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ASEAN Institutionalisation: The Function of Political Values and State Capacity

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ABSTRACT

Various proposals for an "ASEAN Community" (e.g. Bali Concord II) have committed ASEAN to establish a more institutionalised organisation with the capacity to guide substantive "political and security cooperation". Such an outcome would evidence well-developed levels of trust, interest harmonisation and foreign policy coordination. This paper analyses how state weakness and divergent political values represent the biggest challenge to these outcomes. While state weakness detracts from regional security and cohesion (e.g. Myanmar), divergent political values lead to divisions over the manner and extent to which the ASEAN members can and will cooperate in relation to both domestic and regional issues. State weakness also generates internal security dilemmas that detract from regionalists enterprises (e.g. post-Suharto Indonesia). Nonetheless, economic cooperation has been relatively more feasible for all the ASEAN members as it has the potential to enhance domestic stability and (for the less democratic members) it can also provide added regime security through "performance legitimacy". Finally, the capacity gaps and divergence of political values currently extant in the region mean that ASEAN will remain a mutual sovereignty-reinforcing (intergovernmental) model of regional organisation for the foreseeable future. While ASEAN may achieve incremental progress towards the realisation of its regionalist goals, policy makers should plan for a multi-decade approach rather than the current goal of achieving an "ASEAN Community"—particularly the "Security Community" and "Socio-Cultural Community" pillars—by 2015.

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ASEAN Institutionalisation: The Function of Political Values and State Capacity

Introduction

A large volume of literature has attempted to examine the prospect of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) reaching its goal of establishing an "ASEAN Community" by 2015. However, in much of the IR literature on regionalism, there has been a tendency to "black-box" internal state characteristics. This chapter seeks to redress this flaw by examining how *weak states* and *political values* can potentially affect regionalist enterprises. At one level, it explains how state weakness adversely affects regional security and cohesion. Further, the chapter demonstrates that state weakness detracts from both the will and capacity for cooperation and institutionalisation in ASEAN. Instead, such conditions generate a preference to respond to the "internal security dilemmas" associated with state weakness through a sovereignty reinforcing model of regional organisation—as depicted by ASEAN in its current form. At another level, the chapter examines the nexus between political values and the emergence of foreign policies that promote stronger regionalism in the political and security spheres. The analysis of this second variable is also necessary because it provides some insight about why ASEAN's rhetorical aspirations (e.g. the emergence of an ASEAN community) continue to be contradicted by ASEAN's norms together with the patterns of inter-state behaviour in Southeast Asia. The chapter concludes that ASEAN will not achieve its goal of an "ASEAN Community"—including political cooperation and integration—as long as it remains constrained by state weakness and divergent political values.

ASEAN's Aspirations and the Challenge of State Weakness

Through the Bali Concord II (2003), together with the Plan of Action for a Security Community (2004), the Vientiane Plan of Action (2004), the ASEAN Charter (2005), and the ASEAN Blueprint for a Security Community (2009), the ASEAN members have committed to the formation of an "ASEAN Community" by 2015. The ASEAN Community is to be based on three pillars: a "security community", a "socio-cultural community" and an "economic community". According to these instruments, the establishment of the ASEAN Community would lead to greater "integration" and

move “political and security cooperation to a higher plane” where the “members shall rely exclusively on peaceful processes in the settlement of differences and disputes”. More specifically, in the course of “achieving a more coherent and clearer path for cooperation” together with “peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region”, the ASEAN members have committed to the formation of a “common regional identity”, greater “cohesiveness and harmony” (including a “we-feeling”), the establishment of a “rules-based community”, regional “stability”, “enhanced defence cooperation”, increased “maritime cooperation”, the resolution of “territorial” and “maritime issues”, greater cooperation in tackling “transnational crime” (including “ensuring a drug free ASEAN by 2015”), the “strengthening of law enforcement cooperation”, “the prevention and control of infectious diseases”, the “strengthening of democratic institutions and popular participation”, “strengthening the rule of law and judiciary systems”, “enhancing good governance in public and private sectors”, the “promotion of human rights”, and the establishment of “a single market and production base”. Moreover, ASEAN “subscribes to the principle of comprehensive security [as it] … acknowledge[s] the strong interdependence of the political, economic and social life of the region” (ASEAN, 2004a). In this context, the ASEAN declarations have also recognised that the three pillars of the ASEAN community are “closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing for the purpose of ensuring durable peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region” (ASEAN, 2003).

There is some debate about whether the sum-total of the ASEAN commitments amount to a Deutschian type of a security community such as the European Union (EU). However, the accomplishment of ASEAN’s goals would in fact exceed the requirements for a security community as defined in the scholarly literature. Thus, a set of benchmarks based only on the thresholds set by the ASEAN leaders—namely, a “rules-based community” that will “achieve peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region”—will be unlikely to be realised in the absence of an institutionalised ASEAN that has the capacity to guide substantive “political and security cooperation”. Moreover, the evolution of such an organisation would, in turn, evidence well-developed levels of trust, interest harmonisation and foreign policy coordination. Regardless of the precise benchmark that is set, this section argues that state weakness significantly impedes the effectiveness of ASEAN, together with the prospects for the establishment of the “ASEAN Community”. According to Sorensen

(2007), state weakness occurs when there are gaps in any one of the following three spheres: (i) a security gap where the state is unwilling or unable to maintain basic order (protection of the citizens within its territory); (ii) a capacity gap where the state is either unwilling or unable "to provide other basic social values, such as welfare, liberty, and the rule of law"; and (iii) a legitimacy gap "in that the state offers little or nothing, and gets no support in return" (pp. 365–366). Such weakness impedes regionalist endeavours because it shifts "the focus of security from inter-state lateral pressure toward intra-state, centrifugal challenges—secessionists, terrorists, militias and others" (Kelly, 2007: 216). In other words, state weakness generates an internal security dilemma that detracts from, if not trumps, considerations of regional cooperation and integration or an external security dilemma.

