



[ADRN Online Seminar] Democracy Cooperation Series 15: Ups and Downs of Direct Democracy Trends in Asia

Exploring Direct, Deliberative, and Participatory Democracy in Asia

East Asia Institute (EAI)

I. Overview

Democratic countries in Asia are incorporating concepts and mechanisms of direct democracy into their political system, but many still face difficulties in implementing good governance. In order to examine the diverse backgrounds and ongoing trends of direct democracy within Asia, the Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN) hosted an ADRN online seminar, inviting scholars from seven Asian countries to speak about their country's direct democracy trends.

II. Case Studies: Philippines, Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India

Philippines

“Even though there are mechanisms for direct democracy [...], the clear challenge is the persistence of political dynasties...and the continuity of authoritarian populism in the country”

Direct democracy in the Philippines is anchored in its constitution. Article 13 of Section 16 of the constitution emphasizes the right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making.

At the center of Philippine direct democracy is a system of initiatives and referendums. For example, a 2019 referendum sought public approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law and the creation of a new province. Another example is recall elections. There have been instances when a petition made by a certain percentage of voters in a province or local jurisdiction resulted in out-of-cycle recall elections for local mayors.

Local government code also encourages the development of policies for public participation. For example, several local governments have created a local people's council, adding an additional layer of direct governance to the already-mandated local development councils. People's councils can observe, vote on, and participate in city government project activities and programs. The people's council can also designate representatives to all city council committees and suggest and vote on proposed legislation.



A new development in Philippine direct democracy is the use of digital democracy. Mayor Vico Sotto of the city of Pasig is known to actively use digital platforms to gauge public opinion on and get approval for certain policies. For example, new rules on speed limits in Pasig were proposed through online platforms, in what Magno likens to a local online referendum.

Participatory budgeting practices also help to boost accountability. Several mechanisms have been introduced over the past six or seven years (e.g. the Budget Partnership Agreements) to encourage bottom-up budgeting and citizen participatory audits. Village-level residents are also asked to identify budget priorities through a series of workshop assemblies; these priorities are incorporated into the budget of higher levels of government, including national development plans.

Direct democracy requires a combination of government enabling mechanisms and civil society demands. Enabling factors within the Philippines include its democratic political culture after the replacement of authoritarianism in the 1980s; rules and legislation, including local government code and the Philippine constitution; the right to information in the executive branch, the pursuit of open data for citizens, and access to reliable public documents; and ongoing capacity building for government agencies based on public participation.

The Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) is a law that provides incentives for participatory governance, aiming to ensure transparency, participation, and accountability across all government functions. The Department of the Interior and local governments are now also providing data ongoing infrastructure project, allowing people to monitor the progress of projects online and provide feedback.

On the demand side of direct democracy, one factor is the availability and accessibility of independent media that enables citizens to discuss public issues. For example, a corruption scandal in which government funds were being funneled to fake NGOs was exposed by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, an independent media organization. This prompted an online petition for the government's anti-graft agency to probe the 10 billion peso scam, and hundreds of thousands to protest.

Moving forward, Magno recommends passing the Freedom of Information Law, legislating participatory budget mechanisms at national and sub-national levels, integrating citizen participation in civic education, promoting open data and conducting analytics for better government planning, and building a database on citizen participation to aid policy reform efforts. He calls for new mechanisms to make the government's Full Disclosure Policy (FDP) fully operational, incorporating local knowledge stakeholders to create platforms that better bridge government data and policy advocacy. The persistence of political dynasties, which have been successful in representative democracy elections, and the rise of authoritarian populism in the country.

Mongolia

“Mongolia has the key mechanisms allowing for direct democracy..., but the general observation is these laws are not implemented in practice”

There is very limited space for direct democracy in Mongolia, especially as traditionally defined—people voting directly about the issues that interest them. However, using a broader interpretation



and examining whether mechanisms exist for citizen participation, there has been progress on the direct democratic front.

