

## **‘NEW REGIONALISM’: ASEAN – REPUBLIC OF KOREA (ROK) PARTNERSHIP IN SOCIO-CULTURAL AND EDUCATION EXCHANGES**

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### **Abstract**

ASEAN and South Korea have achieved substantial progress in political and economic relationship since 1989, when they first established a dialogue partnership. In 2010, their relationship further developed into a ‘Strategic Partnership in Peace and Prosperity’. ASEAN and South Korea share a common interest in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond. ‘New regionalism’ theory has become current interest in regionalism and is undoubtedly one of the important trends in contemporary international relations. This theory focuses more on ‘deep integration’ between countries. ASEAN and South Korea emerged from the same root of colonization and escalated to become the second largest trading partner with its relationship thriving in tourism and educational sector. In this study, I focus on the development of ‘new regionalism’ in ASEAN and Republic of South Korea partnership as well as their regional integration efforts in the area of socio-culture and education. The study contributes to the existing knowledge of regionalism between ASEAN-Korea; the mutual relationship which emerged from economic and political-security into the area of socio-culture and education.

*Keywords:* ASEAN, Republic of South Korea, socio-culture, education, new regionalism

### **Introduction**

For more than two decades, ASEAN and Korea have strengthened mutual cooperation in various sectors. These two have worked together to enhance regional, political and security and became a part of a family in ARF, APT, ADMM and so on. They have worked together to increase economic sector within the region. ASEAN is now Korea’s second most important trading bloc and Korea’s ODA has become an important development resource for low-income ASEAN member states. Moving forward in socio-cultural and academic exchanges areas, the Korean wave has penetrated the lives of many people in ASEAN, and some five million Koreans that have visited the member states annually. Furthermore, various forms of academic cooperation between ASEAN and Korea are actively being implemented as large numbers of scholars and students are visiting each country and studying to understand the dynamic of these regions.

ASEAN and ROK were colonized by the Japanese in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Japan, after winning wars against China and Russia, forcibly annexed Korea and instituted colonial rule in 1910 until the Japan defeat in WWII in 1945. Since then, like all other countries after colonization, ROK began to develop themselves. During the 1960s, Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world with per capita income of less than \$100 (Choe & Malarcher, 2011). Korea then

started to carry out its first five-years economic plans that fully utilized its well-educated manpower<sup>25</sup>. Koreans began with highly labour-intensive industries which then restructured its industry to heavy industry in 1970s. In the 1990s, Korean emphasis on high-tech industries which Koreans excel in industries of steel<sup>26</sup>, ships<sup>27</sup>, automobiles<sup>28</sup>, constructions, armaments, electronics and chemicals. In order to fulfil the agenda in becoming an industrialized country, Korea chose an export-driven economic strategy and in almost thirty-five years later. In 1997, Korean's export had increased 2,480 times, and imports 340 times compared to 1962. Although, Korea have also impacted from the Asian Financial Crisis which occurred in 1997/98, ROK has been advocating a series of comprehensive reform measures in the corporate, financial, and labour sectors to address important difficulties in the economy. Under the leadership of Kim Dae-jung governance and successful negotiation with IMF and foreign debts, Korea has overcome the problems by creating an economic structure suitable for an advance economy. By 2010, ROK became the sixth largest exporters and eighth largest importers. In 2014, ROK GDP reached US\$ 28 million and in 2015, ROK GDP ranked thirteenth in the world.

Apart from politically and economically stability, Korea also began to expand its culture worldwide. In the late nineteenth century, Korea was known as the country of morning serenity, a place where everything was static and slow in those days. In the twentieth century, Korea blossomed into an energized and dynamic country. Skyscrapers were built in the cities and towns and modernization began to change its culture and people. Nevertheless, there are still old people, the historians were able to nurture the young generations to preserve their national identities and old traditions which are valuable to the Koreans.

Koreans have established its public-school system as early as AD 372 called 'Taehak' in the Goguryeo dynasty. This public-school system continues to exist as "Gughak" during the Silla dynasty, "Gukjagam" during the Goryeo dynasty, and "Seongyungwan" during the Joseon dynasty. Private schools called "gyeongdang" also existed through Goguryeo, Silla and Goryeo dynasties. In Joseon, there were private schools called "seowon" for yangbans<sup>29</sup> and "seodang" for commoners. The current educational system<sup>30</sup> in Korea has been modelled on the American system; preschool followed by six years of primary education and six years of secondary education. Education was made compulsory for children. Thanks to this government effort for which Korea enjoys almost a hundred-percent literacy rate.

This culture in enriching lives with knowledge has become major roles in promoting the political, economy, and socio-cultural for Koreans. Education has served as a means of political socialization by instructing students in knowledge and behaviour patterns and attitudes regarding democratic values and systems and by bringing up political leaders and politicians (the Korean Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development, 2003).

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<sup>25</sup> In 1960s, Korea had almost no natural resources.