In the case of Myanmar, all of Sorenson's categories apply; for example, the ruling State Peace and Development Committee (SPDC) has not been able to maintain basic order due to the continuation of armed insurgent groups such as the Shan State Army (South). While other insurgent forces may have entered into a ceasefire accords with the Burmese junta, some of these groups have not disarmed as the United Wa State Army (UWSA), for example, continues to maintain a military force of 21,000 soldiers and much of its revenue comes from the manufacture and export of illicit drugs (Roberts, 2010: 67 & 83–87). Thus, the government cannot even provide safety from crime and neither is there the rule of law or regime legitimacy. In the case of Thailand, the advent of a military coup in 2006, the revival of the insurgency in Southern Thailand, and the violent anti-government protests in May 2010, *inter alia*, also provide strong indicators of state weakness. Meanwhile, the Philippines, once a symbol of democracy through its "people power movement", remains plagued by corruption, failed military coups and long running insurgencies in the South. Not only do the Jane's Intelligence Stability Indicators (Table 1) corroborate the weakness of semi-democratic Thailand and the Philippines but it remains questionable whether they will be able to significantly consolidate their democracies over the short to mid-term because of a continued lack of state capacity.

Table 1. Jane's Intelligence Stability Indicators 2010 [1]

		Brunei	Cambodia	Indonesia	Laos	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
Political factors	Clarity of system of governance	7	6	7	6	5	6	6	7	4	7
	State adherence to system of governance	6	5	6	5	6	4	6	8	5	7
	Public acceptance of organs of state	7	6	6	6	5	5	6	8	3	7
	Strength of state institutions	6	4	7	4	6	3	5	7	5	6
	Presence of non-military interests in the status quo	7	5	4	4	7	4	4	7	6	5
	Support of military for the state	8	5	8	7	8	9	6	8	5	7
Political stability		**76**	**57**	**70**	**59**	**69**	**57**	**61**	**83**	**52**	**72**
Social factors	Social cohesion	7	7	5	7	5	4	5	8	6	6
	Crime	7	4	5	5	7	6	4	8	6	4
	Health	6	4	4	4	6	3	4	8	6	4
	Demographic stability	6	5	5	6	5	6	5	8	6	5
Social stability		**72**	**56**	**53**	**61**	**64**	**53**	**50**	**89**	**67**	**53**
Economic factors	Employment and labour	6	4	6	4	6	3	6	8	5	6
	Economic policy	6	4	6	4	5	3	6	8	4	7
	Robustness of economy	6	3	5	4	6	3	7	8	4	7
	Infrastructure	6	4	4	4	6	2	5	8	5	6
	Resource reliance	5	4	4	4	6	3	4	6	5	4
Economic stability		**64**	**42**	**56**	**44**	**64**	**31**	**62**	**84**	**51**	**67**
Military/Security factors	State control of security forces	7	6	7	6	6	8	6	8	5	7
	Professionalism of security forces	5	4	4	4	5	3	4	8	4	5
	Efficacy of security forces	6	5	7	5	6	6	5	8	5	5
	Challenge from NSAGS and crime groups	7	5	4	6	5	6	4	8	4	7
	Weapons proliferation	7	5	5	5	7	5	5	8	5	7
Military and security stability		**71**	**56**	**60**	**58**	**64**	**62**	**53**	**89**	**51**	**69**
External factors	Involvement with multilateral institutions	7	5	6	6	8	3	7	8	7	6
	Regional relations	6	4	6	4	8	6	7	8	6	6
	Geostrategic vulnerability to invasion	6	4	7	5	8	6	7	7	7	7
	International reputation	6	5	7	5	7	7	6	8	5	7
External stability		**69**	**50**	**72**	**56**	**86**	**61**	**75**	**86**	**69**	**72**
Country stability		**71**	**52**	**63**	**56**	**69**	**53**	**60**	**86**	**57**	**67**

Table based on indicators located at www.janes.com

While weak state governments are highly conscious of a need to assert control, they lack the capacity to respond to dissent other than using violence. As Brian Job states, these "elites often do not have the resources or the political will to accommodate rival groups; challenges are rather met with increasing repression, 'not because it has a high probability of success but because the weakness of the state precludes its resort to less violent alternatives'" (Job, 1992: 29). Examples of the type of policy options undertaken by weak states include inciting or promoting internal conflict in the hope of "riding an ethnic or political wave to political and economic gain", engagement in divide-and-rule tactics or "siding explicitly or implicitly with one group against