Like many other countries in Asia, Mongolia was ruled by an authoritarian regime for 70 years, transitioning out in the 1990s. In that sense, there has been a great deal of democratic progress. Though Mongolia has yet to hold a national referendum and there is not broader national scale participation, key mechanisms exist to allow public participation in various stages of governance, such as planning, budgeting, and monitoring. 2011 legislation established the right to information and transparency, and there are several mechanisms allowing public hearings, petitions, and complaints, as well as mandating the government to respond to these complaints. 2017 legislation introduced deliberative polling.

The first democratic constitution of 1992 set the foundation for direct democracy, recognizing that the people of Mongolia shall directly participate in state affairs. The role of the public evolved further with the Law on Referendum (1995) and a surge of laws in the 2010s which allowed and expanded the role of public participation in governance. However, these laws and mechanisms have not been fully implemented in practice, or are obstructed by other, contradictory laws.

Over the last two decades, the trend has been toward digital transformation and incorporating technology in the state-citizen relationship. This year, the Parliament of Mongolia released a “Digital Parliament” application, and there is a committee dedicated to digitalizing government services. But whether this digital transformation has contributed to people directly voting or indirectly changing policy is unclear. So far, its primary role has been to amplify state-to-citizen communication, and less so the reverse. The hope is for this digital transformation to provide actual decision-making empowerment for the public.

There have been some concerning setbacks for Mongolian direct democracy over the last decade. For example, laws on state secrets significantly restrict the right to information by allowing the government to classify any type of information as a secret. The current parliament also does not have a dedicated standing committee on petitions and complaints, as the existing committee was dissolved and replaced by the digital parliament application. But given the lack of widespread digital access and Mongolia’s “digital divide,” many citizens are unaware that such an application exists.

Mongolia also lacks proponents of direct democracy. In discussions on promoting democracy, few are saying that people need to directly vote and make decisions about key issues. Instead, Mongolian discussion of democracy focuses on representative democracy; there are many ongoing efforts to introduce another constitutional amendment to change the electoral system and fix the parliamentary system.

There are several popular claims against direct democracy. The first is the nationalist objection, which argues that proponents of democracy, especially direct democracy, are “pro-American liberals” who don’t understand the Mongolian culture and context, leading to pushback against democratic movements. Second, as Mongolia is situated between Russia and China, some have voiced the opinion that talking too much about freedom and freedom issues poses a national security concern. In a similar vein, some argue that civil society organizations (CSOs) should be restricted and regulated by the state. Some believe that democracy begets inequality, and will not contribute to the public’s quality of life. Others argue that Mongolia needs to dedicate its energy



to developing a long-term vision for prosperity, rather than wasting time making decisions and getting caught up in discussions of accountability. Finally, a popular belief is that the masses are uneducated, and to have them at the helm of the decision-making process is dangerous.

Indonesia

“Direct democratic practice has successfully [allowed] Indonesia to be resilient [to] democratic setbacks”

Indonesia, as a democratic country, has laws that regulate the working implementation of democracy. One such law stipulates that Indonesia acknowledges the practice of direct democracy. The most prominent forms of direct democracy today in Indonesia are referendums and elections.

Indonesia has implemented direct democracy in the form of referendums; notable examples are the referendum to amend the 1945 Constitution, and the referendum held by the East Timor province to vote on their affiliation to Indonesia. There are two referendum types. Typically, a referendum committee provides a simple question for citizens to directly answer. There are also popular referendums, however, in which citizens make a petition that calls a popular vote over existing legislation. A special committee for hosting referendums determines the timeframe and required signatures for a valid petition (for example, petitions may require signatures from diverse communities to protect minority interests). This form of direct democracy effectively grants the public the option to veto laws adopted by the elected legislature.

The referendum to amend the 1945 Constitution was crucial because the Constitution had never been changed; a 1985 presidential decree had stated such an amendment would only be allowed through a referendum in which 90% of those voting supported the initiative, and the amendment did in fact pass.