<sup>26</sup> The steel industry had been the backbone of Korean economic development. One of the most successful company, Pohang Iron and Steel Company (POSCO) is the leading steel producer in Korea and third-largest in the world that produces 31 million tonnes on steel each year.

<sup>27</sup> Seven Korean shipbuilding are amongst the world top ten which produces tankers, containers, cruise ship etc.

<sup>28</sup> Korean cars also recognised worldwide. Amongst the top are Hyundai.

<sup>29</sup> Yangbans was a traditional ruling class during the Joseon dynasty which they were mainly civil-servants and military officers.

<sup>30</sup> Changes begin in middle 1990s

## ASEAN-ROK Relations

Historically, both ASEAN countries and Korea share the similar colonization period. Disappointment of the local public due to foreign control of their lands led to nationalist movement which eventually fructified in gaining independence from their foreign masters. The transaction of these periods was a product of WWII and it continued to the end of Cold War, Korean War and lastly the changing in the global system. Referring to Caballero & Anthony (2005), the post-Cold War events showed the critical needs for political security framework particularly in the Asia Pacific region that would assist the region in achieving peace and prosperity in the region. The world system revolves around economic dimension where trading as the primary basis on linkages between countries (Caballero & Anthony, 2005). Now the “new regionalism” needs to be related to the changes in terms of politics, economy, and socio-culture.

Since the establishment of the Dialogue Partnership in 1989, ASEAN-Korea relationship has exhibited a remarkable integration and interdependence. For more than two decades, ASEAN member states and ROK have witnessed a vast improvement of their relationship in many areas. One of the most significant improvement was the establishment of an ASEAN-Korea Centre in Seoul, which was made to foster economic and socio-cultural ties with ASEAN and its member states. Furthermore, ASEAN has now established itself as Korea’s second largest partner in the areas of trade, investment, and construction ((AKC), 2016) and became the top travel destination for Koreans.

Korea has emerged as the new middle-power<sup>31</sup> that displays a stable and legitimate foreign policy worldwide through multilateral and cooperative initiatives (Mo, 2016). Middle power countries play a significant role in a wide range of important global issue areas and supports liberal international order with its leadership diplomacy. ASEAN on the other hand showed a tremendous growth in economics, politics, and social since its inception in 1967. ASEAN has open up its door to globalization and became a platform to all major powers in the world to cooperate in political, economic, and social. After the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997/98, ASEAN have seen the importance of cooperation among member and non-members states. ASEAN established organization such as ARF, AKFTA, EAC, APT, ASEAN + 6, APEC of which ROK is one of the members and ROK even signed the TAC in 2004. ASEAN cooperation has been both a goal and a process which are shared by its 10 members in order to become a great nation and recognized world-wide.

## Introduction to “New regionalism”

Referring to (Burfisher, Robinson , & Thierfelder 2004), regionalism comes in two waves; the “first wave” or referred as “old regionalism” begins in the first twenty to thirty years after WWII; according to (Söderbaum, 2003) it emerged in late 1940s in Western Europe and spread to regions in the South which later died in late 1960s and early 1970s. This period was primarily seen as a process of economic integration and security alliances, for example SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) with its main purpose was for collective defence against communist. Old regionalism has been defined as a ‘theory of co-operative hegemony’ and ‘a planned merger of national economies through cooperation’ with the State as the primary

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<sup>31</sup> In international relations, a middle power is a sovereign state that is not a superpower nor a great power, but still has large or moderate influence and international recognition. Another definition, by the Middle Power Initiative: "Middle power countries are politically and economically significant, internationally respected countries that have renounced the nuclear arms race, a standing that give them significant international credibility."

reference point (Gill, 2008). This theory believes that with increased economic and politic cooperation between two or more nations, it will likely have high levels on interdependency in economic and politic, and that states will not go to war on one another.

‘New regionalism’ is a new phenomenon which took place in late 1980s after the end of Cold War. Referring to (Either, 1998), there are six characteristic of the new regionalism which are; a) the new regionalism typically involves one or small countries linking up with a large country b) the small country have recently made, or are making a significant unilateral form c) the degree of liberalisation and free trade progress are rather smooth and slow d) the liberalisation achieved is primarily by small countries e) regionalisation are often ‘deep integration’<sup>32</sup> the partnership is not just focusing on trade barriers or economic policies but rather harmonising in other matters as well f) most of regional arrangement are based on strategic location; meaning that the countries are mostly neighbours. These characters concluded that regional integration which involves small countries have links with its large neighbour country in order to build “deep integration” between them.

It is also important to recognise that ‘new regionalism’ is characterized by its multi-dimensionality, complexity, fluidity and non-conformity, and by the fact that it involves a variety of state and non-state actors, who often come together in rather informal multi-actor coalitions (Söderbaum, 2003). (O’Malley) also stated that the ‘new regionalism’ is closely related to globalization by enhancing the integration and interaction amongst regions. In layman term, the differences between ‘old regionalism’ and ‘new regionalism’ is that the ‘old regionalism’ had a narrow focus (focus on trade arrangement and security alliances) and is basically towards Eurocentric<sup>33</sup> and ‘new regionalism’ is plural and global, focusing more on ‘deep integration’ between countries.

