

H2 History Paper 2 Prelim 2025 Suggested Responses

Section A

1. Compare and contrast the evidence in Sources A and B on ASEAN's response towards the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997.

Similarity	ASEAN responded to the AFC by organizing efforts to manage its impact on the member states. / ASEAN responded to the AFC by organizing diplomatic meetings and issuing directives / ASEAN's approach to the AFC was to enlist the aid of international organizations like the IMF
Source A	'ASEAN produces a tropical cyclone of paper' inferring of the admin paper generated to facilitate such ministerial meetings. Or 'it was left to the International Monetary Fund to deal with the crisis'
Source B	'they had endorsed a proposal for an ASEAN financing arrangement In Phuket, in March 1997'. 'this would supplement the IMF's resources and other international financial institutions.

Why Similar	Sources similarity can be seen in the common context of both sources focusing on ASEAN's institutional framework at that time and how it responded to the AFC that swept through the region in 1997.
Explanation + Substantiation	Both sources describe ASEAN as a regional institution. Hence, ASEAN lacked a central bank or monetary fund for regional pooling resources in place at that time. This meant that ASEAN's response was limited to issuing joint communiques and pledges of cooperation as described above and thus had to depend on external international organizations for immediate assistance.

How Different	Differ in the impact of ASEAN's response to AFC. Source A condemns them as ineffective rhetoric, while Source B argues that there was practical help from the more stable ASEAN countries to those who were struggling.
Source A	Criticises the ASEAN Way as "a cover for inaction and ineffectiveness" and that ASEAN "specialises in standing around uselessly". The aforementioned actions had no discernible impact and that it was left to the "International Monetary Fund to deal with the economic crisis." Hence, very explicit in its condemnation of ASEAN's ineffective response to the AFC.
Source B	In contrast, more optimistic of ASEAN's intended actions to manage the AFC. For example, the statement highlighted the actions to be undertaken by ASEAN such as the agreement to "develop a cooperative financing arrangement for the region" and to "provide financial assistance to any Member Countries requiring such assistance." Hence, seems to provide concrete actions that would be instrumental in helping ASEAN navigate the AFC.

Why Different	The sources' differences can be explained in their differing purpose & context.
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Explanation + Substantiation	Source A (2009, Australian newspaper), criticizes the weak response by ASEAN. This was because this source written more than a decade after the Asian Financial Crisis. Hence, by 2009, it was clear that the IMF and other global actors had played a more central role in rescuing crisis-hit economies, while ASEAN's efforts were seen as marginal. Hence, it dismisses ASEAN's meetings and statements as empty gestures that achieved little. In contrast Source B, (1997, ASEAN ministerial statement). This was an official diplomatic document, produced at the height of the crisis when member states urgently needed reassurance. Its purpose was to project ASEAN as a credible, proactive regional actor, able to coordinate responses and provide support. It emphasized practical initiatives like financial cooperation to signal unity and to reassure both domestic and international audiences that ASEAN was effectively taking steps to assist more vulnerable ASEAN states and the region.
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2. How far do Sources A-F support the assertion that ASEAN has succeeded in promoting regional economic cooperation by 2000?

