

Academic Freedom Movement in Southeast Asian: Threat, Challenge, and It's Implication in Indonesia

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Abstract: This research focused on analyzing the debates and roles of academic freedom movement in Southeast Asian. The dynamics of protection related to academic freedom cannot be separated from its protection on the one hand and the threats accompanying it. The issue of academic freedom creates a threat to the academic community in producing knowledge, both within universities and those who are active as independent researchers, especially in Southeast Asian. Authoritarianism, in turn, has affected the worse situation of free expression, including academic freedom. In the current situation, the digital sphere has been targeted as well. This article will discuss the following questions: (1). What is the situation of the academic freedom movement and protection for the academic community in Southeast Asia? (2). How are efforts to maintain the movement of academic freedom in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, amid efforts to subjugate the campus by the state and the practice of authoritarianism? Using an interdisciplinary approach as a part of socio-legal research, this article argued that there is a strong relationship between the threat of academic freedom movement in Southeast Asian countries and the implications in Indonesia. The academic freedom situation in Southeast Asia has been shaped by the political and economic aspects of the region as well as in their respective countries. The role of independent and progressive alliances to struggle for their rights or to understand the role of professor unions in defending academic and scientific freedom. To what extent is academic freedom considered a strong pillar for democratic societies, including providing important scientific, economic, cultural, and social progress from which we may all benefit? This roundtable is also aimed to promote possible strategies in challenging democracy declines, affecting the shrinking civic space, and how academic resilience in the digital space is a keyword that should be strengthened in its social movement since this will be more complicated due to manipulating information and anti-science politics through systematic repression.

Keywords: Academic Freedom Movement, Authoritarianism, Human Rights, Southeast Asian

1. Introduction

The dynamics of protection related to academic freedom cannot be separated from its protection on the one hand and the threats accompanying it. The issue of academic freedom threatens the academic community in terms of producing knowledge, both within universities and those who are active as independent researchers.

Governments around the world have created new laws to threaten, restrain, and prosecute, as well as restrain critical activities carried out by academics, including in the digital world; a survey of 10,216 respondents, including academics, spread across 8 (eight) countries in Southeast Asia explained, that political views and criticism are getting pressure and threats, even there are efforts to self-censor social media content that is considered dangerous to criticize the government regime.¹

It is a new trend where governments enact new laws to suppress and prosecute academic criticism, especially in the digital realm, focusing on Southeast Asia. Academics face challenges in expressing political views and criticism, and universities are limited in their ability to engage in critical discourse and act as a check on government power. The intertwining of historical authoritarian legacies and contemporary legal restrictions has marginalized academic freedom and undermined the role of universities as agents of societal control and critique.²

In Thailand, government control is intertwined with military power, leading to significant restrictions and control over universities. After the 1997 economic crisis, higher education in Thailand underwent reform and restructuring, indirectly impacting academic freedom and addressing bureaucratic inefficiencies. Due to the repressive attitude of the government backed by the military, academics faced pressure and unrealistic targets in teaching, research, publications, academic responsibilities, and quality assurance processes.³

A similar situation is faced by the people of Myanmar, who face discipline, discrimination, and persecution along with ethnic discrimination. This was carried out by the military junta government both before the democratic leadership and after the coup d'état carried out by overthrowing the democratic regime of Aung San Suu Kyi as de facto leader and Htin Yaw as de jure leader. Campus discipline, accompanied by criminal sanctions and persecution during the coup d'état period carried out by the military junta, made the campus world find no safe space and was full of violations.

Similarly, the oppressive conditions faced by various communities in Myanmar under military rule are characterized by disciplinary actions, discrimination, persecution, and ethnic bias. These actions, including campus crackdowns, criminal sanctions, and persecution during military coups, have created an unsafe environment

1 Elvin Ong, "Online Repression and Self-Censorship: Evidence from Southeast Asia," *Government and Opposition* 56, no. 1 (2021): 141-62.

2 Sriprapha Petcharamesree, "Academic Freedom in Southeast Asia," in *LOCAL RESPONSES TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: A Transregional Studies Reader* (World Scientific, 2023), 67-88.