The relationship between ASEAN-ROK came under various of platforms which showed the commitments towards a successful regional cooperation. There are bilateral and multilateral relationship that came under ARF, APT, EAS, and ADMM Plus which has improved the mutual friendship between these two parties. With diverse issues and discussion brought into the platforms served under ASEAN, ROK has been empowered in their country’s position within the region.

The initial stage of the official relationship between ASEAN – ROK started with the establishment of the Sectorial Dialogue Partnership<sup>34</sup> in 2 November 1989 – where both ASEAN and ROK began concentrating in the areas of trade, investment, and tourism. Both parties continuously expanded towards the development cooperation, transfer of technology, and human resources development (HRD). The signing was done in the presence of the Ambassadors of ASEAN member countries and Dialogue Countries, representatives of the EU and the UNDP, foreign dignitaries, senior officials of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, distinguished members of the private sectors of ASEAN and the Republic of Korea, as well as the Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat and his staff (ASEAN), 2017). In this partnership, ASEAN-ROK agreed upon setting up an ASEAN-ROK Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (ASEAN-ROK JSCC) represented by government officials from both

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<sup>32</sup> Deep integration, as defined by Simone Claar and Andrea Nölke, means trade agreements which not only contain rules on tariffs and conventional non-tariff trade restrictions, but which also regulate the business environment in a more general sense. Issues of deep integration include competition policy, investor rights, product standards, public procurement and intellectual property rights.

<sup>33</sup> Focusing on European culture or history to the exclusion of a wider view of the world; implicitly regarding European culture as pre-eminent.

<sup>34</sup> The Sectorial Dialogue Partnership officially commenced in 1989 between ASEAN and its dialogues partners which includes South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and European Union (EU).

sides which will facilitate the ASEAN-ROK Sectoral Dialogue Relations agreed area. In July 1991<sup>35</sup>, the relationship became a Full Dialogue Partnership at the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM)<sup>36</sup> in Kuala Lumpur and in 1997, the partnership elevated to a summit level whereby the cooperation between ASEAN-ROK was led to the development of official mechanism in various sectors.

Since then, the cooperation developed to a signing of the Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership at the 8th ASEAN-ROK Summit on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2004 in Vientiane and also adopted the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action (POA) to implement the Joint Declaration at the 9th ASEAN-ROK Summit on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. The growth of partnership extended to the establishment of ASEAN-ROK Centre<sup>37</sup> in Seoul in 2009 where this centre was used as an intergovernmental organisation to promote exchanges between South Korea and ASEAN member countries. Its objectives are 1) enhance ASEAN-Korea partnership, 2) promote mutual understanding through, 3) cultural exchange and people-to-people contact, and 4) support ASEAN integration efforts (CENTRE, 2016). This centre organized programme such as ASEAN school tour programme 2017, ASEAN Lecture series 2017, various youth network workshop, and culinary festivals as part of the activities that can strengthen the cooperation among ten member countries and ROK.

### **Socio-culture and Education Relationship**

The relationship between ASEAN-ROK came under various platforms which showed the commitments towards a successful regional cooperation. There are bilateral and multilateral relationship that came under ARF, APT, EAS, and ADMM Plus which have improved the mutual friendship between these two parties. With diverse issues and discussion brought into the platforms served under ASEAN, ROK has been empowered in their country's position within the region.

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<sup>35</sup> This is the second meeting of the ASEAN-ROK JSCC on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June 1991 in Seoul which was attended by delegations from ASEAN member countries and ROK. The meeting was to review the previous cooperation projects and also to enhance the area discussed (the development cooperation, transfer of technology and human resources development).

<sup>36</sup> AMM established in 1967. It an annual meeting with ministers and it has both formal / informal meeting and retreats in between.

<sup>37</sup> The ASEAN-Korea Centre was established as an intergovernmental organization with the aim to promote exchanges among Korea and the ten ASEAN Member States. It was officially inaugurated in 13 March 2009, the year which marked the 20th anniversary of the Dialogue Partnership between ASEAN and Korea in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed at the 11th ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) Summit in November 2007, and entered into force in December 2008(CENTRE, 2016).