Argument of source set	Support	Challenge
Inference from sources Note: Source C can also be seen as a support source if students argue the percentage increase in intra-ASEAN trade exceeds extra-ASEAN increase Intra-ASEAN almost doubled while extra-ASEAN increased by slightly under 50%	Sources B, D and E all show how ASEAN demonstrated promoted regional economic cooperation by demonstrating economic support for member countries during AFC. Start with B affirms that ASEAN did seek to strengthen economic structural policies one month after the AFC, 1 Dec 1997 Further Affirmed by D – Singapore’s support to IMF because of AFC ‘In August 1997, Singapore joined other countries in providing a package of US\$17.1 billion to help Thailand in tackling the financial crisis.’ as attested in an in-depth report in 2002. Source E (nuanced) but overall support because attests to structural improvements in ASEAN economic policies after AFC.	Sources A, C and F challenge as they show that ASEAN failed to work together to promote greater regional economic cooperation. Start with Source C showing the pattern of trade for ASEAN countries. Heavy dependence on trade OUTSIDE ASEAN than within. Extra-ASEAN trade has increased at a much faster rate compared to intra-ASEAN trade. (E.g. Between 1993 – 2000, extra-ASEAN increased from 350 billion to slightly over 500 billion while intra-ASEAN increased from 100 to slightly less than 200 billion USD) Clarified by Source F which explains why ASEAN struggles to promote greater regional economic cooperation. Attributes to each country prioritizing its economic interests and protectionist tendencies. (E.g. proposing products such as snow ploughs and nuclear reactors to be included in the trade agreements exemplifying how ASEAN countries tried to exploit the efforts to increase regional trade). Also corroborates the slow growth in intra-ASEAN trade by including statistics before 1993. Corroborated by A which argues that the “ASEAN Way” is a mask for inaction. ASEAN failed during the 1997 crisis, leaving the IMF to resolve the problem. (contradicts claims

		made by Sources B, D and E on economic cooperation during AFC)
Analysis of support set of sources: The support set sources vary in reliability and usefulness in highlighting ASEAN's efforts to promote regional cooperation during the AFC. Source B (Ministerial Statement of Special ASEAN Finance Ministers Meeting, Dec 1997) is reliable in understanding ASEAN's intentions to manage the AFC. It reflects the commitment of the ASEAN states to implement necessary measures to help its member countries resolve the crisis and promote regional efforts. However, the statement's usefulness diminished in usefulness as it is a statement of intent which may not have been executed. Cross-referencing to Source A highlights that despite its stated intentions, ASEAN did not live up to its claims. Source D (extract from international conference paper, 2000) reflects Singapore's contribution to supporting ASEAN's efforts to manage the crisis. It is reliable because it clearly demonstrates the financial support that Singapore provided to regional efforts. However, its usefulness can be limited because it only focuses on Singapore's contribution, which were not representative of the other countries' actions to support regional efforts. Source E (speech by ASEAN Secretary-General Rodolfo Severino, 1999) is not a reliable indicator of ASEAN's success in managing the crisis. In his position as the ASEAN Secretary-General he would want to present a very positive impression of ASEAN's work in managing the crisis. Hence, focusing on the progress made for AFTA and regional cooperation. However, could be contradicted by Source F, which highlights the problems with ASEAN's trade agreements, which would have been persistent in 1999. Hence, even though the sources claim that ASEAN has been effective in increasing regional economic cooperation, the sources' limited reliability and usefulness mean that they have not presented a convincing argument.		
Analysis of challenge set of sources: The challenge set sources vary in reliability and usefulness in highlighting ASEAN's efforts to promote regional cooperation. Source A (Article from an Australian newspaper) is likely criticising ASEAN's relevance and provoking debate. As a Western POV that could have measured ASEAN against the EU as a model regional organization, hence sees ASEAN's effort as limited to dialogues and no real regional integration. The source provides a strongly critical, outsider's perspective but may exaggerate for effect and reflect Western bias. Nevertheless, it does reflect current understanding of ASEAN's ineffectiveness in managing the crisis as member countries themselves were struggling to manage their own issues (bring in relevant CK). The source can		

be seen as useful in showing external perceptions of ASEAN's ineffectiveness, especially during crises, though at the same time this can diminish its usefulness as it would not appreciate ASEAN's own perspective on its effectiveness.

Source C (statistics from ASEAN Secretariat, 2006) is reliable because it reflects trade data on the patterns of trade in ASEAN. It shows clearly how despite regional efforts to increase cooperation, the growth in intra-ASEAN trade continues to be slow. This is reinforced with reference to Source F which shows how ASEAN member states' economic self-interest has been a key factor in undermining regional economic cooperation.