3 Prapassara Thanosawan, "Authoritarianism in Thai Higher Education: The Threats against Academic Freedom and Productivity," in *2nd Southeast Asian Academic Forum on Sustainable Development (SEA-AFSID 2018)* (Atlantis Press, 2021), 376-79.

in academia characterized by violations of academic freedom and human rights. The junta's authoritarian regime, both before and after the democratic leadership, has led to systematic repression and intimidation within educational institutions, which exacerbates the challenges faced by academics and students.⁴

In the Philippines, the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy did not prevent the rise of dictatorial political regimes. After the Duterte administration was characterized by extrajudicial killings and intimidation of political opposition, journalists, the judiciary, and academics, subsequent regimes led by Ferdinand 'Bong-bong' Marcos Jr. and Sara Duterte continued the same authoritarian approach, including the suppression of academic institutions, amidst a backdrop of political populism. This highlights the continuing trend of authoritarianism and political repression in Philippine governance and societal structures.⁵

The manifestation of authoritarianism in Indonesia, particularly under Soeharto, led to challenges to academic freedom and civil society movements advocating for transparent and accountable governance. This paper highlights the impact of authoritarianism trends on academic freedom in higher education institutions, reflecting broader concerns regarding the decline of democracy and civil liberties in Indonesia.⁶

Under the leadership of Joko Widodo over the past decade from 2014 to 2024, and now transition over Prabowo Subianto regimes, there has been a marked increase in authoritarian tendencies and repression of civil society groups in Indonesia. These trends, coupled with challenges to democracy and echoes of the authoritarian era, indicate a regression in democratic principles. The post-1998 reform agenda has faced obstacles due to various attacks on civic space, continued corrupt practices, and oligarchic groups' need for more transparency.

Indonesian Caucus on Academic Freedom (*Kaukus Indonesia Kebebasan Akademik-KIKA*) collected several cases allegedly violating academic freedom from 2019 to February 2024. The data collected shows 20 cases of academic freedom violations involving approximately 64 victims over the past three years. Of the total 64 affected individuals, the majority of them are students (52 individuals), followed by lecturers (9 individuals), and journalists/activists (3 individuals).⁷

In addition to individuals, four campus institutions have also experienced violations of academic freedom, including student press social media accounts, student executive bodies (BEM), and hacked campus Zoom accounts in line with the data presented by Amnesty International Indonesia, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität (FAU) and V-Dem Institute also mentioned that the Academic Freedom Index (AFI) score of Indonesia has decreased from 0.77 in 2015 to 0.65 in 2021. This score puts Indonesia in the bottom 40% among other countries worldwide.⁸

4 Mohsin Alam Bhat and Rudabeh Shahid, "Introduction: Mutual Attrition of Citizenship, Democracy and the Rule of Law in South and Southeast Asia," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Taylor & Francis, 2024).

5 Richard Javad Heydarian, "The Return of the Marcos Dynasty," *Journal of Democracy* 33, no. 3 (2022): 62-76.

6 H P Wiratraman, "Academic Freedom Post-Soeharto: Not Much Better," *The Jakarta Post*, 2016.

7 Wiratraman, H.P; Prakasa, S.U.W. Two Decades of Academic Freedom in Indonesia: The Challenges of the Rise of Authoritarianism in Its New Model. *Jurnal HAM*, [S.l.], v. 15, n. 2, p. 143-158, oct. 2024

8 Daniel Munier and Satria Unggul Wicaksana, "Joint Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Indonesia by Scholars at Risk and the Indonesian Caucus for Academic Freedom," n.d.