[1] Jane's outlines the methodology behind the rankings in the following manner: "Country Stability Ratings provide a quantitative assessment of the stability environment of a country or autonomous territory. All sovereign countries, non-contiguous autonomous territories and de facto independent entities are included in the assessments. To gauge stability, 24 factors (that rely on various objective sub-factors) are rated. The 24 factors are classified within five distinct groupings, namely political, social, economic, external and military and security. The Country Stability team assesses the stability of each factor as between zero and nine. The various factors are then weighted according to the importance to the particular country's stability. Stability in each of these groupings is provided, with zero being entirely unstable and 100 stable. The weighted factors are also used to produce an overall territory stability rating, from zero (unstable) to 100 (stable). Finally, the team then assesses global stability levels, so that weighting and ratings are standardised across all regions."

another by, for instance, branding members of a group as "foreign agents" (Atzili, 2007: 151). Such practices, together with other symptoms of state weakness, were recently evident in Myanmar. In August 2007, mass protests occurred after the SPDC increased the subsidised rate of petrol (gasoline) from US$1.18 to US$1.96 per gallon with *immediate effect* and *without any warning* (Roberts, 2007b). However, on 26 September, the government put an end to the unrest when its security forces raided key monasteries and also opened fire on a large demonstration in Yangon (Selth, 2008: 379–402). The violent response of the SPDC led to 4,000 arrests and at least 31 deaths including a Japanese photo-journalist (Jakarta Post, 2007d). The international pressure associated with the government's crackdown generated added pressure against ASEAN for it to take stronger action. Even Barry Desker, Dean of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies and an Ambassador for Singapore, called for Myanmar's expulsion from the Association (Desker, 2007). Moreover, in member-states such as Myanmar, ASEAN's goal for peace, stability and comprehensive security remains a distant prospect as anarchy has become domesticated rendering the risk of intrastate violence and conflict higher (Atzili, 2007: 151; Sorensen, 2007: 365).

Regardless of the technical definition applied to the "ASEAN Community" and the "ASEAN security community", ASEAN's declarations of intent prescribe the formation of a regional community of people that are, in the very least, relatively secure. Such "human security" is interdependent with regional security. As Laurie Nathan states:

Domestic instability in the form of large-scale violence precludes the emergence or existence of a security-community in a number of ways. It generates tension and suspicion between states, preventing the forging of trust and common identity. It can also lead to cross-border violence [and in the very least] … other states cannot exclude the possibility of spill-over violence in the future and cannot be certain about the reliability of unstable regimes. In the national context, instability seriously undermines the security of citizens and the state. The inhabitants of a country wracked by violence cannot plausibly be said to live in a security-community. A security-community should therefore be defined to include dependable expectations of peaceful domestic change. Based on this definition, structural instability, and

authoritarian rule could be viewed as further obstacles to the formation of these communities (Nathan, 2006: 293).

At the regional level of analysis, both state weakness and an associated insecurity dilemma have also acted to divert valuable resources away from regionalist endeavours. A prime example occurred in Indonesia where it had acted as the natural leader or "first among equals" in ASEAN. However, following the collapse of Suharto's New Order regime, there was a palpable absence of Indonesian leadership until its security community proposal in 2003 (Acharya, 2009: 259). Thus, the historical record supports some of the contentions of the "new regionalism" literature where Louise Fawcett, for example, argues that a low state capacity is also "an impediment to cooperation, and will, along with the nature of the regional and international environment, crucially affect the success or failure of any regionalist project" (Fawcett, 2005: 72). State weakness also challenges both regional cohesion and security. In connection with the 2007 protests in Myanmar, for example, international pressure for ASEAN to take stronger action—including a U.S. Senate Resolution calling on the Association to expel, or at least, suspend Myanmar from ASEAN membership—represented a direct challenge to the ASEAN way including the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs (Rahim, 2008: 72). The subsequent role of the relatively more democratic and/or globalised members—e.g. Singapore and Indonesia—in pressuring the SPDC through joint ASEAN statements (and other means), challenged regional cohesion *vis-à-vis* the more authoritarian members who continue to uphold the central tenets of the "ASEAN Way": namely, sovereignty, non-interference and consensus based decision making (Roberts, 2010: 141–164). In terms of regional security, the inability of the SPDC to enforce positive sovereignty has also meant that an estimated 80 per cent of illicit drugs in Thailand now come from Myanmar and this had led to hundreds of thousands, even millions, of drug addicts and users in the country (Katanyuu, 2006: 828; Department of Justice, 2003).