Source F (extract from a book by former ASEAN Secretary-General Rodolfo Severino, 2006) is useful because it provides a key insider's perspective on the extent of regional economic cooperation. In his role as Secretary-General, he would have been privy to the economic negotiations and how ASEAN countries were protective of their own industries. Since he is no longer occupying the position, this would enhance his reliability as he would be more open about the problems ASEAN faced in promoting regional economic cooperation. This is further seen when contrasted with his overwhelmingly positive tone when he was still ASEAN Secretary-General.

Thus, the sources have presented a more convincing argument, primarily through the reliability and usefulness of Sources C and F.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the challenge sources have presented a stronger argument on the hypothesis. While the support sources have attempted to present a picture of an effective ASEAN that was able to promote greater regional cooperation during the AFC, this is undermined by the limited reliability and usefulness of the sources. Sources B and E have similar reliability issues, coming from ASEAN itself, which suggests a strong bias in showing ASEAN's effectiveness. Moreover, as sources from that time period, they would not be able to demonstrate the long-term effectiveness of ASEAN. While Source D is reliable, it too is limited because it only reflects one member countries' contribution, rather than the entire organization. In contrast, the challenge sources are largely reliable, especially Sources C and F that provide evidence of ASEAN's effectiveness through statistics as well as an admission from the former ASEAN Secretary-General. Source A too provides an external hindsight perspective on ASEAN and the limitations of the ASEAN Way. Hence, the hypothesis should be modified to state that despite ASEAN's claims of its success in promoting regional economic cooperation, ASEAN has made limited headway due to the structural flaws and self-interest of its member countries.

Section B

2. To what extent were political elites pivotal in determining the political structures of independent SEA from independence to 2000?

Topic	Forming Nation States
Issue	Factors influencing the establishment of different forms of government
Assumption	That political elites were the most significant factors in deciding on the political structure form that was established in Southeast Asian nations upon independence.
Content	'political elites' Other factors: - Masses - Cold War developments - Decolonisation
Thesis	The political structures of independent Southeast Asia from 1945 to 2000 were shaped by domestic actors and external influences. The role of political elites was most pivotal in the early decades, as leaders directly established and entrenched political regimes. The role of the masses became more significant from the 1980s onwards, as mobilisations pressured elites into reform or regime change, though elites ultimately determined institutional outcomes. The legacies of decolonisation provided initial institutional frameworks, and Cold War developments shaped external alignments and resources, but both factors operated largely as contexts rather than decisive determinants. Overall, while masses, colonial inheritances, and Cold War forces mattered, political elites remained the most pivotal factor across the period because they had the greatest long-term impact, the broadest scope over political outcomes, and often acted as the necessary agent for change. TS1: Political elites established political structures in the post-independence decades, determining the initial trajectories of governance. - In Indonesia, Sukarno dismantled parliamentary democracy in 1959 and introduced Guided Democracy, centralising authority in the presidency and marginalising political parties, which determined an authoritarian trajectory. - In Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew consolidated PAP dominance after 1959, embedding a dominant-party parliamentary system where elections were retained but opposition systematically weakened. TS2: Decolonisation experiences shaped initial frameworks, but elites were more pivotal because they decided whether colonial institutions endured or were dismantled. - In the Philippines, American colonial rule left behind democratic institutions, such as a presidential system, bicameral legislature, and an active judiciary. After independence in 1946, Filipino elites like the Liberal and Nacionalista Party leaders operated

