

Regionalism and Migration Governance: The Institutional Role of ASEAN in Complementary Pathways for Labour Mobility

Aqmal Reza Amri¹, A. Muliastuti²

Departement of Government Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar,
Indonesia¹

Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin
Makassar, Indonesia²

E-mail: aqmalrezaamri@unismuh.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the institutional role of ASEAN in developing complementary pathways for labour mobility in Southeast Asia. Moving beyond normative debates on ASEAN's relevance as a regional institution, the study explores how the region's distinctive institutional design, grounded in state sovereignty, non-interference, and consensus, shapes migration governance. Using a qualitative approach, this study draws on ASEAN policy documents, national labour regulations, and reports from international organisations such as the IOM, ILO, and UNHCR. Findings show that ASEAN's complementary pathways are primarily realised through temporary labour schemes, bilateral agreements, and regional normative frameworks such as the 2007 ASEAN Declaration and the 2017 ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. While these instruments provide an important normative foundation, their soft law status results in uneven implementation and heavy reliance on national political commitment. The high proportion of undocumented migrant workers and fragmented protection mechanisms underscore the limitations of ASEAN's consensus-based, intergovernmental model. The study highlights the dual role of complementary pathways as both a bridge between labour market demands and migrant rights protection and as a reflection of ASEAN's institutional constraints. It argues that strengthening these pathways requires expanding regional coordination, integrating international labour standards, and positioning rights protection as a central pillar of migration governance rather than as an adjunct to labour mobility. By comparing ASEAN with the European Union's more integrated model, the paper underscores ASEAN's potential to develop a flexible, inclusive, and progressively rights-based approach suited to the political and economic realities of the Global South.

Keywords: ASEAN; Complementary Pathways; Labour Mobility; Migration Governance; Migrant Workers' Rights

INTRUDUCTION

Rather than remaining entangled in normative debates about ASEAN's relevance as a regional institution (Jetschke & Theiner, 2020), this article shifts the focus toward a more substantive exploration of migration issues in Southeast Asia.

Cross-border labour mobility has emerged as one of the most significant socio-economic and political dynamics in the region (Prianto, Amri, & Ilik, 2023). Migrant labour flows are driven not only by the economic demands of both sending and receiving countries, but also carry profound implications for regional governance (Prianto, Amri, & Ajis, 2023). Through the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) framework, ASEAN has positioned labour market integration as a core component of its regional economic development agenda (Ishikawa, 2021; Pitakdumrongkit, 2023; Plummer et al., 2014). This integration is intended to enhance regional competitiveness and foster shared economic growth. However, in practice, migration governance in Southeast Asia remains largely shaped by the national policies of individual member states, with only limited regional coordination (Capaldi, 2023). This has resulted in policy fragmentation, undermining both the protection of migrant workers' rights and the effectiveness of existing legal migration pathways.

The concept of complementary pathways assumes significant importance (Vankova, 2022). Programs such as temporary labour schemes, regional agreements on migrant protection, and family reunification initiatives illustrate creative ways to balance economic needs with the safeguarding of human rights (Boutier & Maganaris, 2025; Elliott, 2022). These pathways serve as alternative routes outside traditional migration channels, offering legal options for labour mobility while filling protection gaps that conventional systems often overlook. In the ASEAN region, however, these initiatives often operate within a framework of soft law. Their legal status is inherently limited due to the absence of supranational enforcement mechanisms compelling member states to comply with common policies. In contrast to the European Union, which possesses binding legal instruments and robust supranational institutions, ASEAN functions under the principles of non-interference and consensus, with a relatively loose institutional design (Marah, 2025; Sundram, 2025; Tan, 2022). This fundamental difference raises critical questions: to what extent can ASEAN institutions build effective regional migration governance, particularly in developing complementary pathways for labour mobility? Can ASEAN's institutional framework strike a

balance between economic interests, state sovereignty, and the protection of migrant workers' rights?

Academic studies on migration governance in Southeast Asia have primarily focused on the protection of migrant workers and the dynamics of bilateral agreements between states. Much of this scholarship examines instruments such as the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers and the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (Putri & Sari, 2021), highlighting ASEAN's institutional limitations in establishing strong enforcement mechanisms (Asis & Maningat, 2023; Fitria, 2025). The dominance of the non-interference principle is frequently identified as a key factor constraining the strengthening of regional migration governance (Lanna, 2022). However, analyses that explicitly address ASEAN's institutional role in shaping coordinated legal migration pathways, particularly through the lens of complementary pathways, remain scarce. Given the rising flows of labour migration, increasing international pressure to enhance migrant rights protections, and the region's economic imperatives, understanding ASEAN's institutional dynamics has become increasingly critical.

Meanwhile, the international literature on complementary pathways has largely centred on the European Union context and global policy frameworks led by organisations such as the IOM and UNHCR (Loxa, 2023; Moretti, 2021; Rother, 2025; van Harten, 2023; van Selm, 2023). These studies highlight the legal status of migration channels, the role of soft law, and the potential of complementary pathways to expand human rights protection and enhance global migration governance. However, a notable gap emerges when this concept is applied to regions with markedly different institutional characteristics, such as ASEAN, which relies more heavily on informal mechanisms and political consensus than on supranational legal frameworks. Within ASEAN-focused scholarship, many studies stop at analysing norms and interstate politics without linking them to the development of more integrated legal migration pathways. This gap underscores the need for a new analysis that combines an institutionalist perspective with

ASEAN's specific context to understand how regional organisations in the Global South adapt the concept of complementary pathways.

This article proceeds from the premise that ASEAN's institutional role in migration governance cannot be understood solely through the lens of national labour policies or bilateral agreements. An institutionalist approach allows for an examination of how institutional design, regional norms, and member state interests interact to shape legal migration policy at the regional level. Using this perspective, the study aims to critically analyse how ASEAN constructs and implements complementary pathways for labour mobility. In addition, it evaluates the extent to which ASEAN's core principles, such as consensus and non-interference, influence the effectiveness of regional migration policies. The research further explores the interaction between ASEAN, its member states, and international organisations such as the IOM and ILO to understand how these institutional networks shape the design of existing legal migration channels.

The central questions posed are how ASEAN as an institution designs and implements complementary pathways for labour mobility, to what extent the region's normative and political frameworks shape the effectiveness of migration governance, and whether the legal migration channels developed can provide adequate rights protection for migrant workers within the constraints of ASEAN's legal architecture. By comparing ASEAN's approach with that of the European Union, the article also seeks to determine whether there are patterns of convergence in regional migration governance or whether ASEAN is, instead, developing a distinct model characteristic of the Global South. The primary contribution of this study lies in filling a gap in the literature by offering a deeper understanding of the relationship between regionalism and migration governance in Southeast Asia. By mapping the interaction between norms, institutional design, and member state interests, the article demonstrates how ASEAN seeks to construct coordinated legal migration pathways despite operating within a relatively loose institutional framework. The findings are expected to provide new insights into how regional organisations with limited supranational authority can still play a significant role in the architecture of global migration governance. At the same time, this research

expands the discourse on complementary pathways beyond the European context, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges for Global South regions in building more inclusive and equitable legal migration systems

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a comparative institutional analysis design to explore ASEAN's institutional role in developing complementary pathways for labour mobility in Southeast Asia. This approach is chosen because the research focuses on analysing policy processes, institutional dynamics, and the influence of regional norms on the design of legal migration channels, requiring in-depth examination through policy data and official documents.