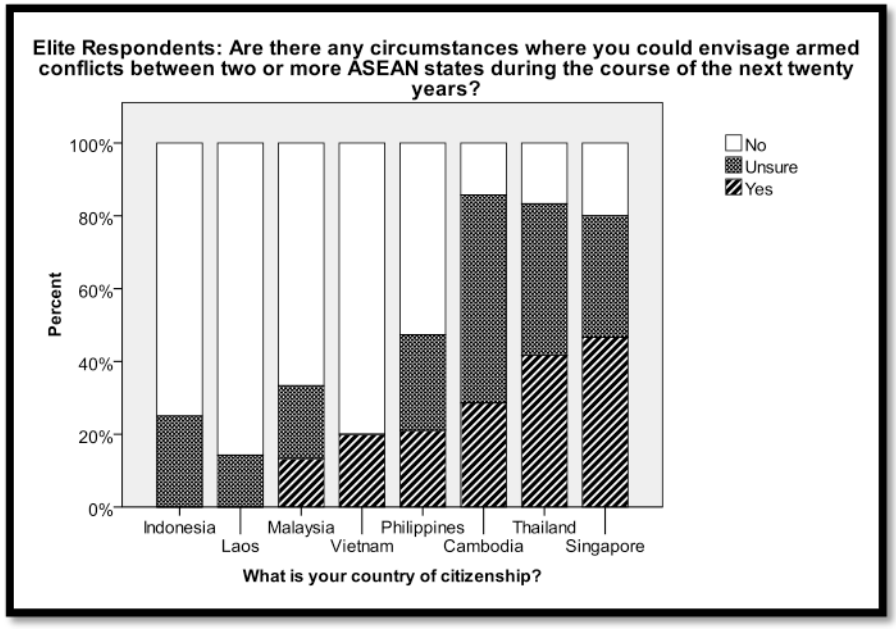
Both Ayoob and Job suggest that because many weak states are in the "early process of nation-building" there is a subsequent "stress on the domestic, rather than international, use of force" (Kelly, 2007: 217). Consequently, "most third world states do not seek conquest of their neighbours, but rather their cooperation" (Kelly, 2007:

217). While these behavioural trends have at times been evident on the surface of ASEAN's relations, there remains a high risk of competitive behaviour and some risk of limited armed conflict. This is because both weak and/or undemocratic states are typically less willing to sacrifice "self-interests" for the collective good. Moreover, such tendencies are compounded by relatively low levels of integration in the political, security and economic spheres. Further, associated weaknesses in regime legitimacy exacerbate the probability of a state alienating a neighbour during times of political crisis (Atzil, 2007: 150). An example of this occurred in 2008 in relation to a territorial dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the Preah Vihear temple. Both Thailand's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister had indicated to Cambodia that his government would accept a decision by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation to list the temple as a World Heritage site (Osborne, 2009). However, domestic opponents believed that the leaders of the Thai government were acting as proxies for ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and this resulted in a crisis of legitimacy for the Thai government. Thailand's leaders responded to their weak legitimacy by exploiting nationalist sentiments for domestic political gain. In the process, Thailand sacrificed positive relations with Cambodia and the resulting chaos led to several armed skirmishes and the death of between 12 and 18 Thai and Khmer soldiers (So, 2009). Had there been "greater state coherence" then it would have been "more difficult for pan-nationalist ideologies to penetrate the state and to challenge pragmatic policies" (Miller, 2005: 244).

Attempts to compensate for weak regime legitimacy by emphasising a common threat or enemy have also been relatively common practices in Southeast Asia more generally. For Thailand, it was the Burmese; for Singapore, it was Malaysia and, at times, Indonesia; and for Indonesia, it was either the Chinese or the Federation of Malaysia (Turnbull, 2005: 285). However, the consequences of such practices continue to affect the region today. Thus, in the wake of a 2005 territorial dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia concerning the Ambalat offshore oil block, a crowd of Indonesians gathered outside the Malaysian embassy in Jakarta shouting "crush Malaysia"—a catchphrase from President Sukarno's *Konfrontasi* policy decades earlier (Emmerson, 2005: 175). Such historical animosities—combined with diversity in the cultural, ethnic, religious and economic spheres—continue to effect regional relations in other respects. In a survey of 100 elites from all 10 of the ASEAN

nations, 59.8% of the respondents indicated that they could not "trust their neighbours to be good neighbours". Further, when the elite respondents were asked if there were any circumstances where they could envision armed conflict between two or more ASEAN states (Figure 1), half the respondents answered "no" but the other half indicated either "yes" (22.3%) or that they were "unsure" (26.7%). Here it is interesting to note that the "risk of conflict" was perceived as particularly high in Cambodia (29%), Thailand (42%) and Singapore (47%) (Roberts, 2007a: 87–88). The limited levels of trust indicated by the elite level respondents is particularly problematic for the ASEAN proposals as different states will be more hesitant to enter into cooperative arrangements—particularly in relation to key political and security issues—in the absence of adequate trust (Kegley & Raymond, 1990: 152).

Figure 1: Elite Perceptions over the Risk of Conflict



Source: Compiled by author from Survey Statistics (Roberts, 2007a)

Because of the dynamics behind state weakness, regional organisations such as ASEAN are best viewed as "mutual sovereignty reinforcement coalitions, not integrationist regional bodies like the European Union" (Kelly, 2007: 218). This contention is compatible with the analysis of Mohammed Ayoob (1995: 13) who suggests regions populated by weak states are structurally different from the strong state systems of the North West. This analogy also applies to the structure of regional organisations that embrace weak-state systems. However, rather than these structural differences being explained by "Asian values" or other socio-cultural factors

(reference), organisations such as ASEAN remain under-institutionalised because they primarily "exist for tacit elite collaboration to quell their common intrastate challenges" (Kelly, 2007: 218). Such insights coincide with the area studies specialists of Southeast Asia. For example, Alan Collins suggests that the principles of the ASEAN Way effectively provides for (i) the avoidance of public criticism; and (ii) the provision of support "if an elite is threatened by internal rebellion" (Collins, 2003: 141). Thus, John Funston argues that the idea of helping neighbouring governments and "acting as a mutual support group … is very much the essence of ASEAN" (Funston, 1998: 27). While the previous paragraphs have noted some significant caveats in connection with how much one can depend on assistance through this "mutual support group" (e.g. the Cambodia/Thailand dispute), the long term effect of a sovereignty reinforcing model of regional organisation is that it has very little positive impact on the level of state capacity (or, in turn, regional cooperation) as it provides few incentives to adopt the reforms necessary for internal consolidation—such as parliamentary and security sector reform or the adoption of more inclusionary nation-building practices and policies (Atzili, 2007: 140).