	within this American-style democracy, holding elections and rotating power between elite factions. - In Burma, the British left behind a weak parliamentary system and an over-reliance on the military to maintain internal order. A2: However, elites remained in a decisive role in overturning colonial legacies thus making them more significant in determining political structures over time. For example, in the Philippines, Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972, he dismantled these inherited democratic safeguards, ruling through authoritarian decrees until 1986. Likewise in Burma, when instability from ethnic rebellions and communist insurgencies undermined the viability of the parliamentary democracy left behind by colonialists, General Ne Win staged a coup in 1962, abolishing parliament and establishing the Burmese Way to Socialism under military rule. TS3: Political elites consolidated political structures during the 1960s–1970s, entrenching authoritarian or semi-democratic regimes. - In the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972, dismantling democratic checks and balances and entrenching authoritarian rule until 1986. - In Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak institutionalised UMNO dominance through the Barisan Nasional coalition in 1973, creating a consociational but elite-controlled parliamentary democracy that endured into the 2000s. TS4: Masses became more influential from the 1980s–1990s by catalysing regime change, but elites remained more pivotal in determining institutional outcomes. - In the Philippines, the role of the masses became significant in the 1980s as opposition to Marcos’s authoritarian rule mounted, exacerbated by economic crisis and the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983. Millions of Filipinos mobilised in the People Power Revolution of February 1986, with mass protests along Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) demanding Marcos’s resignation. The military eventually defected to the opposition, tipping the balance. The protests forced Marcos into exile after two decades of authoritarian rule. - In Indonesia, the role of the masses surged during the Asian Financial Crisis, as students and urban populations protested against Suharto’s authoritarian New Order regime. Discontent was fuelled by rising unemployment, inflation, and long-standing resentment of corruption and cronyism. In May 1998, mass student-led demonstrations escalated nationwide, demanding Suharto’s resignation. The protests culminated in violent clashes and loss of government legitimacy as parts of the military withheld support for Suharto. The mobilisation forced Suharto to resign after 32 years in power, ending the New Order.
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	A2: Yet in both cases, elites decided the institutional frameworks that followed. The Philippines - Cory Aquino and her coalition rebuilt constitutional democracy in the Philippines through the 1987 Constitution, which reintroduced term limits and checks on presidential powers. Likewise, in Indonesia President B. J. Habibie introduced reforms, such as ending restrictions on political parties, implementing decentralisation, and allowing competitive elections, while still preserving military influence through the “dual function” doctrine. Thus, mass mobilisation dismantled the regime, but elites designed the institutional framework that followed. TS5: Cold War developments influenced alignments and provided external support, but elites were more pivotal in determining institutional outcomes. - In Indonesia, Cold War rivalry shaped Indonesia’s political crisis, as the US and its allies opposed Sukarno’s left-leaning policies and covertly supported anti-communist forces. After the alleged 1965 coup attempt by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), the army, led by Suharto, launched mass purges of communists, killing hundreds of thousands. Western powers, especially the US, gave tacit approval and aid to the anti-communist crackdown. By 1967, Suharto had replaced Sukarno and consolidated the New Order regime, institutionalising military dominance through Golkar and ruling authoritatively until 1998. - In Vietnam, after reunification in 1975, Cold War alignments shaped Hanoi’s foreign and domestic policies. Initially, Vietnam leaned on Chinese aid, but escalating border disputes led it to shift toward the USSR. The Communist Party leadership centralised power in the aftermath of war, establishing a one-party socialist state. By 1978, Hanoi formally allied with the USSR, securing resources that bolstered its regime. Thus, the Cold War provided opportunities for the consolidation of a communist government in Vietnam. A2: Nonetheless, it was still the political elites rather than Cold War developments that played a significant role because their response to Cold War developments dictated the kind of government in power. For example, external Cold War dynamics created opportunity in Indonesia but Suharto’s choices were what determined the political system’s authoritarian character. Likewise, it was it was the Vietnamese Communist Party’s decision to adopt Marxist-Leninist principles and suppress opposition that entrenched authoritarianism, not Soviet or Chinese influence alone.
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3. To what extent was the marginalisation of minorities the most effective approach in establishing national unity throughout independent Southeast Asia?