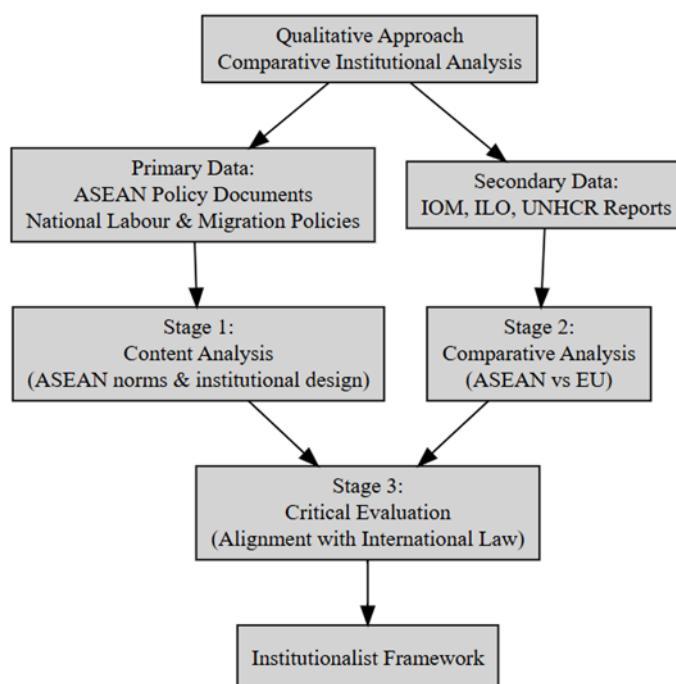


Figure 1. Research methodology flowchart

The primary data source consists of document analysis. The documents examined include ASEAN policy texts such as the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint. In addition, national labour and migration policies of relevant member states—particularly labour-receiving countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, as well as labour-sending

countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines—are analysed to assess how domestic policies connect with the regional framework. Reports from international organisations such as the IOM, ILO, and UNHCR serve as secondary sources to situate ASEAN’s approach within the broader global context of complementary pathways.

The document analysis was conducted in three stages. The first stage employed content analysis to identify ASEAN’s norms, principles, and institutional design related to legal migration. The second stage applied comparative analysis to contrast ASEAN’s regional policies with practices in other regions, particularly the European Union, in order to highlight differences in institutional approaches. The third stage involved a critical evaluation of the extent to which ASEAN’s regional policies align with international legal principles on the protection of migrant workers’ rights.

The study adopts an institutionalist theoretical framework to guide the analysis. Rational choice institutionalism is used to examine how member states’ interests shape the design of regional migration policies. Historical institutionalism provides a lens to trace the evolution of ASEAN’s migration policies from the early stages of economic integration to the development of the migrant workers’ consensus. Meanwhile, sociological institutionalism is employed to assess how ASEAN’s normative principles, such as consensus and non-interference, influence the effectiveness of complementary pathways. By integrating the analysis of regional policy documents, legal instruments, and international reports, this methodological approach enables an in-depth exploration of ASEAN’s role in developing legal migration pathways in the region. At the same time, it offers a theoretical contribution to understanding institutionalism in the Global South and provides an empirical assessment of both the potential and limitations of regionalism-based migration governance in Southeast Asia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

ASEAN's Institutional Design in Migration Governance

ASEAN's institutional design in the context of migration governance reflects the distinctive character of Southeast Asian regionalism, which differs fundamentally from regional integration models such as the European Union (Geddes, 2021; Martínez Marco, 2023; Nadalutti & Rüland, 2024). Since its inception, ASEAN has been built on the principles of state sovereignty, non-interference, and consensus-based decision-making. These characteristics have shaped an institutional framework that prioritises political coordination and voluntary commitments among member states over the creation of binding supranational legal mechanisms. In the field of migration, this approach has a direct impact on how regional policies are designed and implemented, particularly in the development of legal migration pathways or complementary pathways.

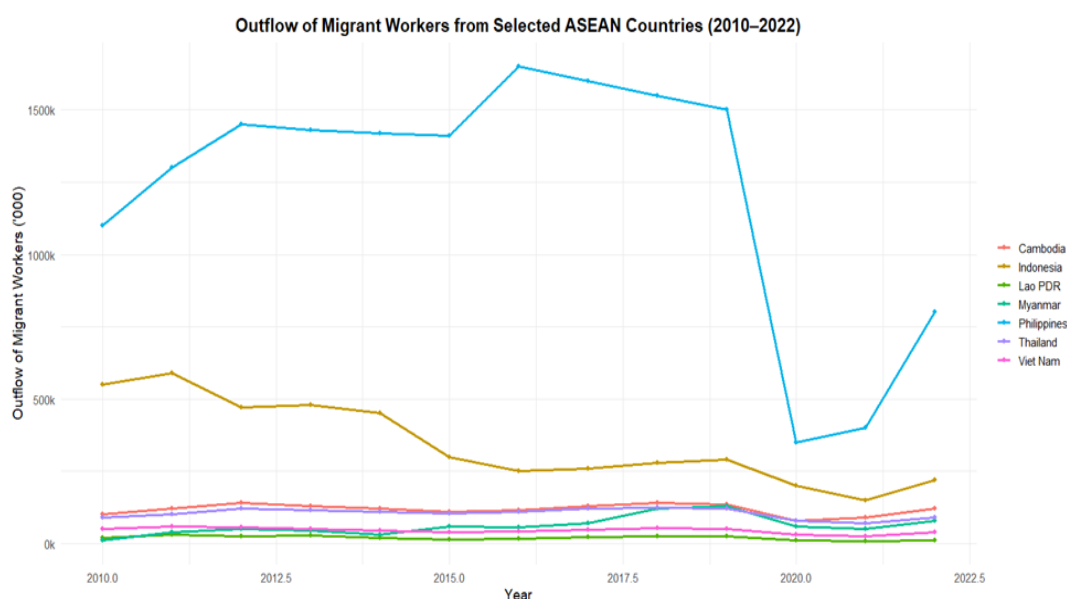


Figure 2. Outflow of Migrant Workers from Selected ASEAN Countries

Source: Migration Data Portal, 2024

Figure 2 illustrates the outflow dynamics of labour migration from seven ASEAN countries between 2010 and 2022. The data reveal distinct movement patterns across countries with significant variations in volume, which can be interpreted in the context of national policies, regional economic conditions, and external factors such as the global pandemic. The Philippines emerges as the

country with the highest outflow volume throughout the observation period. The prominent light-blue line on the graph shows an upward trend peaking in 2017, reaching over 1.6 million migrant workers per year. This pattern reflects the Philippines' well-established overseas labour management system, supported by a strong legal framework and an integrated migrant protection network. The sharp decline in 2020–2021 demonstrates the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international labour mobility.