Adequate state capacity is also a key enabler for the consolidation of a liberal democracy. As the next section will examine, the presence of stable democratic governments may aid regionalist endeavours—including associated increases to the level of cooperation and integration—but an increasing body of literature has recognised that a state first needs adequate state capacity, or internal consolidation, before it can implement and maintain a stable liberal democracy. Paul Collier (2010: 21), for example, in his widely acclaimed book, *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, has quantified this dilemma by arguing that a stable democracy can only emerge once the income level, on a *per capita* basis, has exceeded approximately US$2,700 per annum—Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos all fall below this threshold. While this figure is debatable because additional factors affect the equation—such as cultural homogeneity and geography—the Jane's Intelligence Stability indicators in Table 1 demonstrated that most of the states in Southeast Asia have relatively low levels of stability rendering the installation of a full-fledged consolidated democracy more difficult. However, an anomaly exists in Southeast Asia where Singapore, and to a lesser extent Brunei, are ranked the most stable countries in the region: neither of these two countries can be classed as electoral or liberal

democracies. Ironically, a partial answer can be found in the very tool that grants the capacity to maintain a stable democracy—wealth.

Both Singapore and Brunei maintain the highest levels of income in Southeast Asia on a per capita basis. In the case of Singapore, the gross national income per capita for 2009 (PPP) was US$49,850 while for Brunei it was US$50,920 (World Bank, 2010). The success of the two economies—efficient management in the case of Singapore and oil wealth in the case of Brunei—leads to what has been labelled performance legitimacy (Acharya, 1995: 260). In other words, the state is able to gain a *narrow* sense of legitimacy by providing sufficient material benefits to its citizens. The Political Instability Task Force (PITF) provides partial support to this proposition. Extensive empirical research by PITF has provided some insightful accounts of how both full democracies and full autocracies generally provide the highest level of domestic stability. Meanwhile, states undertaking a transition from autocracy to democracy—such as Thailand—are in fact the most likely to suffer from political instability (Goldstone et al, 2005: 28-29). Here, Benson and Kugler (1998: 198–199) provide an explanatory caveat concerning the nexus between democracy and stability when they argue that it is the degree of governance rather than the form of government that is the most important variable. However, because stable authoritarian states rest their legitimacy (regime security) on a narrow pillar (i.e. material wealth), the risk of instability will be higher during a major crisis (relative to a democracy) as there are fewer peaceful mechanisms for the citizens of these countries to express opposition or deliver positive change—e.g. by way of an election. Thus, authoritarian states can at best maintain a form of *narrow strength*. Given these considerations, the development of the political and institutional capacity necessary to the advanced stages of regionalism has also been said to be more prevalent within democratic societies (Farrell, 2004: 4). Consequently, the next section redirects the focus of analysis towards a consideration of whether democratic values serve as a precondition to substantive regionalisation.

The Second Domestic Variable: Political Values and Structures

While the Kantian and neo-functionalist schools of thought provide some important insights concerning the impact of "legitimacy" on state strength, their examination of

democracy is also relevant to the earlier mentioned problem of distrust. According to the Kantian democratic peace thesis, the empirical record demonstrates that democracies are significantly less likely to fight wars with each other (Patty & Weber, 2006: 36). Such insights also link to the process of regional institutionalisation because, as Miller states, "only among liberal democracies is the security dilemma sufficiently reduced to allow the states to surrender a part of their sovereignty without the fear that today's partner may become tomorrow's enemy" (Miller, 2005: 251). This is because the types of structures and institutions typically inherent in liberal democracies impose normative and legal-procedural constraints on the decision-making process thereby creating a more predictable strategic environment (O'Neal et al, 1997: 267–268). Under these conditions, the reduced security dilemma reinforces (and is reinforced by) more frequent and regularised interactions; the deepening and broadening of the process of socialisation (in a manner that better accommodates the concerns of civil society); and a broadening of the agenda for regional institutions (due to a reduced concern with the issue of sovereignty). Democracy also strengthens these outcomes by generating greater transparency, understanding, trust, regional stability, conflict resolution and foreign-policy innovation (Singh, 2008: 143–145; Acharya, 2003: 377).