Topic	National Unity
Issue	Which approach to establishing national unity was the most effective?
Assumption	That marginalisation of minorities was the most effective in establishing national unity
Content	'National Unity' Other factors: Assimilation Accommodation
Thesis	The search for national unity in independent Southeast Asia was shaped by different approaches: assimilation, accommodation, and marginalisation of minorities. While marginalisation often created short-term cohesion by reducing the influence of minority groups, its exclusionary nature generated long-term instability. In contrast, assimilation fostered unity by promoting a common identity, while accommodation enabled plural societies to coexist within shared political frameworks. This essay argues that although marginalisation was significant in certain contexts, accommodation proved the most effective in ensuring lasting unity, since it had broader, long-term impacts across political, social, and cultural spheres. TS1: Marginalisation was initially effective in establishing national unity by excluding minorities deemed threatening, but its long-term impact often undermined unity. - Malaysia - Following the 1969 racial riots, the New Economic Policy (NEP) institutionalised Malay political and economic dominance. This process reduced Chinese political influence and promoted Malay unity, with the outcome of stabilising Malay dominance under UMNO. However, it entrenched ethnic resentment among Chinese and Indians, limiting long-term cohesion. - Myanmar (post-1948) - Successive governments marginalised ethnic minorities like the Karen and Rohingya through Burmanisation policies and later citizenship laws. While this process temporarily consolidated Burman control, the outcome was decades of insurgency, which fractured unity rather than preserved it. - Thus, while marginalisation was effective in the short run by consolidating the majority, it failed at establishing long-term stability, as it deepened divisions that could resurface violently. TS2: Accommodation created unity by recognising pluralism and balancing the interests of different groups, which sustained stability better than marginalisation.

	- Malaysia - Prior to the NEP, the “bargain” between UMNO, MCA, and MIC institutionalised power-sharing. This process gave each community political representation and economic roles, with the outcome of a functioning multi-ethnic coalition that brought relative stability in early independence. - Singapore - From 1965, the PAP promoted a multiracial framework with CMIO (Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others) categories, bilingual education, and the Presidential Council for Minority Rights. This process acknowledged minority identities while preserving equality, with the outcome of long-term harmony in a deeply diverse society. A2: Across Southeast Asia, accommodation was ultimately more effective than marginalisation in establishing national unity because it created long-term stability and was adopted in more countries. For example, marginalisation in Myanmar, such as Burmanisation and the 1982 Citizenship Law, entrenched Burman dominance but fuelled decades of ethnic insurgencies and communal violence. Thus, accommodation had a greater long-term impact, was practised in more countries, and was a necessary foundation for unity in plural societies, making it more effective than marginalisation. TS3: Assimilation fostered national unity by compelling non-indigenous minorities to adopt a common national culture, which created cohesion beyond ethnic divides but remained less effective than accommodation which proved to be more inclusive. - Indonesia - Suharto sought to erase ‘Chinese-ness’ and absorb them into the national Suharto’s national Javanese culture. Chinese-language schools were phased out. The government mandated that all Chinese should take on Indonesian-sounding names and family names. most Chinese Indonesians did their best to assimilate into Indonesian society through methods such as adopting Indonesian names, speaking Bahasa Indonesia, and even converting to Islam. - Thailand - The state enforced Thaification, promoting the Thai language, Buddhism, and loyalty to the monarchy. This process integrated Chinese immigrants into mainstream Thai identity, with the outcome that Chinese-Thais became some of the most loyal citizens, strengthening unity. A2: Nonetheless, accommodation rather than assimilation was more effective in establishing national unity given the latter often merely suppressed resentment for the short-term leaving national unity to be rather superficial in the long-run. For example, the anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia in 1998 show that the seemingly successful assimilation of Chinese into Indonesia did not improve local sentiments to see them as Indonesian in times of crisis.
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4. To what extent was attracting foreign direct investments the driving force in the economic development of independent Southeast Asia?