Indonesia ranks second but exhibits a different trend. After peaking in 2011–2012, the outflow figures show a consistent decline, dropping below 300,000 in 2020. This phenomenon can be linked to policies restricting migrant worker placements in sectors vulnerable to exploitation, as well as government efforts to expand domestic employment opportunities. However, a slight increase in 2022 indicates a post-pandemic recovery process. Other countries, such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Viet Nam, and Lao PDR, show relatively low and stable outflow numbers. Myanmar experienced a moderate rise in 2017–2018, which may be associated with labour demand in neighbouring countries' informal sectors. In contrast, Lao PDR maintained consistently minimal figures throughout the period, reflecting the limited scale of labour migration outflows. There are significant gaps among ASEAN countries in their capacity to manage labour migration pathways. National mechanisms dominate over regional coordination, consistent with ASEAN's soft-law institutional character (Gaffar & Al Brashdi, 2025; Sundram, 2023). External shocks such as the pandemic highlight the need for more coordinated complementary pathways to ensure migrant worker protection in times of crisis (Prianto, Amri, & Ilik, 2023).

The key instruments that reflect ASEAN's institutional design in migration governance are the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2007) and the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017). Both documents are often regarded as significant milestones, as they mark the first time ASEAN reached a regional commitment to migrant worker protection. However, from an institutional perspective, neither instrument carries binding legal status. The 2007 Declaration

functions merely as a political statement of intent, while the 2017 Consensus, despite being more detailed, still operates within a soft law framework without clear enforcement mechanisms or sanctions. In other words, ASEAN's institutional design for migration governance functions more as a normative coordination forum than as a regulatory structure with binding authority (Dewi, 2024; Fitria, 2025). This approach is also evident in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) framework, which identifies labour market integration as one of its key pillars. Although the AEC promotes the liberalisation of labour mobility, its implementation remains confined to specific sectors through Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs). These MRAs apply only to selected professions and focus primarily on the recognition of professional qualifications rather than establishing comprehensive legal migration channels for cross-sectoral labour mobility. This underscores the partial nature of ASEAN's institutional design, characterised by a narrow scope and heavy reliance on the national policies of member states.

ASEAN's soft institutionalism also shapes the relationship between regional and national policies. Instead of creating uniform migration mechanisms at the regional level, ASEAN provides normative guidelines that are then translated into national policies according to each member state's context. In practice, this has resulted in wide variations in the implementation of migrant worker protection and labour mobility schemes. Labour-receiving countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand maintain strict domestic regulations on work permits, while labour-sending countries like Indonesia and the Philippines place greater emphasis on the protection of their overseas workers (Çingir, 2022; Lee, 2025; Srinivas & Sivaraman, 2021). The absence of a binding regional legal framework means that complementary pathways in ASEAN are largely grounded in domestic policies loosely harmonised through ASEAN commitments.

From an institutionalist perspective, ASEAN's design can be understood through three analytical approaches. First, rational choice institutionalism explains that ASEAN member states tend to maintain migration policy as a domain of national sovereignty due to its implications for domestic security, economic stability, and political considerations. Regional consensus is achieved only when it

aligns with the national interests of the majority of member states. Second, historical institutionalism highlights that ASEAN's institutional design reflects a path dependency shaped since the organisation's inception, where the principle of non-interference became a foundational norm. Third, sociological institutionalism underscores how regional norms—such as solidarity, consensus, and respect for sovereignty—have shaped migration policies to be rooted more in political agreement than in formal regulation.

This institutional design has two major implications for the development of complementary pathways. On the one hand, ASEAN's institutional flexibility allows adaptation to the varying capacities and interests of its member states. This is crucial given the significant differences in economic structures, legal systems, and migration flows across Southeast Asia. On the other hand, the absence of a binding regional enforcement mechanism means that the protection of migrant workers' rights depends largely on national political commitment, resulting in uneven and poorly coordinated policy implementation. In other words, ASEAN's institutional design produces soft legal migration pathways that can foster regional collaboration but lack the legal guarantees associated with supranational mechanisms.

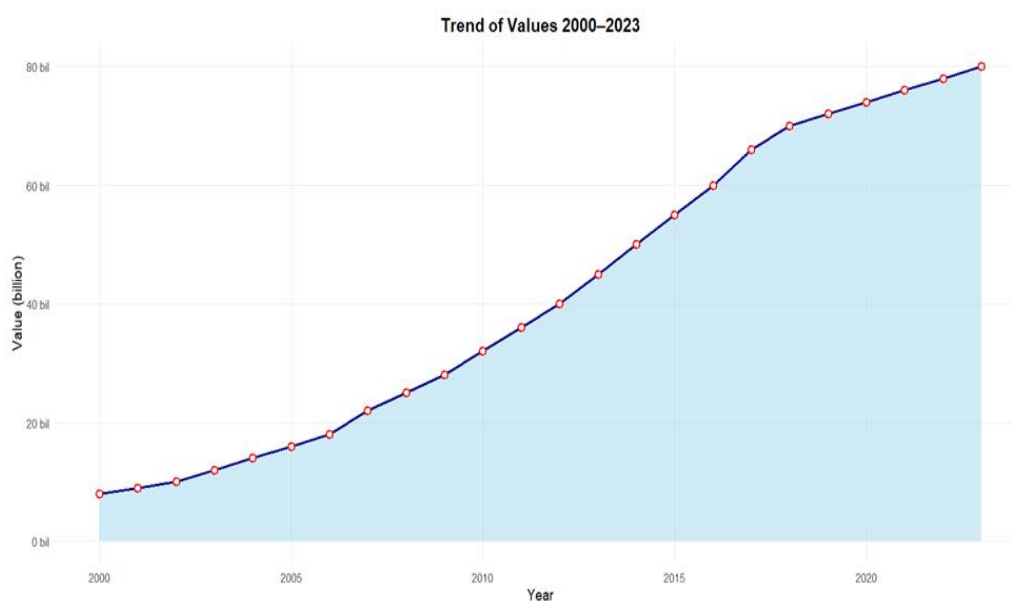


Figure 3. Remittance trends in Southeast Asia

Source: Migration Data Portal, 2024

Figure 3 illustrates the growth of remittance inflows to Southeast Asian countries between 2000 and 2023. Remittances serve as a key indicator for measuring migrant workers' contributions to national economies and reflect the dynamics of cross-border labour migration in the region (Capaldi, 2023; Prianto, Amri, & Ajis, 2023; Soriano & Reyes, 2024). The trend shows consistent growth over the past two decades. In the early period (2000–2005), remittance values remained relatively low, below USD 20 billion, reflecting a smaller scale of labour migration and less efficient financial transfer systems compared to the present. A significant increase became evident after 2005, with steady acceleration driven by rising demand for migrant workers in destination countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Middle East, alongside improvements in formal financial remittance channels.

The 2010–2015 period recorded a sharp surge, with remittances exceeding USD 50 billion. This phenomenon can be linked to regional economic integration through the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which began opening opportunities for labour mobility, as well as the increasing participation of labour-sending countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam in the global labour market. During this time, migrant worker protection policies in sending countries were also strengthened, encouraging the use of formal remittance channels. The peak occurred between 2018 and 2023, when remittances approached USD 80 billion. Although growth temporarily slowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the trend shows a rapid recovery after 2021. This highlights the resilience of remittance-based economies in Southeast Asia and underscores the strategic role of migrant workers in sustaining economic stability in their countries of origin.