In 2023-2024, KIKA recorded 27 violations of academic freedom and continued to repeat events with similar attacks since 2015. In this context, lecturers, students, and civil society are victims of violations of academic freedom. The state carries out the authoritarianism model through policy instruments from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Police or through University policies; there are at least 4 (four) models of academic freedom pressure, namely:⁹

- I) Attacks on Student Organisations (BEM, Persma, etc.), namely the cases of (1). The banning of LPM Acta Surya Stikosa AWS Surabaya; (2) The summoning of BEM PPNS related to the Omnibus Law action; (3). Dismissal of STAIMS Yogyakarta Students; (4). Polemics of Udayana Students; (5). Campus Repression Against Student Action at Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa University, Yogyakarta; (6). Polemics of BEM UB; (7). Criminalization of Khariq, UNRI Student; (8). Polemics over KIP-K recipient data due to Ransomware; and (9). The problem of higher education costs and free education efforts with the APATIS Alliance.
- II) Academic Personnel issues and links to Public Policy Advocacy are characterized by (1). Involvement of critical academics in the Kemenkopolhukam Law Reform Team; (2). Advocacy on regional language issues; (3). Suppression of academic criticism during the 2024 Election; (4). Dismissal of Prof BUS as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Universitas Airlangga after criticizing foreign doctors on the impact of the Omnibus Law on Health) Problems of Academic Personnel and Links to Advocacy SDA problems are related to (1). the Haris Fatia case and natural resources issues in Papua; (2). Prohibition of foreign researchers on orangutan issues against KLHK (Erick Meijard et al.); (3). Wadas advocacy; (4). Rempang advocacy; (5). Pakel advocacy; (5). Support for Awyu Tribe, Boven Digoel Papua due to deforestation; (6). Support for Mendol Island residents; (7). Support for residents affected by PT RUM.
- III) Academic Integrity & GB Polemics are characterized by: (1). Alleged plagiarism of UIN KHAS Jember Lecturer; (2). Kumba Digdowaseso polemic; (3). Polemics of public officials who need help appointing professors; (4). BRIN polemic; (5). The issue of dozens of problematic professors at ULM; (6). The issue of academic integrity of other professors

Studies related to academic freedom in Southeast Asia have experienced significant developments amidst the increasingly threatened protection situation; discourse and research on the topic have become interesting issues, especially related to the models and characteristics of attacks on academic freedom in various countries. Lars Lott's study explains that academic freedom substantially becomes an obstacle in realizing democracy instead of creating autocracy; the growth of academic freedom has been greatly hampered in various countries, including the Philippines and Indonesia, in recent years, which have experienced a phenomenon of episodes of decline in the protection of academic freedom.¹⁰

The phenomenon of academic freedom from a global, historical, and human

9 Wiratraman, H. P., & Prakasa, S. U. W. (2024). Two Decades of Academic Freedom in Indonesia: The Challenges of the Rise of Authoritarianism in Its New Model. *Jurnal HAM*, 15(2), 143-158.

10 Lott, L. (2023). Academic freedom growth and decline episodes. *Higher Education*, 1-19.

rights perspective. The situation of academic freedom is observed from an internal perspective related to the challenges faced by various universities in the world in maintaining the autonomy of universities and guaranteeing their freedom as stated in the law, constitution, and university governance policies. Also, the external context or foreign aspects are marked by intervention and pressure on academic freedom due to demands for market liberalization. Campuses and academic communities from various campuses worldwide, including Southeast Asia, continue struggling to seize and maintain academic freedom.¹¹

In another study, the values of academic freedom that vary across campuses in various countries create different qualities related to learning and research conducted by academics; administrative, legal, and ideological barriers become obstacles to realizing academic freedom itself. Academic freedom is the main instrument for driving creativity and innovation in the classroom and laboratory when conducting research.¹²

In Joanne William's view, academic freedom explains that there will be many challenges and threats to implementing academic freedom amidst the increasingly strict professional role of academics required in the increasingly massive liberalization of global education. Furthermore, something that is no less important is the threat to academic freedom due to the denial of the truth. Campuses do not become imaginative spaces to produce truth. Still, they are more disciplined by market interests and the accompanying legal politics, so academic freedom becomes an anomaly for campuses that want to be expansive and pursue the existence of a global reputation.¹³

The reason why academic freedom is very weak in Southeast Asia is also due to several problems, as stated by Herlambang P. Wiratraman, why administrative structures and embedded feudalism matter in this regard: (1) an embedded patron-client relationship between those higher-ranked in the university structure and others in the community and (2) patron-client hierarchical relationships regarding academic degrees. Embedded feudalism has acquired a repressive character to maintain such hierarchical relations, potentially confining campuses to institutions to reproduce scientific knowledge. Hence, formal state or university policies easily restrict and stigmatize the space for dissent.¹⁴

This research aims to focus on the study of the extent of the phenomenon of academic freedom and its movement in Southeast Asia; how the model and pressure are amid economic liberalization, which requires campuses to continue to be part of it in carrying out economic expansion, at the same time, there is an anomaly about political and democratic pressures that occur in various countries in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia which has implications for the protection and advancement of academic freedom that occurs.