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The history of socio-cultural exchanges between ASEAN-ROK countries cannot be easily reconstructed because of a lack in historical records (before the WWII). Thus, this study will highlight the significant changes which are divided into three phases that can help compare socio-cultural ties between ASEAN-ROK in each period of interest and allow a comparison of how these have changed and developed over time.

a) Establishment Period: 1989-1998

This phase was important for both ASEAN and ROK as they engaged in an official partnership and ROK began a Dialogue Partnership with ASEAN in 1989. ROK became a full Dialogue Partner in 1991 and the ASEAN-ROK partnership elevated to summit level in 1997. Official socio-cultural exchanges between ROK and ASEAN were initiated by KOICA. After KOICA was established in 1991, the Conclusion of Agreement on Korea Overseas Volunteer (KOV) with five ASEAN countries was signed over the period until 1997; the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Vietnam. This attempt was followed by an increase in the ASEAN-Korea Special Cooperation Fund (SCF) which has been launched in 1993 with its aim to intensify ASEAN-ROK cooperation. Its annual fund was one million until the figure doubled in the third year. The funding was mainly used for cooperation in the economic sector until the fund was separated and renamed as the Future Oriented Cooperation Fund (FOCF) in 1996. The FOCF used to enhance people-to-people exchanges between ASEAN-ROK, including youth exchanges, journalist exchanges, as well as cultural and art exchanges. In this phase, the people of ASEAN did not have much information on ROK, and vice versa. This was due to the fact that official cooperation was not yet established. The agenda of ASEAN-ROK was mainly carried out by these two governments. Therefore, there were not much socio-cultural changes in this period. The most significant achievement in this phase was the official interaction at government level that was established by ASEAN and ROK. This official tie became a platform supporting further socio-cultural exchanges in the years to come.

b) Development phase: 1999-2008

Korean wave is a key word to describe in this phase. The expansion of Korean dramas gained a lot of popularity in Southeast Asia countries after 1999. Hallyu, along with the rapid economic development of ASEAN countries has contributed to the increasing numbers of tourists for both ASEAN and ROK. Government efforts to foster socio-cultural ties between two sides also continued. ASEAN-ROK elevated their relationship to a Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership in 2004. During the fifteenth year of ASEAN-ROK anniversary, the Korean Cultural Center was opened in Hanoi for the first time in Southeast Asian country. The Center aimed to promote Korean culture and facilitate cultural exchanges overseas. In this development phase, ASEAN-ROK relationship became more robust and well-developed. The interaction was not only carried out by the government, but the society has also assisted in promoting each other's culture. The ASEAN people learn modern culture of Korean through Hallyu and caused ASEAN culture to slowly evolve in Korean people.

c) Consolidation phase: 2009-present

In this phase, ROK became a Strategic Partner of ASEAN and established a number of prestigious institutions to enhance socio-cultural cooperation with ASEAN. The effort begins with the establishment of AKC which was established in 2009. AKC is an international

organization established under agreement between ASEAN-ROK countries with aims not only to enhance the ASEAN-ROK partnership but also to promote mutual understanding between ASEAN and Korean societies by encouraging people-to-people exchanges. Korean Culture Centers for ASEAN countries additionally opened in Jakarta in Indonesia and Taguig City in Philippines in 2011, and also Bangkok, Thailand in 2013. Funding by FOCHF increased in 2010 and ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF) begin to operate with seven million USD annually in 2015 (MOFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). Numerous seminar and forum underlining socio-cultural exchanges between ASEAN-ROK have been funded by the government, including the ASEAN-Korea Culture and Art Forum (since 2010) and the Seminar on Korea-ASEAN Socio Cultural Partnership (since 2014). With these efforts, the socio-cultural exchanges become more dynamic and the number of visitors between two sides also increased which shows the importance of the relationship to continue stronger and stable.

### **‘New regionalism’ theory in Socio-cultural and Education ASEAN-ROK**

ASEAN-ROK today have seen a long standing of more than two decades of a cooperative relationship. There has been huge progress in economic ties – with ASEAN now being Korea’s second largest trading partner and investment destination. Socio-cultural exchanges between both sides such as tourism, pop-culture, and food have been equally blossoming (AKC, 2015). The first diplomatic partner of Korea within Southeast Asia was Philippines in 1949, followed by Thailand and Malaysia in 1960, Indonesia in 1973, Myanmar and Singapore in 1975, and Brunei in 1984 (Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011). Early diplomatic relations were accompanied by treaties to promote socio-cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchanges including cultural agreements, agreements for air services, scientific and technological cooperation agreements, and agreement on visa waivers (MOFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012). The first establishment of diplomatic partner with Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia did not result in any socio-cultural and people-to-people changes. The relationship then become an official dialogue partnership in 1989 and transformed to ‘full dialogue partner’ in 1991. The partnership was then elevated to ‘comprehensive cooperation partnership’ in 2004 and is now known as a ‘strategic partnership for peace and prosperity’ since 2010. The elevation of bilateral relations was aimed to promote ASEAN-ROK exchanges and at the same time reflect the intensification of human interactions. The recognition is shared that ASEAN-ROK socio-cultural interactions are mutually beneficial and indispensable for the prosperity of East Asia.