Topic	Economic Development in Southeast Asia
Issue	Factors influencing economic development
Assumption	Attracting FDI (a government action) was the driving force in economic development
Content	Define 'economic development' – growth, equity, economic nationalism Other factors: Domestic conditions External developments Private businesses Other actions of the government
Thesis	The economic development of independent Southeast Asia (1945–2000) was shaped by multiple forces. Attracting foreign direct investments (FDI) was critical in catalysing industrialisation in export-oriented economies like Singapore and Malaysia during the 1960s–1980s. Yet, its impact was uneven, conditional on government policies. In the long run, government actions—including shifts between socialist and capitalist models, state-led planning, and human capital development—were the ultimate driving force, because they determined whether FDI, private entrepreneurship, and external aid could be harnessed for sustained growth. TS1: During the 1960s–1980s, attracting FDI was a catalyst for industrialisation and export growth. - Singapore's EDB (1961) deliberately targeted multinational corporations, enabling the electronics sector to expand by the 1970s, with MNCs accounting for over 70% of industrial output by 1975. - Malaysia's Investment Incentives Act (1968) and the creation of free trade zones (e.g., Bayan Lepas, 1972) drew in Japanese and US firms, creating thousands of jobs in light manufacturing. FDI thus facilitated rapid insertion into global markets. - In contrast, Indonesia under Sukarno (1950s–1965) pursued autarky, rejecting FDI; its GDP contracted in 1963–65, with inflation exceeding 600% by 1965. TS2: From the 1960s onwards, government actions were broader in scope and had a longer-term impact than FDI. - Singapore's industrialisation strategy (1960s–1970s) combined FDI attraction with large-scale investment in education (e.g., the 1979 education reforms tailored curricula to industrial needs) and infrastructure like Jurong Industrial Estate. These state actions ensured a skilled workforce and efficient logistics, without which FDI would have faltered. - Thailand's First Development Plan (1961–1966) channelled resources into irrigation, boosting rice production, and later plans

	diversified the economy into textiles and automotive assembly in the 1980s. A2: Compared to FDI, government action had a wider sectoral reach developing both agriculture (Thailand's irrigation, Malaysia's FELDA land schemes from 1956) and industry (Singapore's electronics, Malaysia's manufacturing). It also had longer-term impact. While FDI surged in the 1970s–80s, policies like Malaysia's New Economic Policy (1971–1990) reshaped society for decades by balancing growth with equity. Crucially, FDI success was conditional on state planning. Indonesia's stagnation under Sukarno compared to recovery under Suharto's New Order (1966 onwards, which reopened to FDI) illustrates that government frameworks, not capital inflows themselves, sustained development. TS3: From the 1970s to 1990s, private businesses were significant in capital accumulation and job creation, but their contribution often complemented FDI inflows shaped by government strategy rather than replacing them - In Malaysia, Chinese-owned conglomerates like Robert Kuok's empire in sugar and palm oil and later diversified firms such as Hong Leong supplied capital, developed export sectors, and created thousands of jobs in agribusiness and finance. "Ali-Baba" partnerships under the NEP also enabled Bumiputera to gain stakes in industries otherwise dominated by non-Malays, widening indigenous participation in the economy. - In Indonesia, Chinese-Indonesian conglomerates such as the Salim Group (flour, banking, food processing) and Astra International (automotives) mobilised resources and managerial expertise, becoming the backbone of industrial growth. Their businesses created large-scale employment in consumer goods, finance, and light manufacturing, which by the 1980s–1990s contributed to Indonesia's average 7% annual GDP growth and a significant drop in poverty. A2: Yet, these contributions were only possible and impactful because of government actions. In Malaysia, the NEP (1971) and Industrial Coordination Act (1975) mandated "Ali-Baba" partnerships and channelled state credit through PNB and MARA, ensuring private capital also advanced equity and nationalist objectives. Under the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1971), the government actively used FDI inflows to restructure the economy and reduce ethnic inequalities. By the mid-1990s, FDI-driven manufacturing accounted for over 30% of Malaysia's GDP, with private domestic firms benefitting directly from these linkages. Without these state frameworks, and contributions of FDI, private businesses might have remained limited in scope, captured by elites, or destabilising.
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5. 'Southeast Asian governments prioritised economic equity in their pursuit of economic development from independence to 2000.' How far do you agree with this statement?