The concept of complementary pathways in migration governance refers to additional legal migration channels beyond traditional mechanisms such as refugee resettlement or regular economic migration (Fratzke et al., 2021; van Selm, 2023; Varjonen et al., 2021). Within ASEAN, this concept has become increasingly relevant given the complexity of labour migration flows that include skilled workers, informal sector labourers, and migrants moving due to socio-economic

pressures in their home countries. Labour mobility schemes in Southeast Asia reflect attempts to balance labour market needs with the protection of workers' rights, although they continue to face significant institutional and legal constraints (Aziz & Basir, 2021; Low, 2021; Uchiyama et al., 2022).

In the ASEAN context, complementary pathways are primarily realised through three main forms: temporary labour schemes, bilateral or regional agreements on migrant worker protection, and family reunification channels. Temporary labour schemes are the most common, particularly in labour-receiving countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, which rely heavily on foreign workers in construction, plantation, manufacturing, and domestic service sectors (Anderson, 2021; Ness, 2021; Triandafyllidou, 2022; Yuda et al., 2022). These schemes function as legal migration channels but are often short-term contractual arrangements with limited protections. Within the framework of complementary pathways, such programmes provide legal avenues for migration while addressing urgent labour market needs, yet they do not fully guarantee migrant workers' social and human rights protections.

The second form comprises bilateral agreements and ASEAN-level regional commitments. The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017) seeks to establish a normative framework for protecting migrant workers in the region. However, as a soft law instrument, it requires translation into national policies to be implemented effectively. ASEAN member states also rely heavily on bilateral arrangements, such as agreements between Indonesia–Malaysia or Thailand–Myanmar, to regulate labour flows. These bilateral accords are often more operational than regional policies, as they directly govern recruitment mechanisms, work permits, and repatriation procedures. In the context of complementary pathways, the combination of regional consensus and bilateral frameworks creates layered legal migration channels, albeit with limited coordination at the ASEAN level. The third form is family reunification pathways, though their proportion remains relatively small compared to labour-driven migration in ASEAN. These pathways are crucial in adding a human rights dimension, particularly for long-term migrant workers in host

countries. However, most labour-receiving ASEAN states continue to restrict family reunification for low-income or informal sector workers, creating a gap between human rights principles and labour market-driven migration policies.

From an institutionalist perspective, complementary pathways in ASEAN reflect the interaction between regional norms, member state interests, and a consensus-based institutional design. Rational choice institutionalism explains that labour-receiving countries design legal migration channels primarily according to their economic needs, while labour-sending countries prioritise migrant protection as a domestic political imperative. Historical institutionalism highlights that reliance on bilateral agreements and temporary contract schemes reflects a long-standing institutional trajectory in the region. Meanwhile, sociological institutionalism underscores how ASEAN's consensus-based norms enable the creation of legal migration pathways but simultaneously limit deeper integration by avoiding mechanisms that could infringe upon member states' sovereignty.

The Influence of Regional Norms and Principles on Policy Effectiveness

The core norms and principles embedded within ASEAN play a central role in shaping the effectiveness of migration policies, including the development of complementary pathways. Two key principles exert the most influence: non-interference and consensus. These have formed the institutional foundation of ASEAN since its establishment and significantly determine the organisation's scope of action in designing regional migration policies. While these principles provide political stability and help maintain harmonious relations among member states, they also pose serious challenges to building effective and integrated migration governance mechanisms.

Table 1. Implementation of the ASEAN Consensus in ASEAN Member States

Member State	Status of Ratification / Integration into National Law	Level of Implementation
Brunei Darussalam	No specific ratification; partial integration through domestic labor regulations	Partial
Cambodia	Incorporated key principles of the <i>Consensus</i> into the 2020 Law on Migrant Workers	Full

Indonesia	Law No. 18/2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers reflects the <i>Consensus</i>	Full
Lao PDR	Domestic regulations cover only part of the migrant protection principles	Partial
Malaysia	No formal ratification; labor migration policy relies on bilateral agreements	Partial
Myanmar	Limited integration; migration policies focus on labor deployment with minimal protection framework	Partial
Philippines	Overseas labor protection system already aligned with <i>Consensus</i> principles prior to 2017	Full
Singapore	No formal ratification; relies on domestic work permit-based labor policies	Partial
Thailand	Incorporated <i>Consensus</i> principles into national policies and bilateral labor MOUs	Full
Viet Nam	2020 Migrant Labor Law reflects some <i>Consensus</i> principles	Partial

Source: Processed by Authors from Various Sources

Table 1 maps the extent to which ASEAN member states have integrated the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers into their national legal frameworks. The mapping results reveal varying levels of implementation, underscoring differences in legal capacity and political commitment among member states in building regionally based migration governance. Several countries demonstrate full implementation. Indonesia, through Law No. 18/2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, explicitly adopts the principles of the Consensus. Similarly, Cambodia incorporates its key provisions into the 2020 Migrant Workers Law, while Thailand harmonises its national policies and bilateral memoranda of understanding with the Consensus framework. The Philippines occupies a unique position, as its overseas migrant worker protection system was already aligned with the Consensus principles even before 2017, reflecting a more advanced national legal framework compared to other member states.

Conversely, most of the other ASEAN member states have only achieved partial implementation. Brunei Darussalam, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore,

and Viet Nam have yet to undertake formal ratification; the integration of the Consensus principles remains limited to sectoral domestic policies or bilateral agreements. For example, Malaysia's migration policy continues to rely heavily on intergovernmental MOUs, while Singapore focuses on domestic work permit regulations without adopting a broader regional protection framework. Myanmar demonstrates minimal integration, concentrating primarily on labour deployment without a comprehensive protection mechanism. This variation highlights two key points. First, the implementation of the Consensus is highly influenced by each country's national legal context and domestic political priorities. Second, the soft law character of the ASEAN Consensus means there is no supranational enforcement mechanism to ensure full policy harmonisation. As a result, the protection of migrant workers in the ASEAN region continues to depend on the voluntary commitments of member states, creating imbalances in policy effectiveness.

At the institutional level, these findings reinforce the argument that ASEAN's migration governance remains intergovernmental in nature, relying on consensus-based coordination rather than supranational authority. The table also underscores a key challenge in building integrated complementary pathways in the region: how to translate normative commitments into more uniform, legally binding mechanisms that can operate across member states. The principle of non-interference affirms that each member state retains full sovereignty over its domestic policies, including migration.

In practice, this means ASEAN lacks the authority to impose regulations or common standards on member states regarding legal migration channels. As a result, every regional policy—including the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017)—can only be implemented to the extent that member states are willing to translate it into their national frameworks. This produces uneven implementation, heavily dependent on domestic political priorities. Labour-receiving countries with strong economic interests in maintaining access to low-cost labour, such as Malaysia and Thailand, tend to focus policies on recruitment regulation and migration control. By contrast, labour-

sending countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines emphasise migrant worker protection. These divergences illustrate how the principle of non-interference reinforces national policy variation while simultaneously weakening regional coordination.