11 De Baets, A. (2021). Academic Freedom Between History and Human Rights in a Global Context. *Third International Handbook of Globalisation, Education and Policy Research*, 923-943.

12 Tierney, W. G. (2020). The idea of academic freedom and its implications for teaching and learning. *Teaching learning and new technologies in higher education*, 17-28.

13 Williams, J. (2016). *Academic freedom in an age of conformity: Confronting the fear of knowledge*. Springer, pg. 54-55

14 Wiratraman, H. P. (2022). Marginalised academics under Joko Widodo's authoritarian politics. In *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia* (pp. 187-206). Routledge.

Based on the facts that have been explained, the problem formulations raised in this study are: (1) What is the situation of the academic freedom movement and protection for the academic community in Southeast Asia? (2). How are efforts to maintain the movement of academic freedom in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, amid efforts to subjugate the campus by the state and the practice of authoritarianism?

2. Methodology

This research uses a socio-legal research method to understand the threats to academic freedom in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. An interdisciplinary legal research method overcomes the limitations of legal approaches that only stop at norms. Still, it cannot read the operation of law in society; one must identify how academic freedom in authoritarian regimes and political, economic, and legal influences on protecting academic freedom can be carried out.¹⁵

3. Pressurised Model of Academic Freedom and Protection Movement in Southeast Asia

The repression of academic freedom in Southeast Asia is driven by autocratic tendencies, ambiguous legal frameworks, and the use of national security as a pretext for censorship. These factors collectively contribute to a decline in freedom of expression and a culture of self-censorship among lecturers and students. The repression of academic freedom in Southeast Asia is driven by autocratic tendencies, ambiguous legal frameworks, and the use of national security as a pretext for censorship. These factors collectively contribute to a decline in freedom of expression and a culture of self-censorship among academics and students.¹⁶

Regarding the issues of government interference and autocracy, The government of Singapore's soft authoritarianism has led to indirect censorship and self-censorship in universities. Scholars feel constrained from discussing controversial topics, and there is a strong disincentive to research in politically sensitive areas.¹⁷ Indonesia also has several problems regarding the protection of academic freedom, which is under threat due to repressive practices, including the use of the judiciary to repress academics, the banning of left-wing books, and the forced dissolution of scientific discussions. There have been instances of terror and threats against academics and students.¹⁸

Regarding legal frameworks and censorship, Southeast Asian governments have passed intentionally ambiguous and poorly defined laws, allowing for the

15 Brian Z Tamanaha, *Realistic Socio-Legal Theory : Pragmatism and a Social Theory of Law*, Oxford Socio-Legal Studies, 1997.

16 Que Anh Dang, Liviu Matei, and Milica Popovic, "Reimagining Academic Freedom: An Introduction," *Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education* 5, no. 2 (2023): 209–22.

17 Andrew Ross, "Repressive Tolerance Revamped? The Illiberal Embrace of Academic Freedom," in *Academic Freedom: Autonomy, Challenges and Conformation* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2021), 133–47.

18 Satria Unggul Wicaksana Prakasa, "Paradigm of Law and Human Rights as a Protection of Academic Freedom in Indonesia," *Human Rights in the Global South (HRGS)* 2, no. 1 (2023): 37–52.

manipulation of legal provisions to attack free expression. These laws often use national security as a pretext for censorship.

The issue of appointing professors in Indonesia is conspiracy, manipulation, and corruption. Politicians compete to get professorships with lobbying and money. The oddity of celebrity professorships was uncovered during an inspection by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology regarding the inauguration of eleven professors at Lambung Mangkurat University (ULM), Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. The ministry opened an investigation after a whistleblower reported on a complaints website regarding the validity of the professors' degrees. Various figures, such as politicians, law enforcers, and state officials, face academic integrity problems when appointing professors in Indonesia.