Topic	Economic development in Southeast Asia
Issue	Outcomes of economic change
Assumption	Economic equity was prioritised as a goal of economic development
Content	Other priorities: Economic growth Economic nationalism
Thesis	The pursuit of economic development in Southeast Asia after independence was shaped by competing goals of growth, equity, and nationalism. While governments often declared poverty reduction and social justice as central aims, in practice their developmental strategies frequently placed greater emphasis on economic growth and nationalism. This essay will argue that although some Southeast Asian governments made notable efforts to prioritise equity, particularly in addressing poverty and income distribution, the pursuit of growth and nationalism ultimately took precedence as they were seen as necessary for regime survival, global competitiveness, and long-term stability. TS1: Some Southeast Asian governments emphasised economic equity through poverty reduction and redistribution policies to address economic issues in their countries. - Malaysia: The New Economic Policy (NEP, 1971–1990) explicitly prioritised restructuring society to reduce ethnic economic disparities, especially uplifting the Bumiputera. This included state-led affirmative action, increased access to education, and redistribution of corporate equity. Poverty rates fell dramatically from around 50% in 1970 to 17% in 1990, indicating real equity gains. - Singapore: The People's Action Party (PAP) promoted equity through public housing and wage increases tied to industrialisation. By the late 1980s, over 80% of Singaporeans lived in Housing Development Board (HDB) flats, alleviating urban poverty while wage increases improved income distribution across different communities. TS2: However, economic growth was often prioritised as the foundation for long-term stability and legitimacy. - Thailand: From the 1960s, governments pursued rapid growth through agricultural exports and industrialisation, supported by US aid. GDP growth averaged 7–8% in the late 1980s, but wealth distribution remained highly uneven, with rural poverty persisting. This indicates growth was prioritised, while equity lagged behind. - Under Suharto's New Order (1966–1998), growth was prioritised through macroeconomic stability, foreign investment, and oil revenues. Between 1967 and 1997, Indonesia's GDP grew at an average of 6–7%, creating a substantial middle class, but

	regional disparities and rural poverty persisted, revealing that equity was secondary. A2: Compared to equity, policies directed at growth were more consistently evident across the region over time. For example, in Malaysia, while the NEP implemented affirmative action policies and quotas to uplift Malays, by the mid-1980s the government increasingly shifted its focus back to rapid industrialisation and export-oriented growth. Under Mahathir Mohamad (Prime Minister, 1981–2003), Malaysia pursued policies such as the Look East Policy (1982) and established free trade zones to attract foreign direct investment in electronics and manufacturing. By the 1990s, FDI-driven industrial growth became the central pillar of Malaysia's economy, while income inequality and regional disparities remained significant evident in the Gini coefficient still at 0.47 in 1990. TS3: Governments also prioritised nationalism through efforts at self-sufficiency and resisting external dependence demonstrating that policies to achieve economic equality were not always the main priority - Indonesia: Sukarno's Guided Democracy (1957–1965) prioritised economic nationalism over equity. Determined to reduce foreign dependence, Sukarno nationalised over 300 Dutch-owned enterprises in 1957 and promoted import substitution while restricting foreign investment. However, these policies focused on asserting sovereignty rather than tackling income inequality or poverty, and by the mid-1960s hyperinflation exceeded 600% while rural poverty persisted. This shows that efforts at self-sufficiency often overshadowed equity goals in Indonesia's development strategy. - Vietnam: After reunification in 1975, the state collectivised agriculture and industry to assert domestic control and independence from foreign powers. While this hindered growth until Đổi Mới reforms (1986), the priority clearly lay in nationalist economic autonomy rather than immediate equity. A2: Nationalism often carried greater political salience, but the extent to which it took precedence over equity depended on each government's chosen economic strategy. Leaders like Ne Win in Burma and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam viewed economic independence as essential for legitimising postcolonial sovereignty, which led them to prioritise self-sufficiency and state control. In contrast, in countries like Malaysia, the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1971) pursued equity goals alongside growth, reflecting the government's choice of a state-guided capitalist path rather than socialist isolation. However, in cases where nationalism dominated, it often came at the expense of equity. For example, Burma's socialist experiments worsened poverty, and Vietnam's collectivisation suppressed wages until Doi Moi reforms (1986) reversed course. This suggests that while nationalism frequently shaped early development strategies, governments'
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	priorities ultimately reflected their broader economic paths, rather than nationalism always overriding equity
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