***Rezension** / Review*

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Since the mid-1990s, regional cooperation in Southeast Asia has increased even in a traditionally sensitive area: security. The first non-traditional transnational threats the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) identified in the mid-1990s as priority issues were drug smuggling and terrorism. Due to the distrust among the ASEAN members, the concrete collaboration is still very limited; usually, it is bi- or minilateral rather than truly regional. Nevertheless, ASEAN as an institution has been on the forefront to pursue the notion of comprehensive security which includes conventional as well as non-conventional threats such as underdevelopment, poverty, migration, people and drug trafficking, infectious diseases or environmental degradation. Yet ASEAN has not been known as an organization that would actively promote democracy and human rights. Consequently, the linkage between regionalism, security and democracy – and in particular how they interact – is a new research area. "Hard Choices: Security, Democracy, and Regionalism in Southeast Asia", edited by Donald K. Emmerson, Director of the Southeast Asia Forum (SEAF)

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at Stanford's Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (APARC), offers more than initial thoughts to close the existing gap. The ten contributions from renowned international experts also illustrate the wide spectrum of opinions in regard to how security, democracy and regionalism are – or should be – linked.

In his introduction, Emmerson establishes the framework for the following analyses of the difficulties ASEAN faces. He argues that ASEAN is confronted with new hard choices – hard choices in order to remain a relevant international institution but also to improve the sake of its peoples. Thereby he follows the good American tradition of presenting concise definitions of all the highly complex and adjective-rich key terms. In regard to "security" he has – untypical for many US scholars – a very positive view of constructivist approaches. Like the Copenhagen School he believes that security is highly subjective: "Anything that is valued can warrant concerns for its 'security' on the part of whoever values it" (p. 6).

Security encompasses for Emmerson human, non-traditional and intrastate security as well as better governance and effective democracy. Important is his distinction between state and human security: In the third world context it is indispensable as it is very often the state that endangers the security of its citizens, be it that the government is criminal or even murderous or that due to bad governance undermines the socioeconomic development. Logically, from a moral point of view, a humanitarian intervention to topple the regime might be in certain cases the only solution to guarantee human security. In case of ASEAN, however, this scenario is absolutely unlikely. First, the ASEAN Way stresses the founding principles of sovereignty and non-interference into domestic affairs. Secondly, the majority of the ASEAN members are non-democracies. Theoretically, this might not be an obstacle for the promotion of democracy: As certain other authors argue in „Hard Choices", the problem with ASEAN is the lack of implementation rather than of existing norms. Thus even if ASEAN would have agreed on the draft version of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) for the new Charter with a surprisingly strong emphasis on human security, democracy and human rights, this would not necessarily lead to any changes on the ground.

The ASEAN Charter, adopted in July 2008, is despite many shortcomings in regard to human rights and democracy a crucial step in ASEAN's political and institutional development; it can be regarded as a kind of constitution that codifies ASEAN's norms and rules. Consequently, the majority of the contributions in "Hard Choices"

deal with the Charter. Even though the different views offer interesting insights, the analyses are sometimes too repetitive.

Concluding his Introduction, Emmerson is realistic when he claims that liberal democracy will not be the core concern of Southeast Asian regionalism. The furthering of good governance, human rights, the rule of law and human security, though, could be part of the agenda. In regard to ASEAN's previous record, this would be a remarkable progress.

Jörn Dosch (University of Leeds) points out that regionalism is today much more complex than during the relatively stable Cold War era: The security discourse has shifted from hard security (and anti-Communism) to more people oriented approaches. The Asian Financial crisis in 1997 as well as the environmental damages, in particular the haze problem and the 2004 tsunami, have illustrated that security must include the human and individual dimension. Human security implies at least debates on the necessity of human rights and increased participation of the civil society.

Dosch sees a clear link between security, democratization and regionalism: His argument is that democratization has opened the space for academics and civil society groups which advocate a more people oriented understanding of security. This participation has triggered a new notion of security – which, in turn, has "changed the way the ASEAN states, both individually and collectively, perceive and respond to security challenges" (p. 62). Even though ASEAN's security discourse might now be more open and inclusive and the governments are much more accountable, the problem is the lack of implementation and of collective mechanisms to enforce the existing rules and norms. Consequently, Dosch remains very cautious: "(N)ational sovereignty still rules" (p. 90), and accordingly, Realism, he correctly states, is still the dominant paradigm for the individual governments. The governments are also very pragmatic and use all possible instruments to increase their security – not at least economic development, as Dosch, Mely Caballero-Anthony (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) and David Martin Jones (University of Queensland) claim but do not analyze in depth.