Referring to the comparison on ‘old regionalism’ and ‘new regionalism’, ‘new regionalism’ took place in late 1980s after the end of Cold War. Characteristic of the new regionalism referred to (Either, 1998) are a) the new regionalism typically involves one or small countries linking up with a large country, b) the small country have recently made, or are making a significant unilateral form, c) the degree of liberalisation and free trade progress are rather smooth and slow, d) the liberalisation achieved is primarily by small countries, e) regionalisation are often ‘deep integration’ the partnership not just focusing on trade barriers or economic policies but rather harmonising in other matters as well, f) most of regional arrangement are based on strategic location; meaning that the countries are mostly neighbours. In the matter of ASEAN-ROK, the relations fulfilled all four characters of ‘new regionalism’.

The elaboration of these characters is as below:

- a) the new regionalism typically involves one or small countries linking up with a large country. ASEAN-ROK involve a partnership between ASEAN as one of the successful regional association and ROK as the rising middle power country. In addition, ASEAN-

ROK involve in various regional mechanism such as ARF, APT, EAS, and ADMM Plus that supports the key interest in keeping up peace and success in each region. Apart from relations of ASEAN-ROK, South Korea had built diplomatic partnership with Philippines in 1949, followed by Thailand and Malaysia in 1960, Indonesia in 1973, Myanmar and Singapore in 1975, and Brunei in 1984. Thus, the bilateral relationship between South Korea and Southeast Asian countries continues until now.

- b) the small country has recently made, or are making a significant unilateral form. This can be seen in ROK acceptance of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in 1992, 1997 and 1995 which the official relations were severed following the installation of communist regimes. Since then, these three countries received visitors from Korea and likewise.
- c) regionalisation is often 'deep integration' the partnership not just focusing on trade barriers or economic policies but rather harmonising in other matters as well. This term is the most significant for ASEAN-ROK relationship. The first diplomatic partner of Korea in Southeast Asia was Philippines in 1949 followed by Thailand and Malaysia in 1960, Indonesia in 1973, Myanmar and Singapore in 1975 and Brunei in 1984. The relationship then became an official dialogue partnership in 1989, transformed to 'full dialogue partner' in 1991, elevated to 'comprehensive cooperation partnership' in 2004, and now as a 'strategic partnership for peace and prosperity' in 2010. The elevation of bilateral relations was aimed to promote ASEAN-ROK exchanges and at the same time, reflect the intensification of human exchanges between these two.
- d) most of regional arrangement are based on strategic location; meaning that the countries are mostly neighbours. Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia are neighbour countries. This character applies to 'old regionalism' as well and can be applied as well in 'new regionalism'. Between ASEAN-ROK, the Asian Financial Crisis have made the most impact of the regional integration between these two.

In summary, ASEAN-ROK relationship best fits in the 'new regionalism' theory. A regional integration that involves a reform-minded small country with moderate trade concession links with a large, neighbouring country that involve 'deep integration' between these two sides.

### **Strategies in Strengthening the Socio-cultural and Education Sector ASEAN-ROK.**

Since the beginning of ASEAN-ROK partnership, the socio-cultural links and education sector between both sides have come a long way. There have been efforts taken by both ASEAN-ROK to build a continuously growing social-cultural. Such efforts can be seen through the past developments which have led to the strong ties now. This people-to-people exchanges can be seen in three different areas(Yang & Mansor, 2016).

The first area is tourism. Tourism is one if the effective way to learn more about the culture of another country. Southeast Asia countries are the most popular tourist destinations. Number of visitors have been increasing exponentially and doubled to 6.5 million from 2009 to 2013. In 2014, almost 4.95 million Koreans have travelled to ASEAN and in the same year, around 1.8 million ASEAN visitors have visited Korea. In 2016, the number of tourists to ROK hits record of 14.5 million (Jin-a, 2016), that includes 2.2 million ASEAN visitors to ROK and around 6 million Koreans visited ASEAN (AKC, 2015). One of the factors that caused this phenomenon was due to Southeast Asia low-cost carrier such as Air Asia, Cebu Pacific, Tigerair, and Viet Jet Air which offers incessantly market cheap fare promotions for flights heading to Seoul, Busan, and Incheon. Air Asia for example provides around twelve trips from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to Seoul and Busan in South Korea per day. This laidback schedule by Air Asia simplify Malaysian people to travel to ROK at their flexible time. Another strategy for

increasing tourism sector of ASEAN-ROK is through promoting by travel agencies. Travel agencies plays an important role in advertising various tour packages to cater different needs of the tourists. As experienced by the researcher, if we are visiting a country for the first time, it is wise to seek advice from the travel agency as they can provide relevant information and advice for the tourist. It is crucial for both ASEAN-ROK government to monitor the travel agencies by providing support and regular updates as these agencies are the source of information for travellers. In addition to that, AKC also had launched a 'ASEAN Tourism Guide Mobile Application' for tourists to have easy access to information on ASEAN. Through this 'ASEAN Travel' application, users of smart-phone can have updated info of all Southeast Asia countries which includes tourist destinations, restaurants, transportation, and accommodation (AKC, 2015). This app is available for both android phone and iPhone and can be downloaded at Apple App Store or Google Play. The best part with this apps is that the information is written in both Korean and English language. Tourism is also being promoted through social media. For example, Facebook users in ROK for year 2017 have recorded approximately 14.5 million while Southeast Asia countries have more than 306 million Facebook users (Statista, 2017).