Cases	Countres	The Model of State Repression	Actors who Involves
Apparatus Repression	Thailand, Indonesia	Military involvement in action control and criticism	Empire, Military
Use of autocratic legal rules	Singapore, Indonesia, Kamboja	Through autocratic legal rules, the state controls the campus through censorship.	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Law
Self-censorship and Intimidation	Vietnam, Indonesia	The use of laws and policies that create fear and censorship	Police, Military
Repression Thought State Policy	Indonesia	The use of the majority vote for the election of the Chancellor of 35% from Public University	Ministry of Educa-tion

Table 2. The Model of State Repression and Academic Freedom in Southeast Asia

Why is academic freedom in Indonesia still weak, and why is it facing a complexity problem? Academia is facing Forms of violence, such as Physical assault, violent dissolution of discussions/seminars, Book banning, Permit restrictions, Dismissal/suspension of lecturers and students, Discipline, excessive bureaucratization, Lawsuits and criminalization, and Absence of legal protection. Also, stigma, such as Issues the stigma of communism, the stigma of religious minorities, beliefs, Sexual orientation, Defamation, Anti-corruption, Papuans, accusing 'separatists' Innovate learning methods, Anti-state ideology / NKRI ('radicalism' and 'extremism'), 'Macdonalisation education,' and commercialization

Scientists, authorities, and power have big problems because intellectuals are used to support anti-science policies. Why is this bastion of academic freedom so fragile? It's happened because scientists manipulate and deny the truth honestly and with integrity.

3.1. State Intervention of Campus and Threat of Academic Freedom

In creating a free market and liberalism-oriented economic development, education is a commodity in the service sector. It can be used as a benchmark for the readiness of countries involved in free trade. Realizing skilled labor requires countries to continue to prepare skilled human resources through adequate higher education services that align with the free trade policy agenda set by various international organizations such as the OECD, WTO, and World Bank.¹⁹

Regarding liberalization policies in higher education, countries worldwide must follow international mechanisms as part of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The GATS provisions provide a framework to regulate liberalization and encourage transparency and methods of liberalization in services, including in the field of higher education, by implementing the principle of 'most-favorable of nations'. In the GATS approach in the field of higher education, at least four models are provided, namely:

Trade Mode	Title	Liberalization of Higher Education
Mode 1	Cross-border supply	International ranking of universities that allows recruitment of consultants from international accreditation agencies to assist
Mode 2	Consumption Abroad	Enabling international students to study at the Indonesian Faculty of Law
Mode 3	Commercial Presence	Establishing foreign universities in various countries, including Indonesia (Monash University, Melbourne University, etc.).
Mode 4	Presence of Natural Persons	It is possible to have foreign lecturers teaching at law faculties in Indonesia.

Table 2. The Model of Liberalization of Higher Education

Market liberalization can improve welfare for countries with the largest income from the lower middle class by encouraging political-economic support by various parties to ensure that free trade can run well. Data from 248 countries over 25 years shows that adequate political policy support, accompanied by the rule of law that runs with certainty, encourages economic independence and significant growth.²⁰ This means that political-economic support will greatly encourage the country's competitiveness. One element of this support is to present the quality of higher education as a quality instrument

¹⁹ Ryan P Deuel, "Governing Higher Education toward Neoliberal Governmentality: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Global Policy Agendas," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 20, no. 3 (2022): 310–23.

²⁰ Yener Kandogan and Scott D Johnson, "Political Economy and Income Inequality: How Did Trade Liberalization and Changes in Political and Economic Freedom Affect the Middle Classes across the World?," *Cogent Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2024): 2341702.

of trade liberalization.