Democratic governments are also more willing to cooperate and integrate supranationally because most politically liberal "states have become so densely integrated that both territorial integrity and the autonomy of their domestic political orders are no longer upheld. In that specific sense, state survival is not the primary goal" (Sorensen, 2007: 360). Further, there is a consensus in much of the literature that democratic states generally respect human rights so long as their democratic institutions are supported by adequate state capacity (Young, 2009: 283–284). Authoritarian regimes, by contrast, "tend to suppress or distort negotiations among transnational interest groups and to assert their passionate defence of national sovereignty as the major source of their domestic legitimacy" (Miller, 2005: 251). Thus, Mohammad Ayoob (1995: 4) also observes that authoritarian states typically "obsess about sovereignty" and, in the context of Southeast Asia, such patterns of behaviour have been reflected in the more authoritarian members including their relatively more stringent defence of the ASEAN Way. In terms of democratic prevalence, Table 2 highlights that Freedom House ranked Indonesia as "Free" (F) in

2010. Four other ASEAN members—Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines—were ranked "Partly Free" (PF). However, the remaining five ASEAN members were ranked "Not Free" (NF). Such diversity is problematic because, as the analysis below corroborates, it will be difficult for the ASEAN members to share similar value systems and expectations in the absence of similar political systems (Zhu, 2000: 26). Nonetheless, some of the key outcomes of democracy, as predicted above, have been observable in Southeast Asia.

Table 2. Freedom House: Political Freedom and Civil Liberties

Country	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
Indonesia	6.0 (NF)	5.0 (PF)	4.0 (PF)	3.5 (PF)	3.5 (PF)	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**
Philippines	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	3.0 (PF)	3.5 (NF)	3.5 (PF)
Malaysia	4.5 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	4.0 (PF)	4.0 (PF)	4.0 (PF)
Thailand	3.0 (PF)	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	**2.5 (F)**	3.0 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	4.5 (PF)
Singapore	4.5 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	5.0 (PF)	4.5 (PF)	4.5 (PF)	4.5 (PF)
Cambodia	6.0 (NF)	6.0 (NF)	6.0 (NF)	5.5 (NF)	5.5 (NF)	5.5 (NF)	5.5 (NF)	5.5 (NF)
Brunei	6.5 (NF)	6.0 (NF)	6.0 (NF)	6.0 (NF)	5.5 (NF)	5.5 (NF)	5.5 (NF)	5.5 (NF)
Vietnam	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (F)	7.0 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.0 (NF)	6.0 (NF)	6.0 (NF)
Laos	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)	6.5 (NF)
Myanmar	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (NF)	7.0 (NF)

Source: Compiled by author from "combined average ratings" located at www.freedomhouse.org

Since the 1990s, there has been a correlation between the emergence of democracy and the nature of the political values, norms and ideas that these democracies have espoused. An early example occurred in Thailand following the election of Chuan Leekpai's Democratic Party in 1997. During this period, through to 2006, the military largely withdrew from politics, the Thai middle class became increasingly influential, the foreign ministry was professionalised to be more independent and a new constitution was installed (Dosch, 2007: 40 & 63). As a corollary to these developments, Thailand also became internationally recognised as having "an accomplished record in promoting political stability, civil liberties and human rights through the process of democratisation" (Haacke, 1999: 588). Moreover, Acharya claims that Leekpai valued this image and subsequently assessed a policy of "constructive engagement" with Myanmar to be irreconcilable with the promotion of Thailand's democratic credentials to the world (Acharya, 2003: 383). Following a proposal by Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, to allow for "constructive interventions" in each other's internal affairs, Thailand's Foreign Minister, Surin Pitsuwan, launched his own initiative for "flexible engagement". Pitsuwan argued that an effective response to the challenges of globalisation required a closer coordination of policies between the ASEAN members. He further argued that ASEAN's standing and voice had been impeded by a lack of transparency, the structures of the governments in power, and the issue of democracy and associated human rights problems (Haacke, 1999: 585). In the end, Thailand's proposal was "bitterly opposed by Myanmar and rejected by all the other ASEAN members except the Philippines—the only other democratic nation at the time" (Collins, 2003: 144).

These events had all transpired in the wake of the East Asian financial crisis (1997–1998) which resulted in devastating economic and political consequences for Southeast Asia. For the purpose of this chapter, however, it was the collapse of President Suharto's New Order regime in May 1998 that is the most notable as his removal led to a series of reforms (*reformasi*) that implemented democratic governance (Weatherbee, 2006: 6). Notwithstanding a degree of domestic instability during the early years, democracy in Indonesia did eventually contribute to some major political achievements. One example concerns an August 2005 peace agreement with the Free Aceh Movement—*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM)—that granted regional autonomy to the Acehnese in July 2006 (Jones, 2008: 746). Negotiations for the final settlement included participants from the Indonesian

government, GAM, local governments, human rights activists, academics and religious leaders. In contrast to a traditional obsession about sovereignty in the region, the Indonesian government was also willing to accord a role to the international community to help facilitate the peace agreement and the memorandum of understanding between the disputants was subsequently negotiated in Helsinki with the participation of the European Union. Indonesia also agreed to the establishment of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) and this was led by the European Union (International Crisis Group, 2005: 2).

The December 2004 Tsunami that killed 130,000 Indonesians represented an important precursor to the peace in Aceh. The humanitarian crisis that followed generated international attention and added pressure for the Indonesian government to find a peaceful resolution. Significantly, the foreign educated President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, resisted calls from nationalist leaders and religious clerics to keep the media and foreign aid operations out of Aceh. Instead, President Yudhoyono permitted foreign militaries to enter Indonesian territory for the purpose of delivering humanitarian aid and undertaking reconstruction works. The fact that democratic Indonesia had become less possessive of its sovereignty paid dividends. The international community, buoyed by Indonesia's openness and willingness to embrace assistance (cf. Myanmar's response to Cyclone Nargis), subsequently provided billions of dollars in financial aid and loans (Age, 2005). While Acharya (2003: 377) has suggested that democracies often deal "responsibly and creatively with their neighbours", the democratic government of Indonesia has also revealed a heightened capacity to deal with the broader international community in such a fashion.