Second, in the 1999 referendum held in East Timor, the people of East Timor were asked whether they would like to remain affiliated with Indonesia or become independent. The area had been annexed—forcibly incorporated—into Indonesia in 1975 under the Suharto presidency. Demands were made by European and ASEAN countries for Indonesia to carry out political reforms, and the referendum came as a consequence of UN resolutions calling for the right to self-determination. Out of a total of 438,968 valid votes, 344,580 (78.5%) were pro-independence, while 94,388 (21.5%) supported remaining with Indonesia. Voter participation was very high—98.6% of all registered voters participated in the referendum. The results of the referendum led to the official separation of East Timor from Indonesia.

Though Indonesia used to have indirect elections, direct elections began in 2005. Indonesia directly elects its executives: the President and Vice President, governors, mayors, regents, village heads, and national and local representatives.

Various literature studies have revealed the advantages of direct democracy, but Indonesia’s democratic transition has shown the pathway to consolidation by merging direct elections for president and vice president with those for local governors and regents. The strengthening of direct democratic practices has allowed democratic institutions to ensure the proper functioning of civil society organizations and allowed other interest groups to engage in policy decision-making. Direct democratic practices have allowed Indonesia to remain resilient to



democratic setbacks, though it is still necessary to push back against rising populism being used in popular votes to expand power.

Malaysia

“The age of government-knows-all has basically ended”

Malaysia has had a tumultuous relationship with democracy, moving between three different governments within the span of two to three years. Malaysia’s first democratic transition occurred in 2018, shifting the federal government after 60 years under the former ruling coalition (known as the National Front). Unfortunately, the new government did not last long, only managing to stay in power for about a year and a half due to ideological splits and members of the party changing their party affiliation. The Sheraton Move—the political move carried out by the existing government in which the ruling coalition broke up—notably led to a political and constitutional crisis just before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The general election had been invalidated by the politicians themselves, leading to frustration among the voters as, after only one and a half years, a new government rose to power that was, in essence, a coalition of the losers of the previous general election.

As voters become more disillusioned and mistrust towards institutions arose, Malaysia underwent periods of uncertainty in terms of leadership. Seated in this context, conversations have arisen about opportunities to explore other forms of democracy, namely direct/participatory democracy, amongst members of civil society. There is also a need for less state intervention and greater empowerment of CSOs (civil society organizations); whereas Malaysia has historically been a top-down country, movements on the ground are now talking about a bottom-up approach.

The three governments that have held power in Malaysia since 2018 are known as the National Front (Barisan Nasional, or BN), the Pact of Hope (Pakatan Harapan, or PH), and the National Alliance (Perikatan Nasional, or PN). The National Front is the former, long-ruling coalition that stayed in power for six decades. The Pact of Hope government, a coalition based on progressive opposition politics, won the 2018 general elections but was short-lived. Finally, the National Alliance is a coalition comprised of the losers of the previous general election and splinter parties who deserted the previous ruling coalitions. The ambiguous self-collapse of the Pact of Hope movement and the undemocratic rise of the National Alliance have led to a fragile, minority government. Though the government has been forced to sign a memorandum of understanding between the National Alliance and the opposition bloc committing the current government to reform, the memorandum has also faced backlash from supporters of both parties due to the failure to consult the public during its creation.

Malaysia has historically practiced a representative/indirect model of democracy in combination with a constitutional monarchy, borrowing from the Westminster Model (an inheritance from the British colonization period). The monarch and royal families also have an internal consultative mechanism. Therefore, Malaysia has a very complex power structures and diverse social makeup. However, the discussion on democracy coming down to the ground level has been very limited, as—of the three branches of government—only the lower house of the Parliament is elected. The remaining positions are filled by appointment. in terms of politics in Malaysia.



Some political science dialogue in Malaysia centers around clientelism and patronage. In Malaysia, members of parliament (MPs) or potential candidates often engage with the public/the local level for political gain by providing citizens with “goodies” or aid and basic necessities to garner votes.