The principle of consensus also has a significant impact. On the one hand, it enables the formation of inclusive political commitments, as all member states are involved in decision-making. On the other hand, the consensus mechanism often produces compromise policies that are broad and shallow, designed to avoid conflicts of interest. This is reflected in the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2007), which is normative in nature and lacks implementation mechanisms. Even the more comprehensive ASEAN Consensus of 2017 does not include binding enforcement provisions, as maintaining the agreement of all parties takes precedence. In the context of complementary pathways, this means that although there is regional recognition of the importance of legal migration channels, the resulting policies remain loosely framed and highly dependent on national-level adaptation.

From an institutionalist perspective, these norms demonstrate the complex interaction between institutional structures and member state behaviour. Sociological institutionalism explains that the norms of consensus and non-interference are not merely procedural mechanisms but part of ASEAN's collective identity, shaping the behavioural expectations of its member states. These norms act as political glue but also set an upper limit on the depth of policy integration. Rational choice institutionalism suggests that member states adhere to these principles because they align with national interest calculations, thereby safeguarding sovereignty while still reaping economic benefits from the regional framework. Meanwhile, historical institutionalism views the persistence of these principles as a result of path dependency, deeply embedded in ASEAN's decision-making structure since its inception and therefore resistant to change.

The influence of these norms and principles on policy effectiveness is evident in several aspects. First, ASEAN's migration policies are more coordinated than regulatory. ASEAN serves as a forum for norm-setting rather than as a

governing or enforcement body for legal migration policies. Second, existing complementary pathways reflect the willingness of member states to collaborate rather than the result of binding regulation. This provides flexibility but also produces uneven implementation across the region. Third, the absence of strong enforcement mechanisms means that the protection of migrant workers' rights continues to depend on national commitments, which are often inconsistent with the regional principles that ASEAN has formally endorsed.

Nevertheless, the principles of non-interference and consensus are not absolute obstacles. In some cases, these very principles have enabled the creation of minimum agreements that serve as a foundation for strengthening future policies. The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017), for instance, while not legally binding, has provided a normative framework that encourages member states to begin aligning their domestic policies. International organisations such as the IOM and ILO have used this document as an entry point for delivering technical assistance and policy advocacy. In other words, regional norms can serve as an initial platform for developing more coordinated complementary pathways, provided they are supported by member state initiatives and external actors. A comparison between migration governance in ASEAN and the European Union (EU) highlights the fundamental differences in institutional design, policy approaches, and the effectiveness of implementing complementary pathways (Jetschke & Murray, 2012). Both regions face significant cross-border migration flows, yet their political contexts, levels of integration, and underlying institutional principles have produced vastly different governance models.

The EU possesses a supranational structure that allows the formulation of migration policies with binding legal authority over all member states. This is evident in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and various complementary pathways schemes such as relocation programmes, humanitarian visas, and EU-regulated labour mobility initiatives. These policies are implemented through formal legal instruments, including regulations and directives, which carry legal force above national policies. Within this framework, the EU is able to

establish minimum standards for migrant protection and coordinated legal migration pathways at the regional level. In contrast, ASEAN operates under an institutional design grounded in consensus and the principle of non-interference. There are no supranational mechanisms capable of compelling member states to adopt regional migration policies. Instruments such as the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017) function as soft law without any enforcement mechanisms. Policy implementation therefore depends entirely on the willingness of member states to align their domestic regulations. This fundamental difference means that complementary pathways in ASEAN serve more as normative guidelines than as binding regulatory systems, unlike the EU model.

In terms of policy scope, the EU adopts a more comprehensive approach. Complementary pathways in Europe encompass not only labour mobility but also humanitarian channels, family reunification, and refugee protection mechanisms. ASEAN, by contrast, focuses primarily on labour mobility, particularly in the context of regional economic integration through the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Existing schemes are largely based on temporary contracts and bilateral agreements, with migrant rights protections varying widely between member states. Moreover, the sectors covered by ASEAN's formal integration are limited mainly to skilled professions under the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs), while the majority of ASEAN migrant workers are employed in non-MRA sectors such as construction, agriculture, and domestic work. This highlights that complementary pathways in ASEAN remain partial compared to the EU's more comprehensive model.

From a normative perspective, the EU tends to prioritise regional solidarity and human rights protection as the foundation of its migration policies. This enables the development of complementary pathways aligned with international human rights standards. ASEAN, in contrast, is guided by norms of consensus and respect for member state sovereignty. While these norms provide crucial flexibility in a region marked by high political and economic heterogeneity, they simultaneously

limit the depth of migration policy integration. This normative divergence directly impacts the effectiveness of legal migration channels in the two regions.

Tabel 2. Comparison of ASEAN and European Union Migration Policy Instruments

Policy Instrument	Legal Status	Enforcement Mechanism	Binding Force	Source
<i>ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers</i> (2007)	Soft Law	No sanction mechanism; implementation left to member states' national policies	Low	ASEAN Secretariat (2007), <i>ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers</i>
<i>ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers</i> (2017)	Soft Law	No formal monitoring mechanism; serves as a normative guideline for member states	Low–Medium (depending on national commitment)	ASEAN Secretariat (2017), <i>ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers</i>
EU Directive 2009/50/EC – Blue Card Directive	Hard Law	Enforcement via supranational law; member states are required to transpose into national policy	High	European Commission (2009), <i>Council Directive 2009/50/EC on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purpose of Highly Qualified Employment</i>
EU Directive 2003/86/EC – Family Reunification	Hard Law	Monitoring mechanism in place; violations can be brought before the	High	European Commission (2003), <i>Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the Right to</i>

European Court of Justice	<i>Family Reunification</i>
------------------------------	---------------------------------

Source: Processed by Authors from Various Sources

The comparison between ASEAN and European Union migration policy instruments in this table highlights fundamental differences in institutional design and approaches to regional migration governance. On ASEAN's side, both the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2007) and the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017) represent a soft law model that is non-binding. These instruments lack supranational enforcement or sanction mechanisms; their implementation is entirely delegated to member states through their respective national policies. Their binding force remains relatively low to medium, depending largely on each country's domestic political commitment. This reflects ASEAN's soft institutionalism approach, where norms and consensus form the core foundation of regional coordination rather than supranational legal rules.

In contrast, the European Union's migration policy instruments, such as EU Directive 2009/50/EC (Blue Card Directive) and EU Directive 2003/86/EC (Family Reunification), reflect a hard law approach with robust enforcement mechanisms. Both directives carry supranational legal status that obliges EU member states to transpose the provisions into their national legislation. In addition, formal monitoring mechanisms and litigation pathways through the European Court of Justice exist for non-compliant member states. This structure ensures a higher degree of policy harmonisation and guarantees the binding force of migration regulations at the regional level.

This narrative underscores the divergent institutional orientations of the two regions. ASEAN prioritises flexibility and respect for state sovereignty, whereas the European Union builds migration governance through legal harmonisation and binding supranational mechanisms. In the context of complementary pathways, this difference has significant implications: ASEAN tends to develop legal migration channels based on political commitments and voluntary agreements, while the EU can establish more integrated pathways underpinned by stronger legal protections.