The significance of granting permission to foreign military forces to enter Indonesian territory should not be underestimated. In part, the President only had the political support necessary to make these decisions because a gradual withdrawal of the military from political affairs had taken place since Suharto's resignation. As with Thailand, such a process was interdependent with both democratisation and several more specific factors. As a retired General, President Yudhoyono himself had had an esteemed background in the military and this provided his presidency with the legitimacy necessary to maintain the momentum behind the *reformasi* process

(Dosch, 2007: 36). Significantly, other reform-minded officers in the military had supported *reformasi* from the outset and these officers found a voice (agency) in the wake of Suharto's downfall. Consequently, the military gradually withdrew from politics and this withdrawal culminated in a constitutional amendment that terminated the seats that had been previously allocated to the military in parliament. As with Thailand, the withdrawal of the military from political affairs coincided with the restructuring of *Deplu* so that it became independent rather than subordinate to the Indonesian military (Jones, 2008: 746). In the process, *Deplu* has evolved in a manner that reflects a "multi-party environment where it must be neutral and learn to serve changing administrations" (Smith, 2000: 501). As with the earlier discussion of Thailand, the number of actors influencing Indonesia's foreign policy has increased which has provided a positive influence on the quality of decision-making—a general phenomenon that has been noted for democracies across the globe (Dosch, 2007: 12 & 46–47).

Given these considerations, it is also interesting to note that a few months after President Suharto's fall from office, the late Ali Alatas , Indonesia's longest serving foreign minister, initiated some face-saving diplomacy vis-à-vis Thailand's proposal for flexible engagement by introducing a compromise policy of "enhanced interaction". While Indonesian democracy was in its very early phases—thus raising the question of causality—the Foreign Minister's pattern of diplomacy over the decades (including Myanmar in recent times) indicates that he held a moderate-liberal perspective regarding politics (Alatas, 2006). Despite the fact that the term "enhanced interaction" has not appeared in any public ASEAN commitments, the diplomacy surrounding the issue arguably contributed to a "phased adjustment of the principle" towards flexible engagement—particularly in relation to ASEAN's diplomacy with Myanmar (Katanyuu, 2006: 830). More recently, Indonesia's Director-General for ASEAN (*Deplu*) acknowledged the impact of democracy when he stated that "I believe on this issue [non-interference] we are more open now … Indonesia is more open, more flexible because of the democratisation process" (Acharya, 2009: 254). Such statements, together with the aforementioned developments, support the contention of Kuniko Ashizawa that the "concept of state identity perceived by policymakers provides a specific *value*—defined here as 'some sort of *pro-attitude* -

towards actions of a certain kind'—which in turn determines a policymakers' preference for a particular foreign policy" (Ashizawa, 2008: 573).

These developments partly explain Indonesia's attempt to reassert its leadership in the region through its proposal for a security community that would include a "regional peacekeeping force" and "human rights commission" (Deplu, 2004). However, only the Philippines was strongly supportive of the latter two initiatives while some of the remaining ASEAN members voiced strong opposition. Consequently, they were removed in the final Plan of Action for a Security Community (Roberts, 2005). Nonetheless, these documents remained notable for several provisions including an outline of the five "strategic thrusts" by which ASEAN's security community will be realised: (i) political development; (ii) the shaping and sharing of norms; (iii) conflict prevention; (iv) conflict resolution; and (v) post-conflict peace building (ASEAN, 2004c). Again, the realisation of these foundations will not be easy given the twin challenge of state weakness and political diversity. For example, in the case of the first strategic thrust ASEAN declared that the "highest political commitment that would serve as the basis for ASEAN political cooperation … [is to] promote political development … to achieve peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the region" (ASEAN, 2004b). Aside from the fact that some of the ASEAN members are far from "stable" and only a few can be classed as "democratic", there is also little evidence to suggest that the ASEAN members are close to the formation of a share vision or common values in the political and security realm. Here, the dilemma of regionalism in Southeast Asia was acknowledged in an interview with the Deputy Director-General of the ASEAN Department in the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He argued that the implementation of some of these strategic thrusts would be difficult due to "different political systems, cultures, religions, and the level of comfort or trust" each member maintains (Luangmuninthone, 2007).

Nonetheless, under Indonesia's leadership, the ASEAN members continued to reflect on how the Association could be strengthened and, in this context, the early negotiations for an ASEAN Charter were surprisingly progressive. For example, a December 2006 report by its Eminent Persons Group (EPG) acknowledged the need to calibrate the principle of non-interference and called for the institutionalisation of dispute settlement mechanisms as well as compliance monitoring and enforcement

mechanisms (ASEAN, 2006). The EPG report also urged the ASEAN leaders to vest the Association with the power to suspend the "rights and privileges of membership" in order to redress serious breaches of ASEAN agreements, objectives and major principles including human rights violations (ASEAN, 2006). Crucially, the report recommended the creation of "rules of procedure" that would provide the ASEAN Summit with the power to vote where it was not possible to reach a consensus. The EPG report was followed by an announcement at the July 2007 ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting that the ministers had agreed to establish one of Indonesia's original proposals—a "Human Rights Body" (BBC, 2007).