Second area in strengthening the people-to-people exchanges can be done in education sector. Numerous universities have opened the Southeast Asian research centres and departments such as Institute for South East Asian Studies (ISEAS), National University of Singapore; the Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC), KISEAS, KASEAS, and many more indicating that the region of Southeast Asia is on the academic radar as an area of specialisation. ASEAN-ROK relations are also determined by the increasing and supporting ties of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and top-notch Korean academic institutions. AUN is an Asian university association that was founded in November 1995 by ASEAN member countries. AUN allows exchanges between university students from both sides and creates opportunities for those in higher educational institutions (in both technical and vocational education) to learn more about each other at in depth-level. The various cultural exchanges among ASEAN-ROK youth also allow greater understanding and awareness of each other. As of 2015, there are around 7300 students from ASEAN countries that chose to study in Korean universities((AKC), 2016). ROK was not only responsible for exchange students, but also initiated scholarships and provided research grants. Amongst the initiated programmes are ASEAN-South Korea Academic Exchange Programme, ASEAN Millennium Leaders College Students Exchange Programme, and ASEAN-South Korea Scholarship for South Korea Studies Programme which have been on-going since 2010.

The third area is in human development. This phenomenon is a growing cultural exchange widely known as *hallyu*. *Hallyu* or Korean wave is a term that refers to the popularity of Korean entertainment and culture (ranges from television dramas, movies, popular music (K-pop), dance (B-boys), video game, food, fashion, tourism, and language (Hangul)) across Asia and other parts of the world which include Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the United States. *Hallyu* started in the mid-1990s, starting with drama and film industry and then evolving to music entertainment such as K-pop. This industry witnessed teenagers idolizing Korean artists and put up pressure for ASEAN cinema and drama to revolutionize their plots and scripts. To spike viewership and revenue, television channels screen Korean films and dramas dubbed into local language. Just like Hollywood, Bollywood and Japanese animated shows, Korean dramas are a clear example of globalization that has stretched social, political, economic, and cultural activities across the national borders and across the globe. The government of ROK took the advantage of the Korean wave as a policy tool to improve its cultural and public diplomacy where it is used to promote Korean national interest and enhancing ROK images in the world. Through the researcher's understanding, Korean wave is also seen as emergence of 'soft

power'<sup>38</sup> instil by the ROK that developed through relation with allies, economic assistance and cultural exchanges. 'Soft power' is a new trend in today's diplomacy in order to pursue national interests by influencing the public opinion of the other states. This phenomenon is progressing well for ROK as to strengthen its public diplomacy and making the country's culture and development to be accepted in the whole world.

As mentioned above, these three areas (tourism, education and human development) shown an astounding progress. Thus, there is a need to build up greater understanding of the Southeast Asia region for the Koreans. Likewise, ASEAN people too need to be able beyond South Korea represents. In order to have a greater interaction between both sides, the researcher would like to propose additional suggestion of looking beyond *Hallyu* culture.

The rise of K-pop on the global stage began in late 1990s in a small part of East Asia and spread to Southeast Asia, Europe and the America. Since then, ROK has emerged as a new centre for the production of transnational pop culture, exporting a range of cultural products to neighbouring Asian countries. Thus, it seems that the culture of Koreans have moved towards modernization and its historical values has slowly been forgotten. It would be beneficial to learn more about Korea's rich history and have a better understanding of Korea's proud traditional heritage. During the researcher's visit to Seoul (May-July 2017), several informal interviews were conducted with various levels of Korean people in order to get their insight of the knowledge of their own culture and ASEAN. From the research point of view, Koreans has gradually paved their traditional culture, history, and values and are only remembered through ancient building and monuments which are preserved by the government. Likewise, other countries in Southeast Asia have gone through modernization and globalization which has been a great influence to all, whereby people no longer see the historical part of our glorious states but rather predict the development of the future. This is crucial for many historians and academician to continuously promote history to younger generation and preserved the traditional culture that reminds us of where we belong.