This comparison highlights two key points. First, the institutional differences between ASEAN and the EU result in significant variations in the design and effectiveness of complementary pathways. Second, although ASEAN lags behind in terms of integration depth, its approach offers an alternative model of regional migration governance that aligns more closely with Southeast Asia's political and economic realities. To strengthen complementary pathways, ASEAN does not need to fully replicate the EU model but can draw lessons from the EU's enforcement mechanisms and migrant protection standards while retaining the flexibility that characterises Southeast Asian regionalism. Although the EU is often used as a benchmark, ASEAN's model possesses its own distinctiveness. ASEAN's soft institutionalism approach allows adaptation to member states' varying capacities and provides a more inclusive space for political negotiation. This flexibility is crucial in the context of the Global South, where supranational integration often faces resistance. In several respects, ASEAN's complementary pathways reflect pragmatic collaboration tailored to national conditions rather than full harmonisation, which could generate political tensions.

The Role of International Organizations in Strengthening Migration Routes

International organisations play a crucial role in shaping and strengthening complementary pathways in the ASEAN region. Given ASEAN's institutional limitations, operating under soft law and consensus-based principles, external actors such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provide significant support in technical, normative, and policy advocacy aspects. Their involvement helps to fill ASEAN's institutional gaps and promotes the development of more coordinated legal migration mechanisms.

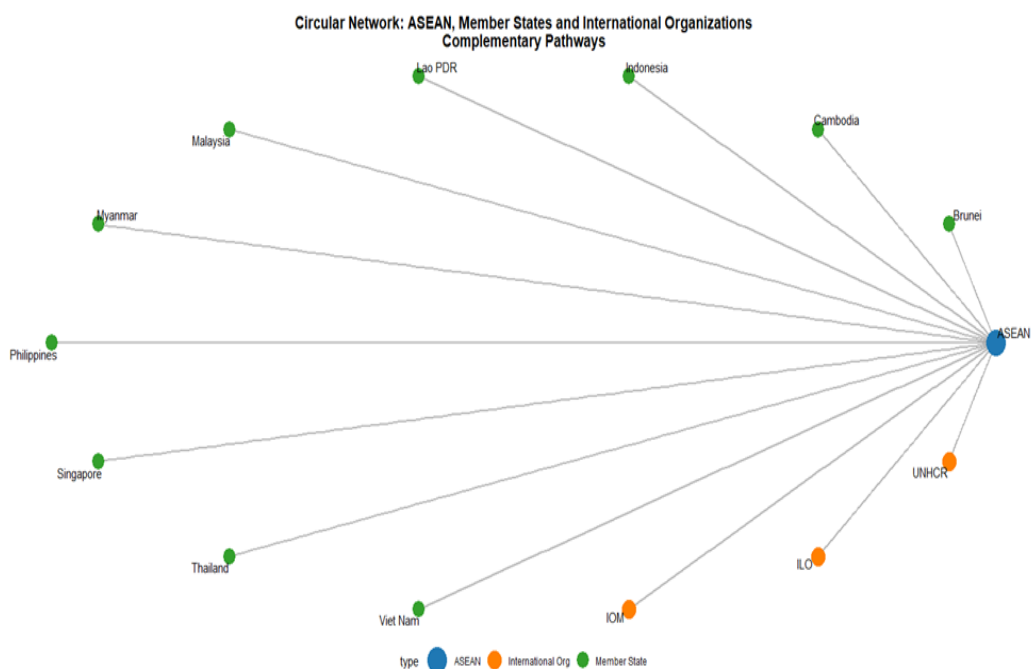


Figure 4. Circular Network: ASEAN, Member States and International Organizations Complementary Pathways
 Source: Processed by Authors

This circular network diagram (see figure 4) illustrates the institutional relationships underpinning ASEAN’s efforts to develop complementary pathways for labour migration governance. ASEAN is positioned at the centre of the visualisation as the primary node, reflecting its role as a regional coordination platform that facilitates dialogue and policy alignment among member states. The central placement underscores ASEAN’s function as a connector rather than a supranational authority, consistent with the principles of consensus and non-interference that characterise Southeast Asian regionalism.

Surrounding the central ASEAN node are the ten member states, represented in green, forming the first layer of the network. Their equal placement signifies the horizontal and non-hierarchical nature of ASEAN’s institutional design, where each state retains sovereignty over its national migration policies. The connecting lines between ASEAN and its member states depict the channels through which regional commitments—such as the ASEAN Consensus on the

Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers—are translated into national legal frameworks. The absence of direct interconnections among member states in the diagram also highlights that labour migration governance in ASEAN remains largely dominated by bilateral and national approaches, with limited supranational integration.

The second layer of the network consists of three international organisations—the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—depicted in orange. Their placement on the same ring as the member states emphasises their external yet significant role in strengthening complementary pathways. Through technical assistance, policy support, and the dissemination of international standards, these organisations act as linking nodes between ASEAN’s regional initiatives and the broader architecture of global migration governance. The use of colour and varying node sizes highlights the hierarchy of institutional roles: ASEAN, as the central coordinating body, is depicted as the largest node, while member states and international organisations are shown at a smaller scale, reflecting their interconnected yet interdependent roles. This circular layout represents ASEAN’s soft institutionalism, where coordination flows from the centre to all nodes through voluntary commitments rather than binding legal authority.

The IOM serves as ASEAN’s primary partner in migration data management, policy development, and the facilitation of legal migration pathways. One of IOM’s key contributions is the collection and harmonisation of migrant worker data in the region through the ASEAN Migration Data Portal. This database provides the foundation for planning complementary pathways, particularly since many ASEAN member states lack integrated migration statistics systems. IOM also supports member states in designing temporary labour migration programmes aligned with international standards, including fair recruitment mechanisms. This technical role enhances ASEAN’s institutional capacity, which remains limited in managing cross-border migration flows.

The ILO adds a critical dimension of migrant workers' rights protection to complementary pathways. With its labour-focused mandate, the ILO assists ASEAN member states in integrating international labour standards into migration policies. Programmes such as the ILO's ASEAN Triangle Project promote labour law reforms, improve contract mechanisms, and strengthen social protections for migrant workers. In the context of legal migration channels, the ILO's contribution ensures that complementary pathways function not merely as mechanisms for labour supply but also as instruments for upholding human rights.

Although the UNHCR's primary mandate is refugee protection, it plays a relevant role in ASEAN's complementary pathways. Migration flows in Southeast Asia are often mixed, with migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers moving through overlapping routes. UNHCR works with ASEAN and its member states to develop additional protection channels, including community-based resettlement programmes and humanitarian schemes that can be categorised as part of complementary pathways. This collaboration expands legal migration channels beyond the economic dimension, adding an international protection layer for vulnerable groups.

The role of international organisations is not only technical but also normative. Through policy support and advocacy, they help introduce international standards into ASEAN's regional discourse. The ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017), for example, was heavily influenced by technical consultations with the ILO and IOM, which promoted the adoption of migrant worker protection principles aligned with international conventions. In this sense, international organisations act as catalysts that strengthen the legitimacy and quality of ASEAN's migration policies while bridging the gap between global norms and regional practices.