Rizal Sukma (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta), who is an intellectual key force behind Indonesia's furthering of regional respect for human rights and democracy since the end of the Suharto regime, concedes that the Charter

falls short of many expectations. In particular the idea of a Human Rights body raises many questions, and the civil society dimension is not as strong as many have hoped. No wonder, the Charter reflects a typical political compromise, as Termsak Chalermpalanupap (ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta) writes: "What made its way into the text was not necessarily what was most desirable. More often than not, it was what no one could object to" (p. 129). Thus the analysis of Surin Pitsuwan, the current ASEAN Secretary-General – a role that has been strengthened by the Charter –, seems overly optimistic: In his foreword, he stresses that for the *New ASEAN* "Democracy and human rights are no longer taboo topics . . . . The days when domestic political controversies could not be discussed in regional settings are over" (p. xx). Hence at least on paper, the legally binding Charter enables ASEAN to react timely and speak with one voice to resolve crises and conflicts.

Interestingly, both Sukma and Jones believe that the promotion of democracy would not (necessarily) improve security in Southeast Asia. On the contrary, the imposing of democratic procedures by ASEAN could lead to resistance and even unrest in the affected member countries. This could even lead to the disintegration of ASEAN, as Jones fears, because the promotion of democracy would undermine the basic norm ASEAN is build on: the sovereignty of its members. Thus Sukma postulates: "Forcing democracy is something the Association has not done, cannot do and should not try to do" (p. 136). Due to the various domestic and international constraints the ASEAN members face, democracy is for him, at best, only one means to strengthen regional security in Southeast Asia. To promote democratization, ASEAN needs to start with introducing good governance and further the respect for human rights, Sukma argues. To reduce conflicts in Southeast Asia, ASEAN should use the Charter "to institutionalize, step by incremental step, a nonpartisan, eventually enforceable, and regionally acceptable rule-of-law regime" (p. 147).

Based on an excellent analysis of ASEAN's institutional and organizational development since 1967, Termsak Chalermpalanupap is as skeptical as Sukma. He believes that ASEAN is not yet prepared to translate the high flying plans for an East Asian Community into reality: "ASEAN was designed for confidence-building, not community-building" (p. 92). Therefore ASEAN needs to reinvent itself. Stressing the need for rules and legally binding decision-making, he believes that the Charter which is logically linked to the community concept can change ASEAN in a positive

direction. In the realm of security, however, neither the Charter nor the blueprint for the Political-Security Community foresee a joint foreign or security policy. ASEAN's security policy is still merely the sum of the ten national security policies.

In her insightful contribution, Mely Caballero-Anthony concentrates on non-traditional security threats like pollution or illegal migration which she believes have contributed to the changing nature of regionalism in Southeast Asia. In the context of the ASEAN Way, however, she demonstrates that comprehensive security is a state-centric concept. A major means to achieve state security is economic development. The Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 changed this state-centric view, as it became clear how much the peoples were affected by the economic downturn and how closely economics and security are interlinked. Jakarta's proposal for a Security Community and its championship for increased respect for democracy and human rights after the political liberalization in Indonesia reflected a new spirit in the region, not at least among the civil society: The new transnational challenges demand regional responses and increased collaboration; the sovereignty norm should therefore not serve as an excuse. As the organization has since 1997 strengthened its belief in human security, "democracy and human rights, however controversial they may be, are becoming Southeast Asian regionalism's next policy frontier" (p. 207).

A case study to assess ASEAN's true beliefs in human security and democracy is Myanmar. In his outstanding analysis of the political situation in ASEAN's "pariah" member and how the institution deals with the crisis, Kyaw Yin Hlaing (City University of Hong Kong) shows that the ruling junta is much more heterogenous than thought but united in the wish to maintain its power. Aware of the lack of public support, the generals promote the concept of a "disciplined democracy" with a new constitution at its heart – a constitution that legalizes the political predominance of the military.

For the junta, the ASEAN membership, gained in 1995, was regarded as positive: as an instrument to broaden its international and economic relations and to reduce the dependency on China and the negative impacts of the economic embargo of the US. The benefits of the membership outweigh the criticism even ASEAN partners do increasingly raise – as long as they do not actively promote regime change. For ASEAN, on the other side, geopolitical reasons (the sheer size of the country and the length of the borders it shares with Thailand) as well as the hope to increase its leverage to change were crucial motives for admitting Myanmar. Though these

hopes have faded, and even Malaysia, once the strongest advocate for Myanmar's membership, is today extremely critical of the junta.