In addition, beyond *Hallyu* culture, ROK did a remarkable job in promoting ASEAN member countries through AKC, where the centre actively engages with government, business communities, academia, and other relevant stakeholder. In year 2016, AKC have carried out twenty work programmes and 63 sub-programmes including in the area of trade and investment, culture and tourism, and public relations and information services(ASEAN-Korea, 2016). Previously, the promotion of ASEAN-ROK focused on selective group that includes think tanks, academics, civil servants, and tertiary students. Currently, these activities conducted by AKC has promoted Southeast Asian countries to all Koreans ranging from school children to youth and adults. Some of the successful programmes in 2016 are ASEAN Culinary Festival on November in Seoul that was represented by participants from all ASEAN countries. Besides, the ASEAN-ROK Youth Network Workshop in August participated by ASEAN, Korean, Chinese and Japanese students as well as the ASEAN school tour programme that has been going since 2009 for Korean middle school students are examples of the successful programmes. These socio-culture and education awareness goes beyond people-to-people exchange. The rapport built by these countries shows the relationship between ASEAN-ROK which are beyond economic and political cooperation as it nurtures relations from young age. Thus, through the researcher's informal interview with some Korean students, they have better understanding on ASEAN and its progress rather than the people of ASEAN itself. ASEAN people are well-versed in current culture of ROK which is K-pop but lack of knowledge in South Korea's history and traditional values. The stage of promoting culture should be

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<sup>38</sup> Soft power defined as the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies.

enhanced not only for Koreans but also to be included in the study of ASEAN for ASEAN people.

### **Challenges that can influence the cooperation between ASEAN and Korea.**

In 2014, ASEAN-ROK celebrated its twenty-fifth years of their partnership dialogue and declared the Joint Statement of the ASEAN-ROK to outline their strategic partnership. This was followed by a Plan of Action (POA) that outlined its implementation during the period of 2016 to 2020. The POA mainly covered the cooperation in three sectors: 1) political-security, 2) economics, and 3) socio-cultural.

These three pillars are in line with the structures of ASEAN Community which has been established in 2015. ASEAN Community comprised of ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-cultural Community (ASCC). The action plan shows an official commitment by both ASEAN-ROK to become comprehensive partners and to actively engage in more cooperation for all sectors.

However, imbalance still exists in ASEAN-ROK relations. ASEAN-ROK cooperation developed at the beginning of globalization with economic factor as the main priority and driving force of the economic cooperation. Political and security cooperation is less developed compared to the interdependence of the growing economic of ASEAN-ROK. As the awareness of political-security changes, the role of ASEAN in the region changes as well. The call for participation and cooperation by ROK in the political-security sector has become more urgent. Problems mainly arise from the third pillar which is the socio-cultural cooperation. Throughout history, the socio-cultural element has often been neglected or positioned in the second or third interest. The attention to socio-cultural sector was given in the late 1990s and 2000s, more than a decade after ROK became a Dialogue Partner with ASEAN. Socio-cultural cooperation has generally lagged behind economic and political cooperation since the establishment of ASEAN-ROK relationship. However, the socio-cultural feature owned by a nation become important as it is the most stable and least affected by external circumstances. It can even enhance the conventional competencies such as economic or political power which has elaborated above as 'soft power'. Strong socio-cultural cooperation can therefore be a good stimulus, welding both sides together. As ROK has placed their culture as part of ASEAN people, it has not only boosted the traditional ties of political and economic but also become more resistant to change and last longer.

Another challenge that can influence the ASEAN-ROK relations is North Korea. Historically known that North Korea and South Korea is separated after the end of WWII and their war continues till now. Since then, these two rivals have strengthened their security and military forces. Like South Korea, North Korea also see ASEAN as an opportunity to be recognized globally. The principle of non-interference and 'ASEAN Way' has given a way for North Korea to embark its peaceful movement. North Korea has diplomatic relations with 164 UN member states, along with Palestine, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, and the European Union. In 2000, North Korea has taken its step to become one of ARF member. In 2008, North Korea acceded to TAC that showed their commitment in fostering peace. The signing of TAC can be seen as the attempt to perceive North Korea from the other claimed nonconformist states of the world. Asian experts say ASEAN profits by getting North Korea on board the arrangement. They call it an improvement of ASEAN's territorial authority, which thus may speed along the vision of an East Asian economic community. Thus, by signing the TAC puts North Korea a step closer in joining the EAS.

By looking at the involvement of North Korea in various organization, it is clear that North Korea is seeking for alliances in order to strengthen their regional cooperation. In terms of North Korea's recent issue of threatening the US with nuclear due to US conducting military exercise with South Korea in waters surrounding Korean peninsula, this issue has indirectly impacted ASEAN (Cabato & Jiao, 2017). Donald Trump administration declared North Korea as 'an urgent national security threat and top foreign policy priority' – it is said that it was focusing on economics and diplomatic pressure. This included the Chinese cooperation in containing its defiant neighbour and ally, and remained open to negotiations (Network, 2017). Due to this crisis, North Korea turned to ASEAN for support against US. North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho wrote a letter ASEAN urging ASEAN to give them proper proposal on the situation. In order to maintain allies with US and North Korea and uphold the ASEAN principle of peace and security, ASEAN called for North Korea to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions on its nuclear program and make a positive contribution to regional peace.