However, the involvement of international organisations also faces challenges. ASEAN's principles of state sovereignty and non-interference limit the extent to which external recommendations can be adopted. Their support must be negotiated within a framework that respects the region's political dynamics. This requires international organisations in ASEAN to adopt a more collaborative and

consultative approach rather than an instructive one. Nevertheless, this pattern aligns closely with ASEAN's consensus-based institutional character, as it allows for the gradual adoption of international standards without undermining member states' political sensitivities.

Implications for the Protection of Migrant Workers' Rights

The development of complementary pathways in ASEAN has direct implications for the protection of migrant workers' rights in the region. Legal migration channels created through temporary labour schemes, bilateral agreements, and regional normative frameworks such as the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2017) have the potential to expand access to protection, but they also expose a set of limitations that reflect ASEAN's institutional design itself.

One of the key implications is that human rights protection in ASEAN remains heavily dependent on the national policies of member states (Jetschke, 2019). Because regional documents such as the Consensus hold only soft law status, their implementation is uneven. Labour-sending countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines tend to adopt more proactive migrant worker protection policies, including standardised contracts and assistance services in destination countries. In contrast, labour-receiving countries such as Malaysia and Thailand focus more on work permit regulations and migration control, with protections that vary across employment sectors. This misalignment creates protection gaps, where migrant workers' rights are not consistently recognised or enforced across the region.

The high proportion of undocumented migrant workers in ASEAN exacerbates this challenge. IOM (2021) estimates suggest that in some labour-receiving countries, such as Malaysia and Thailand, around 40–45% of migrant workers operate outside official mechanisms. The lack of sufficiently flexible legal pathways to meet labour demand drives many migrants to resort to informal channels. As a result, they not only lose access to legal protections but also face heightened risks of exploitation, contract violations, and even human trafficking. In this context, complementary pathways should serve as instruments to narrow the

space for irregular migration by providing legal channels that are more accessible, better coordinated, and legally protected.

Another implication is the emergence of tension between economic interests and human rights protection. Many complementary pathways in ASEAN, particularly temporary labour schemes, are designed primarily to meet labour market demands in receiving countries. These schemes are often short-term and contractual, with limited access to healthcare, social security, or the right to unionise. This raises the question of whether legal migration channels genuinely enhance the protection of migrant workers' rights or merely function as mechanisms to legitimise the supply of cheap labour. Without the integration of international labour standards, complementary pathways risk reinforcing migrant workers' vulnerabilities rather than safeguarding them.

There are, however, positive implications worth noting. Although not legally binding, the 2017 Consensus has created a normative framework that has encouraged member states to begin aligning their domestic policies. Several countries have improved recruitment systems, strengthened labour dispute resolution mechanisms, and enhanced consular cooperation. In addition, the involvement of international organisations such as the ILO and IOM in supporting the development of complementary pathways has helped introduce migrant protection standards consistent with international conventions into ASEAN's regional policy framework. This demonstrates that, while current protections remain limited, complementary pathways can serve as an important starting point for building a more rights-oriented legal migration system.

At the institutional level, the implications for migrant worker protection highlight the close interconnection between ASEAN's institutional design, regional norms, and national implementation capacity. The consensus-based model offers flexibility to accommodate the region's heterogeneity but also makes protection heavily dependent on the voluntary commitments of member states. To make complementary pathways an effective protection instrument, ASEAN needs to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, extend policy coverage to the informal sectors

that employ the majority of migrant workers, and ensure the integration of international labour standards into its regional migration governance framework.

In other words, the development of complementary pathways holds significant potential to enhance the protection of migrant workers' rights in Southeast Asia, but only if they are designed not merely as channels for labour mobility, but as a central pillar of a rights-based migration governance system. Without this shift, legal migration pathways in ASEAN will remain partial and unable to adequately address the challenges of migrant worker protection in the region.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of ASEAN's role in developing complementary pathways for labour mobility demonstrates that migration governance in Southeast Asia is shaped by a distinctive institutional design grounded in state sovereignty, non-interference, and consensus. This approach creates mechanisms that are flexible and able to accommodate the varying capacities and interests of member states, but at the same time imposes limitations on building integrated legal migration channels with binding authority. Instruments such as the 2007 ASEAN Declaration and the 2017 ASEAN Consensus provide an important normative framework, yet their status as soft law makes the implementation of migrant worker protection highly dependent on national policies. Complementary pathways in ASEAN, largely realised through temporary labour schemes, bilateral agreements, and regional coordination mechanisms, serve as a bridge between labour market demands and the protection of migrant rights. However, the high proportion of undocumented migrant workers and uneven levels of protection across countries indicate that existing legal migration channels are still insufficient to fully address human rights protection challenges in the region. The role of international organisations such as the IOM, ILO, and UNHCR is therefore critical in strengthening technical capacity, providing reliable data, and introducing international standards to help fill ASEAN's institutional gaps. Overall, the findings underscore that strengthening complementary pathways in ASEAN requires a dual approach: expanding regional

coordination while respecting national political contexts, and integrating migrant worker protection principles as a core policy foundation rather than as a secondary component of labour mobility. Although differing from the more integrated European Union model, ASEAN holds the potential to develop legal migration channels that reflect the realities of the Global South—flexible, inclusive, and progressively rights-based. In this way, complementary pathways can evolve into a key instrument of regional migration governance that not only serves economic interests but also upholds migrant worker protection standards across Southeast Asia

REFERENSI

- Anderson, J. T. (2021). Managing labour migration in Malaysia: Foreign workers and the challenges of ‘control’ beyond liberal democracies. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(1), 86–104.
- Asis, R. P., & Maningat, C. L. (2023). The “ASEAN Way” in migration governance. In *The Palgrave handbook of South–South migration and inequality* (pp. 679–698). Springer International Publishing Cham.
- Aziz, S. N. A., & Basir, S. M. (2021). Protection of Migrant Workers under the ICMW: Incompatibility with Malaysian Laws and Position in ASEAN. *Hasanuddin Law Review*, 7(3), 150–168. <https://doi.org/10.20956/halrev.v7i3.3066>
- Boutier, I., & Maganaris, E. (2025). *The Risks of Labour Trafficking for Migrant Workers: A Focus on Human Trafficking and AI*. <https://researchonline.gcu.ac.uk/en/publications/the-risks-of-labour-trafficking-for-migrant-workers-a-focus-on-hu>
- Capaldi, M. P. (2023). Present-Day Migration in Southeast Asia: Evolution, Flows and Migration Dynamics. In S. Petcharamesree & M. P. Capaldi (Eds.), *IMISCOE Research Series* (pp. 1–19). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25748-3_1
- Çingir, Ö. F. (2022). Violations of the human rights of migrant workers in Southeast Asia. In *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia* (pp. 31–48). Routledge.
- Dewi, U. N. M. (2024). Forced migration in Southeast Asian: policies and migration governance. *Southeast Asian Conference on Migration and Development (SEACMD 2023)*, 132–150.
- Elliott, K. A. (2022). Handbook on globalisation and labour standards. In K. A. Elliott (Ed.), *Handbook on Globalisation and Labour Standards*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788977371>
- Fitria, N. (2025). A Critical Review of the ASEAN Convention on the Protection of