The final Charter was delivered at the Singapore Summit on 20 November 2007. However, Barry Desker (2008) argued that "it was a disappointment because it codifies existing norms … [such as non-interference] and maintains its historical identity as an inter-governmental organisation". Such critics argue that the failure to amend its *modus operandi* means that the problem of compliance will remain; this is a significant problem given that only 30 per cent of the ASEAN commitments have ever been implemented (Desker, 2008). The divide in political values has also led to a contradiction between the Charter's commitments to human rights and democracy and its simultaneous entrenchment of the traditional ASEAN Way including non-interference in each other's internal affairs (ASEAN, 2008). In the context of human rights, for example, the ASEAN members were not able to agree on the "terms of reference" in time for the finalisation of the Charter. Two years later, when a "consensus" finally emerged, the terms of reference were interpreted by some analysts as largely "toothless" (Wall Street Journal 2009). In line with the ASEAN way, the Human Rights Commission does not have a "rules-based" element and it does not have the power to investigate human rights concerns within countries (Azhar, 2009). Thus, in the context of other human rights commitments, Shaun Narine believes that "there is little reason to think that most ASEAN states will respect these commitments" (Narine, 2009: 370).

Conclusions

ASEAN's goal to establish a regional community will not be realised by 2015. In reality, the successful establishment of the ASEAN community, in any meaningful

form, will take decades to achieve. Nonetheless, any step towards deeper regionalisation—whether in the security, economic or socio-cultural spheres—will produce tangible benefits for ASEAN, its member-states and the people of Southeast Asia. In the meantime, divergent political systems and values, combined with state weakness, will continue to inhibit regional cooperation over key issues: such as territorial disputes; cultural, religious and historical differences; human rights; and social justice and traditional security issues. Furthermore, state weakness directly challenges regional security, cohesion and trust. For example, instability in Myanmar has presented numerous comprehensive security challenges including illicit drugs and their effects in Thailand. The chapter also discussed how state weakness exposes regional governments to unconstructive pan-nationalist ideologies with the subsequent risk of recourse to adverse comparisons with neighbouring communities and/or states. Such strategies are interdependent with a crisis in legitimacy and have, in recent times, led to armed conflict. In order to overcome these problems, the ASEAN members will need to continue with a process of internal consolidation involving efficient economic management, security sector reform and the implementation of more inclusionary nation-building policies. In the case of nation-building, it will also benefit from the creation of an environment that enables civil society and interest groups to flourish in a way that also increases the number of channels by which bottom up contributions to the formulation of government policy can be made. Again, the realisation of internal-consolidation will be a long-term process; however, recent developments in Indonesia reveal that the task of internal consolidation is far from impossible.

In the context of political values, this chapter's historical synopsis of Thailand and Indonesia supports the Kantian contentions concerning the nexus between democracy and foreign policy. A broader analysis would reveal similar trends in other countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. In the case of Singapore, for example, it is now a far more liberal society because of development, trade-liberalisation and globalisation compared to just a few decades ago. By contrast, the chapter also analysed how attempts to change ASEAN's values, *modus operandi* and level of institutionalisation were challenged by the more authoritarian ASEAN members. In this regard, the ASEAN Charter provided an early but determinative insight concerning the current limitations to Southeast Asian regionalism.

Nonetheless, and despite a clash of values within ASEAN, the Charter still "envisions an ASEAN that is more intrusive than most of its members will tolerate" at the present time (Narine, 2009: 369). While Indonesia, the Philippines and a few other ASEAN members may have contributed to this outcome, it is difficult to avoid an assessment that several of the ASEAN members acceded to the Charter, together with many other "statements of intent", simply because these instruments have very little binding authority. Meanwhile, their agreement appeases some of the larger and more powerful members while also providing a degree of added legitimacy and greater regional and international esteem. This, more than anything, explains the current dichotomy between rhetoric and practice in Southeast Asia.

While the outcome of the Charter has limited ASEAN's capacity to directly intervene with the goal of internal consolidation in mind, ASEAN's traditional practices of "intergovernmental" or "ad hoc" regionalism still have a role to play. Here, a broader analysis would reveal the long-term potential of this model to socialise new norms and values—such as those that have been espoused by Thailand and Indonesia in recent times. Further, as compared to the political and security spheres, ASEAN has been relatively more successful in promoting economic cooperation and integration. Should ASEAN continue in this direction, then associated increases in the level of wealth in each of the ASEAN members will also help to provide the tools to undertake further internal consolidation and, eventually, democracy. In the meantime, increases to economic interdependence will also continue to increase the costs of coercive diplomacy and thereby reduce the risk of armed conflict. Finally, ASEAN's model of *ad hoc* regionalism is not permanent because of some socio-cultural explanation such as Asian values; to the contrary, the current gap between ASEAN rhetoric and practice reveals that the structure of ASEAN is indelibly interdependent with both state-strength and political values. As the capacity gaps narrow, as civil society and transnational interest groups flourish, as the political values converge, then the model of regional governance that the ASEAN members aspire for will also change. In fact, that process has already begun.

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