The liberalization of higher education has allowed the state to exercise strong control through the Ministry of Education and Culture by ensuring that the elected Rector aligns with state policies in promoting a free market economy. This includes the activities of lecturers and students who are asked to be adaptive and mingle with the business and industrial worlds, which muzzles academic freedom on campus.²¹

3.2. Law and Human Rights Principles for the Protection of Academic Freedom in Southeast Asia

When referring to international human rights law regulations, the 'heart' of academic freedom is the embodiment of freedom of expression, which is regulated in Article 19 (2) of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) related to freedom of expression, which is stated as follows:

(2). Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

Furthermore, General Comment No. 10 of the ICCPR explains that freedom of expression, including the freedom to obtain, seek, and receive information, is part of freedom of expression. The state must ensure every citizen can enjoy these rights without discrimination and exercise them responsibly.²²

This means that the restrictions imposed by the state must be determined by impartial law, the purpose is within the scope of maintaining a healthy democratic public order, not contrary to public health, state security, public morals, or public safety, and not detrimental to the rights and freedoms of fellow citizens, this is regulated in the Siracusa Principles regarding the Provisions for Limitation and Reduction of Human Rights in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Also, about the fulfillment of the right to education, based on Article 13 of the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which states that Members of the academic community, both individually and collectively, are free to pursue, develop and disseminate knowledge and ideas, through research, teaching, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation or writing. Academic freedom includes the freedom of individuals to express opinions freely about the institutions or systems in which they work, to fulfill their functions without discrimination or fear of repression by the State or other actors, to participate in professional or representative academic bodies, and to enjoy all universally recognized human rights.

The 13th General Comment of the ECOSOB Covenant states that all

²¹ Andrew Rosser, "Higher Education in Indonesia: The Political Economy of Institution-Level Governance," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 53, no. 1 (2023): 53-78.

²² Eric Barendt, *Academic Freedom and the Law: A Comparative Study* (Oxford: Hart Publishing Ltd, 2010).

academic communities have the right to enjoy the development of scholarly activities, freedom of teaching, research, and a wide range of activities to maintain academic freedom. The State is obliged to protect and fulfill this inseparable and closely interrelated freedom.²³

When using the approach used by Katarina Tomasevski, who is a special rapporteur of the UN Commission on ESCR, has a concept to measure the fulfillment of ESCR rights, namely 4-A, namely availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability.²⁴ Thus, even state authorities cannot arbitrarily separate academic freedom from its relation to the right to education; if neglect occurs, the state can be categorized as violating citizens' human rights.

Indonesia has ratified these key international regulations in Law Number 11 of 2005 and Law Number 12 of 2005. So, the impact of the ratification does not stop at legislation²⁵ But also reaches the implementation and protection of academic freedom in Indonesia.

In the constitution, the 1945 Constitution, the basic basis of academic freedom is regulated in Article 28C, Article 28E, and Article 28F, which respectively regulate the basic rights to obtain a proper education, freedom of belief and expression of thought, as well as communicating and obtaining information and conveying information by using various types of available channels. Academic freedom has a deep meaning that the guarantee in the constitution is intended by the state for the community to carry out scientific functions without being interfered with by power and freedom to carry out learning, teaching, researching, and expressing opinions with scientific activities carried out.²⁶

In Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, academic freedom, freedom of academic pulpit, and scientific autonomy are regulated in Article 8 paragraph (1), article 9, Article 13, and Article 54 paragraph (3), which in principle guarantees academic freedom that must be maintained whether Lecturers and Students express it in every activity included in academic activities, including about national standards of higher education developed by taking into account academic freedom, freedom of the academic pulpit and scientific autonomy.

The next conceptual formulation that needs to be considered related to academic freedom is outlined in the Surabaya Principles on Academic Freedom (SPAF) 2017, which explains: (1). Academic freedom is a fundamental freedom to develop the autonomy of academic institutions; (2). Academic personnel, those who carry out activities in the academic realm, have full freedom in developing community service, education, research, and publishing their results by scientific principles; (3). Academic personnel who work as teachers in

23 Satria Unggul Wicaksana Prakasa, "Perdagangan Internasional Dan Ham: Relasinya Dengan Sustainable Development," *Jurnal Hukum Novelty* 9, no. 1 (2018): 36-53.

24 Katarina Tomaševski, *Right to Education Primers No. 3*. (Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB., 2001).