Malaysia, being situated in the center of Southeast Asia, is highly in touch with its surroundings, especially in terms of democracy. Democratic development in Indonesia and the Philippines in particular affect Malaysia, while larger superpowers like China and India—who are also facing challenges in terms of their democratic models—affect Malaysia indirectly as new generations become open to conversations about leadership decisions. In Malaysia, modern discussions of direct democracy are far more advanced than twenty or thirty years ago; whereas earlier generations preferred to pass policy and leadership decisions over to elites and community leaders, younger generations are much more aware and participatory. Technology has also been a major factor in encouraging Malaysian democracy.

Challenges to transitioning to a direct democracy model in Malaysia include getting buy-in from a large portion of rural and semi-urban constituencies—these communities have greater difficulty accessing information and building democratic awareness and tend to prioritize “bread and butter” survival issues, preferring to delegate policymaking and international issues to politicians and local parties. Malaysia also has three rampant, ongoing challenges making discussions about democracy slightly more problematic: race, religion, and corruption. Additionally, the labels ascribed to democracy by conservatives—namely, that democracy, liberty, and human rights are foreign, Western agendas that should be rejected—and the conservative narrative that democracy is a threat to the “social contract” create added difficulty. Finally, though most Malaysians accept that peace and freedom are benefits of democracy and part of the democratic process, there is less focus on principles like good governance and justice. Thus, democratic education needs to be encouraged and advanced, which will take time.

Those who are pro-democracy and support elements of direct democracy in Malaysia often belong to four key groups—those in urban centers, those with a background in activism, those with exposure to multiculturalism, and those belonging to the younger age bracket. People not belonging to these groups tend to want to maintain the status quo, passing policymaking and discussion responsibilities to representatives in lieu of direct involvement. That said, due to social media, there has been growth of civil society organizations supporting deliberation and dissent in public spaces; people are talking about democracy in a robust manner on digital platforms. Malaysia’s volunteer culture is growing. And the current minority government, because it is so weak, has been forced to consult and hold town halls with NGOs; this is an acknowledgement of the societal role of NGOs and CSOs. After the 14th general election, the age of government-knows-all has come to an end; this has been a long process, beginning in 2008 with concerted opposition efforts to create public awareness. These days, rather than bulldozing policies, governments consider opinions from CSOs and community leaders; in many ways, the decision-making process is much more inclusive.

In terms of ongoing efforts in Malaysia, the Better Malaysia Assembly (BMA) is experimenting with a citizen’s assembly similar to that of Ireland and Switzerland; it will be carrying out a pilot project in the state of Johor this coming August. Online petitions (such as change.org) have been very popular, and one CSO (BERSIH – the Coalition for Clean and Fair



Elections) is working on recall elections. As for open budget transparency, there are initiatives to invite the public to participate in monitoring state budgets.

Finally, there are a few emerging trends in Malaysia. More parties are being created, and there is talk of decentralization. With regards to political literacy, young groups are engaging in efforts to organize a digital parliament. In conclusion, the current government in Malaysia is a weak majority, and the opposition is in disarray. Though this is an opportunity for public involvement by CSOs, the potential for the return of corruption and previous governments (who are more familiar among voters) poses a threat to democracy.

Sri Lanka

“Although Sri Lanka [...] allows citizens to directly engage with Parliament, the successful implementation of all of said instruments is contingent on effective implementation and follow-up by parliamentarians”

Democratic government typically takes two forms—direct, in which individual people participate in decision-making, and representative, in which elected representatives formulate policy. The instruments of direct democracy can be divided into formal instruments—like referendums and voter recalls—and alternative instruments, which also allow for citizen involvement but have not traditionally been seen as instruments of direct democracy.

