navigating-minilateralism-challenges-and-opportunities-for-asean>.

Centre for International Law (CIL). 2015. "Integration through Law: The ASEAN Way in a Comparative Context." National University of Singapore.

Cogan, Mark S. 2022. "Need for ASEAN Reform Has Never Been Greater." Institute for Security and Development Policy, November 4, <https://www.isdp.eu/need-for-asean-reform-has-never-been-greater/>.

Das, Om Prakash. 2024. "Navigating ASEAN Centrality amidst Internal Friction and Interplay of Strategic Frameworks between the US and China." *Journal of Defence Studies* 18(1): 43-66.

Hussain, Nazia. 2019. "The Idea of Indo-Pacific: ASEAN Steps In." RSIS Commentary, July 17, <https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/the-idea-of-indo-pacific-asean-steps-in/>.

Jones, William J. 2023. "ASEAN's Credibility and Centrality on the Line amid Crisis in Myanmar." *East Asia Forum*, December 25, <https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/12/25/aseans-credibility-and-centrality-on-the-line-amid-crisis-in-myanmar/>.

Jones, David Martin and Smith, Michael L. R. "Making Process, Not Progress: ASEAN and the Evolving East Asian Regional Order." *International Security* 32 (1): 148-84.

Kassim, Yang Razali. 2019. "US-China Conflict: Will ASEAN Centrality Be Derailed?" RSIS Commentary, May 31, <https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/us-china-conflict-will-asean-centrality-be-derailed/>.

Khoe, Yee Han. 2023 "Should ASEAN Engage the Quad?" *Stratsea*, June 7, <https://stratsea.com/should-asean-engage-the-quad/>.

Kliem, Frederick. 2019. "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific: Seizing the Narrative?" *RSIS Commentaries* 33, November, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Multilateral-Matters-Oct-2019-V2_compressed.pdf.

Koldunova, Ekaterina. 2025. "Why ASEAN Centrality Still Matters." Valdai Club, February 13, <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/why-asean-centrality-still-matters/>.

Koga, Kei. 2022. "Quad 3.0: Japan, Indo-Pacific and Minilateralism." *East Asian Policy* 14(01): 20-38.

Laksmana, Evan A. 2020. "Whose Centrality? ASEAN and the Quad in the Indo-Pacific." *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 3(5): 106-117.

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP). 2024. "ASEAN's Challenges in an Increasingly Fragmented World." *Global-Is-Asian*, April 19, <https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/gia/article/asean-s-challenges-in-an-increasingly-fragmented-world>.

Limsiritong, Nattapat, Springall, Apiradee, and Rojanawanichkij, Onkanya. 2019. "The Difficulty of ASEAN Decision Making Mode on South China Sea Dispute: The ASEAN Charter Perspective." *Asian Political Science Review* 3(1): 25-33.

Miskimmon, Alister, O'Loughlin, Ben, and Roselle, Laura. 2013. *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order*. New York: Routledge.

Mueller, Lukas Maximilian. 2019. "ASEAN Centrality under Threat – The Cases of RCEP and Connectivity." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 8(2): 177–198.

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

Written by Barbora Valockova

- Nagy, Stephen. 2023. "ASEAN's Institutional Vulnerabilities Are Driving Minilateralism". *The Strategist*, March 22, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/aseans-institutional-vulnerabilities-are-driving-minilateralism/>.
- Severino, C. Rodolfo. 2007. "ASEAN Beyond Forty: Towards Political and Economic Integration." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 29 (3): 406- 423.
- Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA). 2015. "ASEAN Centrality in the Regional Architecture." January, <https://www.siiainline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2015-05-Policy-Brief-ASEAN-Centrality-in-the-Regional-Architecture.pdf>.
- Sundram, Pushpanathan. 2025. "Network Governance in ASEAN: Fostering Regional Cooperation and Integration." *Frontiers in Political Science* 7: 1-15.
- Tan, See Seng. 2017. "Rethinking 'ASEAN Centrality' in the Regional Governance of East Asia." *The Singapore Economic Review* 62(3): 721-740.
- Tan, Alvin. 2021. "Keynote Address at the 36th ASEAN Roundtable." Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore, October 12, <https://www.mti.gov.sg/Newsroom/Speeches/2021/10/Keynote-Address-by-MOS-Alvin-Tan-at-the-36th-ASEAN-Roundtable>.
- Teo, Sarah. 2023. "ASEAN Centrality: Not the Best, But Still Good?" *Counterpoint Southeast Asia* 8, October 3, <http://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/cag/publications/center-publications/publication-article/detail/asean-centrality-not-the-best-but-still-good>.
- Thayer, Carl. 2025. "The State of the South China Sea: Coercion at Sea, Slow Progress on a Code of Conduct." *The Diplomat*, January 27, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/01/the-state-of-the-south-china-sea-coercion-at-sea-slow-progress-on-a-code-of-conduct/>.
- Valockova, Barbora. 2021. "ASEAN's Limited Centrality in Connectivity: Managing Infrastructure Competition between China and Japan." *Asia Policy* 16(1): 129-153.
- Wahyuningrum, Yuyun. 2025. "Time to End ASEAN's Accommodative Approach in Myanmar." *The Jakarta Post*, February 12, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2025/02/12/time-to-end-aseans-accommodative-approach-in-myanmar.html>.
- Weatherbee, Donald E. 2019. *ASEAN's Half Century: A Political History of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Yaacob, Rahman. 2024. "The Translator: 'ASEAN Centrality.'" *The Interpreter*, April 4, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/translator-asean-centrality>.
- Zhang, Jie. 2023. "Rebuilding Strategic Autonomy: ASEAN's Response to US-China Strategic Competition." *China International Strategy Review* 30: 1-17.

About the author:

Barbora Valockova is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre on Asia and Globalisation (CAG), Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. She obtained her PhD in Public Policy and Global Affairs from Nanyang Technological University and researches Asia-Europe relations, the role of Southeast Asia in global governance in the Indo-Pacific, and domestic sources of Southeast Asian foreign and strategic policies. She is the

ASEAN Centrality and Its Narratives in an Evolving Regional Order

Written by Barbora Valockova

main editor of CAG's Counterpoint Southeast Asia webinar and policy brief series.