ASEAN with its norms and principles of 'musyawarah' and 'muafakat' used its diplomacy in solving issues and conflicts. It is crucial for ASEAN to maintain its centrality when dealing with external powers. Thus, ASEAN can foresee that this threat is not only limited in a form of direct attack from North Korea, but also its implication if the war initiated. On the one hand, problems like refugee crisis could also occur. Southeast Asia will inevitably serve as the 'limbo' for Asian refugees.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

'New regionalism' has opened up deeper understanding in multidimensionality, complexity, fluidity, and non-conformity. In fact, it is closely related to globalization with the enhancing integration and interaction amongst regions. The theory shown in the elevation of bilateral relations between ROK and Southeast Asian countries to multilateral partnership of ASEAN-ROK that expands in the area of economic, political, and socio-cultural, while education emerged as a new sector of exchange. Despite many challenges between ASEAN-ROK, both parties have made a remarkable progress throughout the years. The challenges serve as opportunities for increased multilateral cooperation and efforts in community building.

In comparison to other Northeast Asia country, ROK has a relatively weak ties with ASEAN in terms of economics and politics whereas China and Japan have an enormous economic power and significant political positions at the international stage. For example, Japan has established the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and China responded to this by creating the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that engages further with ASEAN in economic and political terms. It is not easy for ROK to follow the same path as these two 'super power' countries. However, at the development of cultural exchanges show, socio-cultural relations between ASEAN and ROK have rapidly improved. This suggests that ROK has remarkable strength and potential in the socio-cultural and education sector in ASEAN.

Undeniably, Korean Wave has improved ROK's image with the people of ASEAN. *Hallyu* has also contributed to the increased economic power of ROK. *Hallyu* has also become an enormous stimulus to cooperation between ASEAN-ROK, yet ASEAN-ROK need to work together to develop a strategy beyond *Hallyu* that takes advantages of its impetus. Three main focus and suggestions are therefore to improve future partnership between ASEAN-ROK in socio-cultural sector.

The first consideration is scope of influence. In the past, the influence of Korea in ASEAN or vice versa reached out to limited audiences on certain fields only. For instance, people in ASEAN countries usually associate Korea with popular culture such as K-drama, the famous ‘Winter Sonata’ story or K-pop, ‘Gangnam Style’ song. On the other hand, people in ROK associate the term ‘Southeast Asia’ with multicultural, ethnicity, and perceiving ASEAN in distinct context. Therefore, it is important to create policies that promote ASEAN-ROK in a larger scope. Take sport as an example, it may serve as one target for additional attention.

The second suggestion to consider is reciprocity. Compared to the perception of and affection for Korean culture of ASEAN, Korean’s knowledge and attention to the culture of ASEAN is relatively lower. In future, this imbalance should be addressed to achieve reciprocity. Southeast Asia as a region owns not only splendid traditional culture, such as Angkor Wat in Indonesia and Borobudur in Indonesia, but also showcases a great deal of exotic intangible cultural heritage as listed by UNESCO, such as *Wayang*<sup>39</sup>, *Batik*<sup>40</sup>, *Sbek Thom*<sup>41</sup> and *Nhã nhac*<sup>42</sup>. However, many Koreans have little knowledge about this cultural heritage; not because these products are not attractive, but rather few opportunities are provided for them to engage with such things. Therefore, it is important to provide an institution that introduces and teaches ASEAN cultures and languages as well as the concept behind ASEAN itself to Koreans. Similarly, Korean Culture Centers should be established in several ASEAN countries. For example, Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) in Malaysia operates to promote ROK heritage and tourism information. Likewise, AKC operated in Seoul does the same promotional efforts on ASEAN. Initial step towards this goal is the establishment of ASEAN Culture House in Busan in 2017 during ASEAN-Korea Cultural Exchange Year. This shows the importance of assessing the past and current development of socio-cultural cooperation between ASEAN-ROK.

The final point to be taken into account is sustainability. Large eye-catching events and exhibition are good ways to introduce both ASEAN-ROK culture to the people. However, if these remain only as one-time events, their significance will have limitation in the long run. AKC have conducted various events starting from school children to youth and adults. Long-term projects should be continued rather than one-off events. For example, the establishment of ‘ASEAN and Korea’ modules in prestigious universities of ASEAN and Korea would assist students in both parties to better understand one another.

Undeniably, ASEAN-ROK have been good partners to each other for almost thirty decades. However, both sides need to maintain their efforts to strengthen this friendship in the future. Governments have played a pivotal role in establishing and facilitating the friendship between ASEAN-ROK but it is the people of these regions who must encourage the friendship to flourish and thrive. It is wise to learn that the socio-cultural element should not be disregarded as an additional or minor element in ASEAN-ROK relationship. This partnership is built on the sharing of same history and tradition and can be developed further for stronger and longer ties.

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<sup>39</sup> Shadow puppet

<sup>40</sup> Wax-resist dying technique for making clothes

<sup>41</sup> Shadow Theater

<sup>42</sup> Court music

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