Instruments of direct democracy exist and are relevant within the Sri Lankan context. When Sri Lanka gained its independence in 1948, the Solbury Constitution was already in effect, having been instated in 1944; the government accordingly had a Westminster parliamentary structure. In 1972, the first Republican Constitution came into effect, and was then replaced in 1978 by the second Republican Constitution. Throughout these three systems of governance, the sole formal instrument of direct democracy was the referendum, which was only introduced in the 1978 constitution. However, within the Westminster parliamentary structure, there were instruments that allowed citizens to directly engage in government, namely: private members’ bills, public petitions, and parliamentary questions. Like the referendum, these instruments have direct democratic features.

A referendum, in which people can directly vote on a law or a proposal, is allowed in three cases under the Sri Lankan constitution: if a constitutional amendment proposes changes to entrenched articles in the constitution, or the Supreme Court determines a proposed bill is inconsistent with entrenched articles in the Constitution, it must go to a referendum. Finally, the president can put forward a referendum for citizens’ approval for any matter of public importance. Sri Lanka has only ever held one referendum (in 1982). The Sri Lankan referendum framework has two critical shortcomings that undermine its efficacy as an instrument of deliberative democracy: first, it can only be called by the president, meaning that there is no means for the people to mandate a referendum. Second, it is limited to approving bills and measures that are at the parliamentary level or of national importance; as such, there is no application for local-level measures, preventing communities from directly participating in matters that will affect their day-to-day lives.



Private members' bills, public petitions, and parliamentary questions enable citizens or groups of citizens to advocate for a parliamentarian's support; the member can then sponsor the bill, submit the petition to the public petition committee, or submit a question to the government on the citizens' behalf. However, research has found that over the last 5-6 years, these mechanisms have been inadequately and ineffectively used for direct engagement with the government. Of the 209 private members' bills presented in Parliament, only 12 were matters of public interest; private members' bills have predominantly been used to regulate incorporated bodies rather than for direct democratic engagement. 2,401 public petitions were submitted to the Committee by 181 out of 225 parliamentary members, but approximately half of those petitions were submitted by just 10 parliamentarians. Similarly, 2372 questions were raised by parliamentarians, but 56% were raised by just 10 members. These instruments are being used neither extensively, uniformly, nor effectively by Sri Lankan citizens.

There are three key challenges to using these instruments for direct democratic purposes. First, there are not mechanisms to trigger mandatory action by parliamentarians—instruments are only presented to parliament at the will of the member of parliament the citizens have approached. This is a problem similar to that of referendums, where the power to trigger a referendum rests solely with the President and excludes local issues. Second, accountability mechanisms are insufficient; for example, there is no way to track the status of a submitted petition, and no mandate for parliamentarians to regularly report their progress. Parliamentarians can therefore exercise discretion without sufficient checks, undermining the ability of citizens to fully make use of these instruments. Finally, there are systemic and structural issues inhibiting citizens' access to mechanisms for direct engagement, including lack of women's representation and inaccessibility of committee and subcommittee proceedings.

Aaseem provides three suggestions for areas for improvement. First, expanding the scope of the referendum: in Sri Lanka, referendums currently can only be called by the president—this could be resolved by adopting a system similar to Switzerland, in which citizens can trigger the introduction of a referendum upon endorsement/signatures from a sufficient portion of the constituency. He also suggests exploring introducing a referendum mechanism for resolving legislative and policy issues at the local level. Suggestions for areas of improvement. Second, the existing formal mechanisms of direct engagement currently have no threshold or trigger point at which they are mandatory for a member of Parliament to implement; he suggests introducing procedures that trigger automatic implementation of formal instruments under specific circumstances, such as a particular number of citizen signatures. Finally, he suggests introducing mechanisms to increase public representatives' accountability. Though Sri Lanka currently recognizes these formal instruments, successfully using them depends on effective implementation and follow-up by parliamentarians. Aaseem proposes that Sri Lanka explore the systems to monitor how these formal instruments are being used, as well as to raise awareness of the utility of these instruments among the general public.

Thailand

“Referendums have become a political mechanism and no longer reflect the will of the public, [...] and recalls seem to be impossible.”