25 Damos Dumoli Agusman, *Hukum Perjanjian Internasional: Kajian Teori Dan Praktik Indonesia* (Refika Aditama, 2010).

26 Moh Mahfud, "Perspektif Politik Dan Hukum Tentang Kebebasan Akademik Dan Kritik Sosial," *Unisia*, 1997, 33-43.

education have the freedom in the classroom to discuss courses by considering scientific competence and respect for human values; (4). Academic personnel must be free from restrictions and discipline to develop a responsible academic culture with scientific integrity for humanity (5). Public authorities must respect, protect, and ensure measures to guarantee academic freedom.

4. Sustaining the Academic Freedom Movement in Southeast Asia

Scientists, authorities, and power face big problems because intellectuals are used to support anti-science policies. Why is this bastion of academic freedom so fragile? It happened because scientists manipulate and deny the truth with honesty and integrity.

So, what is a possible movement for academics in Southeast Asia? Besides sustainable promoting the “Surabaya Principles on Academic Freedom” (6 Dec 2017), supported by SEAHRN, SEPAHAM Indonesia, adopted by SEAHRN in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 25 April 2018, this continues by establishing a progressive alliance of KIKA (Indonesian Caucus for Academic Freedom).

Adopt academic principles and freedoms as basic rights and freedoms through advocacy, including expanding strategies, by supporting the establishment of SPK, a national-based university union. Receiving complaints, making support, and strategic advocacy. Actively participate in solidarity for academic freedom in Southeast Asia region and global network, with SEAHRN, Scholars at Risk, and academic freedom coalition to provide protection and asylum for academics who face pressure and discipline on their respective campuses or even by state authorities.

Regarding the strategies in promoting the protection of academic freedom, with soft measures, such as (1). Boycott University collaborations that do not comply with academic freedom because almost all universities in Indonesia are obsessed with reaching World Class University; (2). Building an integrated system for academic freedom, including academic freedom components as a standard in ranking and accreditation; (3) Building an internal code of ethics to support academic freedom as regulations and policies within the university.

Also, with the hard measures, such as (1). To protect academia as victims of violations of academic freedom, there is a need for the strengthening of the involvement of institutions such as the National Commission of Human Rights, as well as The national bodies on the protection of victims and suspects in protecting academic people as victims of terror; (2). Mainstreaming academic freedom as a human rights standard authorized institution, Breaking the chain of impunity for perpetrators; (3). Judicial mechanisms are the last resort to provide sanctions for violators of academic freedom with due process of law paradigm

The most important is encouraging sustainable policies in encouraging academic freedom, efforts to manipulate state policies through anti-science attitudes, and campus subordination to reproduce the truth. The policy can be stated

in HE Laws or related legislation so that in efforts to create policies directly related to university governance, the situation is expected to strengthen scientific-based policy, where the main reference is scientific truth.

This includes encouraging the position of academics who explicitly fight for academic freedom in teaching, research, and other social movement activities so that they cannot be processed by law by borrowing the anti-strategic lawsuit against public participation (Anti-SLAPP) approach. This can be encouraged at the regional level, including with encouragement from ASEAN, a regional organization responsible for Southeast Asia, to protect the rights of academics from various forms of attacks and discipline that may occur in protecting the academic freedom of the academic community.

5. Conclusion

The academic freedom situation in Southeast Asia has been shaped by the political and economic aspects of the region as well as in their respective countries. The role of independent and progressive alliances to struggle for their rights or to understand the role of professor unions in defending academic and scientific freedom. To what extent is academic freedom considered a strong pillar for democratic societies, including providing important scientific, economic, cultural, and social progress from which we may all benefit? This roundtable also aims to promote possible strategies to challenge democracy declines, affecting the shrinking of civic space.

Academic freedom faces serious problems, especially in dealing with criticism in digital spaces and targeting them by persecution, criminalization, or other SLAPPs. Threats and challenges are mostly threats to lecturers, students, and researchers who express critical views on those in power, politics, and economic power and its relation to campuses. So, academic resilience in the digital space is a keyword that should be strengthened in its social movement since this will be more complicated due to manipulating information and anti-science politics through systematic repression.

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