# Regionalism and Multilateralism: Southeast Asia

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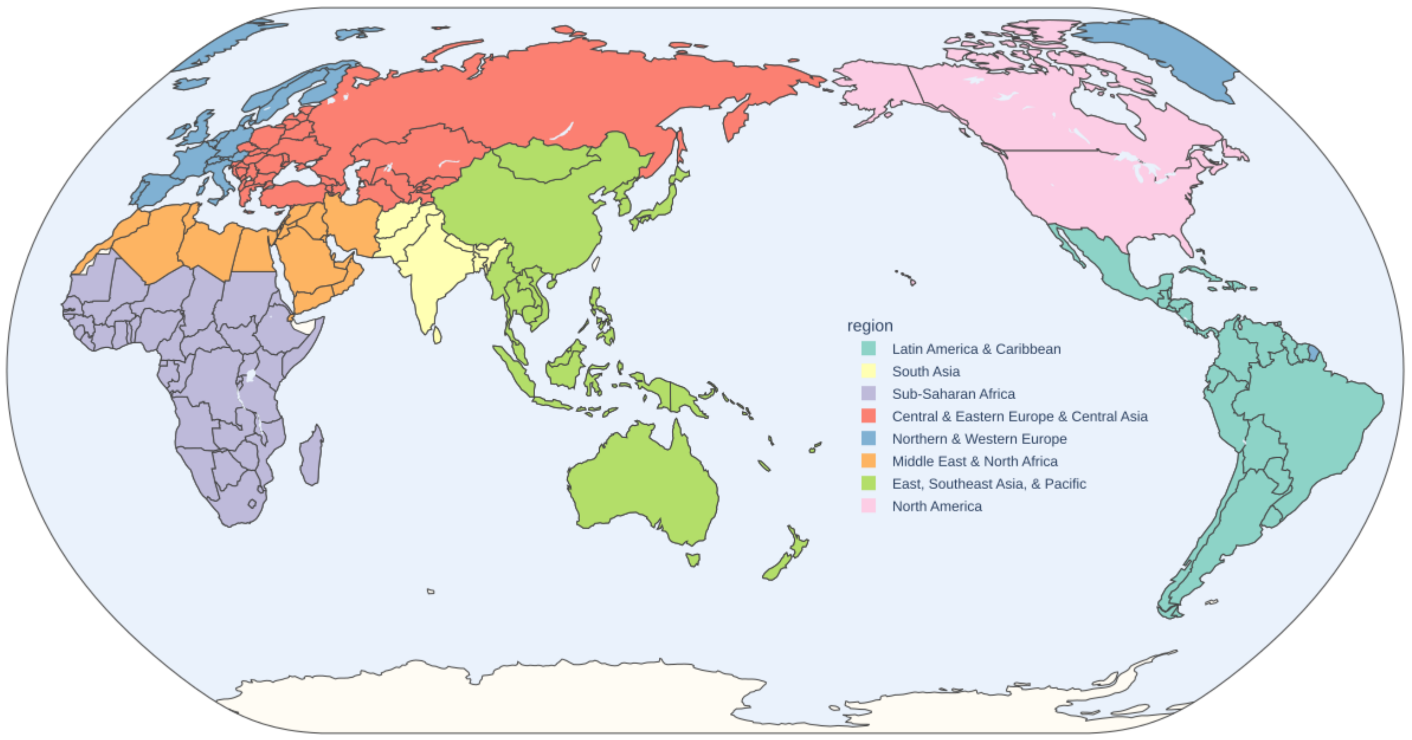
Selina Ho
Dean’s Chair Associate Professor and
Vice-Dean (Research and Development)
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
National University of Singapore

# Why Regions?

- Order transition
- Role of regions in multilateralism and global governance
- Advantages of regions
- "Incubators of Innovation"



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# Incubators of Innovation

- **Free trade and global trading system**





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# Incubators of Innovation

- **Governance of emerging technologies and new forms of economy**





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# Incubators of Innovation

- **Evolving rules-based order**

"ASEAN "soft law" refers to non-legally binding agreements, principles and declarations used within ASEAN to guide cooperation and integration among its member states. These instruments, while not imposing strict legal obligations, play a crucial role in shaping norms, promoting consensus, and fostering regional collaboration." (ChatGPT)

"ASEAN's soft laws (often in the form of declarations and blueprints" is the preeminent instrument of choice to operationalize their diverse goals ranging from security and defence to resource-intensive socio-economic development ambitions." (Tan, EJIL, June 6, 2025)

June 6, 2025

**No Longer Hard Law's 'Poor Relative': The Growing Respect for Soft, Non-Binding Legal Instruments in the International Order**

*Written by Tan Hsien-Li*



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# Reinvigorating Regionalism and Multilateralism

- Article 52 of the UN Charter recognizes that regional organizations may be in a better position to address region-specific disputes
- The uncertainties when the Cold War ended led to a reinvigoration of regionalism
- The world stands at another precipice
- Regions are again at the forefront of experiments to tackle global challenges
- Devolve greater authority and resources to regions



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