Though Thailand's Direct Democracy Practice Potential (DDPP) score is quite low, the country's communication technology revolution spells out interesting possibilities for the future of direct democracy; direct democracy, in combination with technology, may provide unique opportunities for policymakers to acquire deep information from the public that experts cannot provide.

Thailand transitioned from absolute monarchy to constitutional (democratic) monarchy in 1932, but has since undergone thirteen military coups d'état, most recently in 2014. Prior to 1997, several versions of the Constitution allowed referendums for constitutional amendments. The Constitution of 1997, however, marked the beginning of direct democracy in Thailand by establishing an impeachment process and increasing allowances for citizen's participation through the introduction of legislative initiatives and the addition of referendums for laws—in addition to the previously allowed constitutional amendments—affecting national interests.

There are now four primary mechanisms through which Thai citizens can participate in direct democracy: referendums, recalls, legislative initiatives, and unconventional political participation. Two referendums have been held in Thailand, each with greater than 50% voter turnout and each demonstrating political cleavage between the North/Northeast region and the rest of the country. The first approved the 2007 draft Constitution, and the second approved the 2016 draft Constitution and allowed senators to be included in the vote for Prime Minister. This decision has had a notable effect on Thai politics by forcing representatives in the Lower House to collaborate with the Senate in order to effectively support a Prime Ministerial candidate, a possibility which is more readily accessible to the pro-military party.

Legislative initiatives strengthen direct democracy by providing another mechanism for citizens to exercise their rights. The Constitution of 1997 allowed 50,000 eligible voters to propose laws related to public policy and the rights and liberty of the people. This number was reduced to 10,000 in 2007. Most recently, the 2021 Initiative Process Act has made it easier for citizens to submit legislation by allowing social media to be used for proposing bills virtually to Parliament. However, though citizens have submitted more than 100 bills to date, only a small fraction of them have been enacted into law. In addition to having to pass through Parliament, any bills that require use of the government budget must be approved by the Prime Minister; this requirement has brought many proposed initiatives to a halt.

Thailand has had two recalls—one of a member of the Human Rights Commission (unsuccessful), and one of the Prime Minister (recalled by the National Legislative Assembly). Political movements have also conducted informal recalls as petitions on change.org, which function as a signal to the Thai government. Finally, unconventional political participation (such as participating in demonstrations, protests, and marches) provides another means for Thai citizens to participate in direct democracy, and Thai law supports the right to demonstrate. However, only ~5% of people engage with democracy in this way.

Bureekul highlights a few key problems with Thailand's existing direct democratic instruments. Referendums, she posits, have now become a political mechanism, and no longer reflect the will of the public. As for legal initiatives, though many bills are proposed, few pass through Parliament because of the Prime Ministerial endorsement requirement for budget-related bills, and the number of people required to support a bill is too high. Furthermore, people are limited by the amount of time they can dedicate to supporting their initiative. However, civil society helps strengthen Thai direct democracy by supporting law initiatives. Democratic action



through change.org is popular and functions as an effective signaling mechanism for important issues, but it is not legal. Similarly, the role of unconventional political participation in Thai society is growing, but participating citizens risk violating the law.

As for positive trends in Thailand's democratic development, there is already considerable public awareness of the lawmaking process. The use of technology—such as social media—not only for democratic education, but as a means in which to *participate* in direct democracy, will increase the importance of these direct democratic mechanisms. ■