Yet, the argument that in case of an expulsion of Myanmar, ASEAN would lose even its limited leverage is hard to dismiss. In particular as China, India and Russia are still supporting the junta politically, economically and militarily to promote their own strategic and economic interests. In order to ease the transport of oil and gas – to secure the access to energy resources is one of the main aims of the Chinese leadership –, China is building a pipeline through Myanmar, thus less oil needs to be shipped through the Malacca Straits. Therefore the relations between Myanmar and China can be described as one of mutual dependency. Though, as Kyaw points out, Thailand and Singapore also have strong economic interests in Myanmar.

As the author demonstrates, ASEAN had some visible and less visible influence: Highly acclaimed was that the junta abstained from chairing ASEAN in 2007. Also in regard to the promotion of human security ASEAN was after the cyclone Nargis in 2007 successful: Unlike Western relief organizations, ASEAN relief teams could access "sensitive" regions. Though, as Emmerson argues in his introduction, the price for this success was a retreat from the criticism the Singaporean Chair and a few other ASEAN members have uttered before. ASEAN's traditional concepts of state security and respect for sovereignty and non-interference have therefore at least compromised ASEAN's engagement for human security.

In addition, on the international level Myanmar's membership has proven negative for ASEAN too. As Kyaw argues, this negative aspect for its international relations is ASEAN´s main concern – Myanmar's domestic situation is not regarded as a danger for regional stability and security. Under the presidents Clinton and Bush, Washington has refused to deepen its relations with the organization because of Myanmar´s membership. The European Union uttered strong criticism on Myanmar too but did not freeze the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). In the last years, "Brussels" acknowledged the limited influence both the EU itself and ASEAN have on the junta. Conceding that a "constructive dialogue" with the junta is more appropriate than a total boycott, the EU has deepened its relations with ASEAN.

Despite the new Charter Kyaw believes that ASEAN lacks "both the moral authority and the political will to advocate democracy in Myanmar" (p. 186). According to the author, the organization, is forced to react, because it does not have an idea of how

to resolve the problem. He recommends that ASEAN should pressure the junta to increase the political space for civil society organizations and Aung Saw Suu Kyi in the lead-up to the parliamentary elections. The organization should also try to convince China to actively facilitate a political transition. Though, Kyaw concludes, that the most positive influence ASEAN could have on the situation in Myanmar would be leading by example: a democratization of the other ASEAN countries.

To sum up, "Hard Choices" offers sound analyses of the interplay of security, democracy and regionalism. Donald Emmerson is honest enough to concede that there remain "unfinished thoughts", and exactly because of the existing controversies, not at least among the ten contributors, this book is an excellent starting point for further innovative research on this interlinkage.

There are only two minor omissions. One non-traditional security threat that would have deserved a deeper analysis is terrorism. ASEAN's counter-terrorism policies demonstrate its constructivist notion of security: Regarding terrorism as a transnational crime, ASEAN has in fact depoliticized terrorism in order to deal with it on an unpolitical technical level. This allows cooperation (of a pressure group) in sensitive areas of domestic politics. Therefore all members could agree on the ASEAN Counter Terrorism Convention (2007), one of the few binding ASEAN treaties, though not all states have ratified it yet. Similar to ASEAN's other counter-terrorism resolutions, the Convention puts emphasis on a comprehensive approach to resolve the economic, social and even political root causes for terrorism; it is therefore surprisingly close to the idea of human security.

Another criticism is that the economy as a potential driving force for regional security or democracy is not discussed in more detail, even though certain authors stress the catalytic effects of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 on the popularization of human security. The reviewer believes that the common view among many ASEAN politicians that increased regional wealth and trade promotes regional peace and stability might be naïve and could be realized only in the long run. Yet, as a specific security concept that shapes the actions of decision-makers, it cannot be dismissed that easily – even though Emmerson´s correct counter-argument would be that ASEAN as a whole lacks a common definition of security, except the need to engage all outside powers.

The ten contributions in "Hard Choices" show that the new ASEAN Charter does

link security to regionalism – but that it neither links democracy to security or democracy to regionalism. In addition, even though the Charter views security in transnational, non-traditional terms it does not clearly define it in the sense of human security. The latter approach, however, seems conceptually well suited to link not only security to democracy but security to democracy and regionalism. The reviewer agrees with Emmerson's view that it is the notion of security that ASEAN adopts and the way it translates it into practical politics that will shape the future of regionalism in Southeast Asia. While a more people-oriented interpretation of security can be regarded as the political catalyst for the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region, regionalism is the concrete means to improve human security.