

# Evaluating Competing “Democratic” Discourses: The Impact on Human Rights in Southeast Asia



Speaker: **PROF. JAMES GOMEZ**  
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## Biography

Prof. James Gomez is Associate Professor and Program Director of International Journalism, Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, Beijing Normal University and Hong Kong Baptist University: United International College in China. He holds a PhD from Monash University, Australia and a Masters in Discourse Analysis from Essex University, United Kingdom. Prof. Gomez is an academic and consultant with more than two decades' experience as a policy and communications specialist at universities, think-tanks, inter-governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. He has professional exposure to different institutional environments as well as staff and student cultures while working full-time in Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, and United Kingdom. Additionally, he serves as international expert to advisory boards, editorial committees and as external examiner to academic departments, schools, faculties and universities. In 2011 he set up an independent academic institute - the GOMEZ Centre ([www.gomezcentre.com](http://www.gomezcentre.com)) to support the tertiary education and the non-profit sector. His research interests cover citizen journalism, election reporting and the use of social media for political communication. He co-guest edited, "Democracy and Human Rights in Southeast Asia", Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Volume 33, No 3, 2014.

## Abstract

This presentation evaluates the impact of competing “democratic” discourses on human rights protection in Southeast Asia. It identifies three key discourses emanating from a set national governments policies, advocacy positions promoted by both global and local civil society and international standards and procedures adopted by members of inter-governmental organisations. These discourses, the presentation will argue, are collectively shaping ASEAN’s emerging inter-governmental human rights regime. The political impact of these competing “democratic” discourses and their complex interactions bring a cultural dimension to human rights in the region. Observers seeking to understand the emergence of norms, the establishment of institutions and their capacity to collectively protect human rights in the region will find the analysis of these competing discourses useful.