III. Speakers and Moderators Biographies

- **Mohomed Aaseem** graduated with a degree in Industrial Statistics and Mathematical Finance from the University of Colombo and has a Master's in Development Practice from the University of Peradeniya. Aaseem has worked on a range of assignments covering electoral reform, parliamentary monitoring, transitional justice, ethnic violence and peace-building. He also manages databases and provides support in data analysis for Manthri.lk and other web-based platforms at Verité. He is fluent in English, Sinhala and Tamil, and has extensive experience in working with Northern, Eastern and hill country communities.
- **Dolgion Aldar** is a research professional focused on promoting evidence-based policy making in Mongolia. She spent five years as CEO of the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM), one of the first organizations to promote independent and third-party research in the country. Under her leadership, IRIM was awarded the Anti-Corruption Agency's National Annual Award in 2014 and was recognized as Mongolia's leading non-government policy research institute in 2015. She was featured in the *Forbes Mongolia* "Class of 2016: 30 under 30," an annual list of the brightest young leaders and change agents in country. She currently serves as a board member of the Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association and is a member of the Social Well-Being Consortium in Asia and the EvalGender global network. Dolgion holds a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Manchester, and both a master's and a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the National University of Mongolia.
- **Kaustuv K. Bandyopadhyay** is the director of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), a pioneer CSO, who has dedicated more than three decades to work on participation, democratic governance, and civil society development. He has twenty-five years of professional experience working with universities, research institutions, and CSOs. He serves on the Steering Committee of the Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN) and the Asia Democracy Network (ADN). He holds a Ph.D. degree in anthropology for his work with the Parhaiya tribes of Chotanagpur in India.
- **Thawilwadee Bureekul** is the director of the Research and Development Office at King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) where she is involved in the planning, management, implementation, and coordination of the Institute's research projects. In addition to her role at KPI, Dr. Bureekul is a professor at several universities in Thailand, including the Asian Institute of Technology, Thammasat University, Burapha University, Mahidol University, and Silpakorn University. She succeeded in proposing "Gender Responsive Budgeting" in the Thai Constitution and she was granted the "Woman of the Year 2018" award, and received the outstanding award on "Rights Projection and Strengthening Gender Equality" in the Year 2022 as a result.
- **Halmie Azrie Abdul Halim** is a researcher for Democracy and Governance at the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), a well-known and independent think-tank based in Kuala Lumpur. He was a student activist with the National Union of Malaysian



Muslim Students (PKPIM) for over fourteen years, and got familiarized to public policy affairs during his internship at IMAN Research. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in International Relations from Staffordshire University, UK. He has posited his thoughts on domestic political trends at various online portals, and represented Malaysia for several international youth conferences in Turkey, Thailand and Germany.

- **Francisco A. Magno** teaches Political Science and Development Studies at De La Salle University (DLSU). He is the Founding Director of the DLSU Jesse M. Robredo Institute of Governance. He served as the President of the Philippine Political Science Association from 2015 to 2017. He finished his PhD in Political Science at the University of Hawaii.

- **Sri Nuryanti** is currently a senior researcher of the research Center for Politics, National Research and Innovation Agency. She is the former Election Commissioner of the Indonesian General Election Commission 2007-2012, where she successfully oversaw the Parliamentary election and Presidential election 2009, as well as local elections from 2007-2012. She is an active participant in various academic activities at the national as well as the international level. She is a council member of APPRA (Asia Pacific Peace Research Association) and IPRA (International Peace Research Association). Dr. Sri Nuryanti can be contacted by email at yantijkt@yahoo.com



Knowledge-net for a Better World

- The East Asia Institute takes no institutional position on policy issues and has no affiliation with the Korean government. All statements of fact and expressions of opinion contained in its publications are the sole responsibility of the author or authors.

Date of Issue: 30 June 2022

Exploring Direct, Deliberative, and Participatory Democracy in Asia

ISBN 979-11-6617-443-8 95340

Typeset by Sangeun Lee, Jihoon Park, Yena Shim, and Sarah MacHarg

For inquiries:

Jinkyung Baek, Director of the Research Department/Senior Researcher

Tel. 82 2 2277 1683 (ext. 209) j.baek@eai.or.kr

The East Asia Institute

Sajik-dong 261, Jongro-gu,

Seoul 03028, South Korea

Tel. 82 2 2277 1683 Fax 82 2 2277 1684

Email eai@eai.or.kr Website www.eai.or.kr