- Women Migrant Workers: Gaps, Challenges, and Recommendations. *JCIC: Jurnal CIC Lembaga Riset Dan Konsultan Sosial*, 7(1), 51–62.
- Fratzke, S., Zanzuchi, M. B., Hooper, K., Beirens, H., Kainz, L., Benson, N., Bateman, E., & Bolter, J. (2021). Refugee Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Opportunities for Growth. *Geneva and Brussels: UNHCR and MPI Europe*.
- Gaffar, H., & Al Brashdi, S. (2025). Legal frameworks for workforce mobility and employment regulations in ASEAN: challenges and efforts in aligning domestic labour laws with regional standards. *Labor History*, 1–29.
- Geddes, A. (2021). Governing migration beyond the state: Europe, North America, South America, and Southeast Asia in a global context. In *Governing Migration Beyond the State: Europe, North America, South America, and Southeast Asia in a Global Context*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198842750.001.0001>
- Ishikawa, K. (2021). The ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN economic integration. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 10(1), 24–41.
- Jetschke, A. (2019). Does forced migration increase regional human rights commitment? The cases of Malaysia and Thailand in ASEAN. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 25(5), 705–728.
- Jetschke, A., & Murray, P. (2012). Diffusing Regional Integration: The EU and Southeast Asia. In *West European Politics* (Vol. 35, Issue 1, pp. 174–191). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2012.631320>
- Jetschke, A., & Theiner, P. (2020). Time to move on! Why the discussion about ASEAN's relevance is outdated. *The Pacific Review*, 33(3–4), 593–603.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2019.1673803>
- Lanna, N. (2022). Between the hammer of non-interference and the anvil of third-party influence: ASEAN, APT and EAS vis-à-vis the Rohingya migration crisis. In *Migration Governance in Asia* (pp. 126–143). Routledge.
- Lee, H.-A. (2025). Facilitating Gainful Labour Migration in Southeast Asia Remains an Elusive Task. *ISEAS Perspective* 2025/37.
- Low, C. C. (2021). Legal Reforms in Protecting Migrant Workers' Welfare in Malaysia: Labor Law and Social Security. *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 14(1), 59–80.
- Loxa, A. (2023). Complementary pathways: pledging protection at the edges of EU law. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 25(2), 226–248.
- Marah, T. S. (2025). HUMANITARIAN LAW AND ASEAN: ANALYZING REGIONAL COMMITMENT AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE MECHANISMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. *Journal of Governance and Public Administration*, 2(2), 495–511.
- Martínez Marco, M. (2023). *Comparative Analysis of Regional Integration Mechanisms in the EU and ASEAN: A Study of EU and ASEAN's Pathways towards Regional*

Integration.

- Moretti, S. (2021). Between refugee protection and migration management: The quest for coordination between UNHCR and IOM in the Asia-Pacific region. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(1), 34–51.
- Nadalutti, E., & Rüländ, J. (2024). Cross-border regionalism in the EU and ASEAN: another dimension of the “varieties of regionalism.” *Journal of European Integration*, 46(8), 1193–1214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2024.2329636>
- Ness, I. (2021). Temporary labour and worker exploitation: Southeast Asian migration to Malaysia. In *Handbook of Migration and Global Justice* (pp. 26–48). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Pitakdumrongkit, K. (2023). Regional economic integration: the ASEAN Economic Community and beyond. In *The Elgar Companion to ASEAN* (pp. 62–75). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Plummer, M. G., Petri, P. A., & Zhai, F. (2014). Assessing the impact of ASEAN economic integration on labour markets. *ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper, Forthcoming*.
- Prianto, A. L., Amri, A. R., & Ajis, M. N. (2023). Governance and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Human Rights*, 7(2), 214. <https://doi.org/10.19184/jseahr.v7i2.44185>
- Prianto, A. L., Amri, A. R., & Ilik, G. (2023). *Governing Migrant Workers Post-COVID-19 in Southeast Asia: Vulnerability, Mitigation and Transformative Agenda BT - Political Economy of Development in the Global South Post-COVID-19 Pandemic* (H. Adam & R. Rena (eds.); pp. 139–164). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-4074-5_7
- Putri, A. R., & Sari, V. P. (2021). ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers sebagai rezim perlindungan pekerja migran berketerampilan rendah di ASEAN. *Padjadjaran Journal of International Relations*, 3(2), 242–264.
- Rother, S. (2025). International organisations are people, too: IOM’s role as coordinator of the UN migration network and the socialisation of international organisations. *Geopolitics*, 30(4), 1553–1580.
- Soriano, E., & Reyes, M. (2024). The impact of ASEAN regional integration on the cross-border movement of local labor in the Philippines. *Studies in Social Science & Humanities*, 3(6), 8–16.
- Srinivas, S., & Sivaraman, S. (2021). *Understanding Relevant Sustainable Development Goal Targets Related to Labour Migration in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations During the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic*.
- Sundram, P. (2023). ASEAN as network governance: An alternative lens to evaluate policymaking and performance. *F1000Research*, 12, 1073.
- Sundram, P. (2025). Network governance in ASEAN: fostering regional cooperation and integration. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 7, 1434595.

- Tan, H.-L. (2022). Intergovernmental Yet Dynamically Expansive: Concordance Legalization as an Alternative Regional Trading Arrangement in ASEAN and Beyond. *European Journal of International Law*, 33(2), 341–380.
- Triandafyllidou, A. (2022). Temporary migration: category of analysis or category of practice? In *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Vol. 48, Issue 16, pp. 3847–3859). Taylor & Francis.
- Uchiyama, Y., Furuoka, F., Akhir, M. N. M., & MN, M. (2022). Gig workers, social protection and labour market inequality: Lessons from Malaysia. *Jurnal Ekonomi Malaysia*, 56(3), 165–184.
- van Harten, E. B. (2023). Complementary pathways as “genuine and effective access to means of legal entry” in the reasoning of the European Court of Human Rights: Legal and practical implications. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 25(2), 200–225.
- van Selm, J. (2023). Whose pathways are they? The top-down/bottom-up conundrum of complementary pathways for refugees. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 25(2), 137–163.
- Vankova, Z. (2022). Refugees as Migrant Workers after the Global Compacts? Can Labour Migration Serve as a Complementary Pathway for People in Need of Protection into Sweden and Germany? *Laws*, 11(6), 88. <https://doi.org/10.3390/laws11060088>
- Varjonen, S., Kinnunen, A., Paavola, J.-M., Ramadan, F., Raunio, M., van Selm, J., & Vilhunen, T. (2021). *Student, Worker or Refugee? How complementary pathways for people in need of international protection work in practice*. <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/163604>
- Yuda, T. K., Kim, M., Pholpark, A., & Bin Aedy Rahman, H. N. (2022). Unmasking the social policy responses of COVID-19 in four Southeast Asian Nations: institutional patterns and policy adjustment. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development*, 32(4), 294–317.