

***The Indonesian Way: ASEAN, Europeanization, and Foreign Policy Debates in a New Democracy.* By Jürgen Ruland. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. Hard cover: 290pp.**

For the first four decades of its existence, while openly acknowledging that it has looked to Europe as an inspiration, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has not tried to model its regional cooperation on Western European regional integration. Unlike the supranational European Union (EU), with its binding constitution, laws, a vast and powerful central bureaucracy, a European parliament and judiciary that are all intended to enmesh the member states in a regional union marked by diminished national sovereignties, ASEAN has taken a very different route to regional integration. ASEAN was initially designed as a loose and minimalist regional association to promote good neighbourly relations so that each member-state — most of whom had only recently achieved independence — could devote themselves to internal development and strengthen their national resilience, which in turn would contribute to regional resilience. Surrendering parts of their national sovereignties to a supranational regional body was never part of the ASEAN members' plan, though national and regional resilience is conceived to be mutually reinforcing, ensuring the strategic autonomy of the region from the machinations of major external powers.

The 1997–98 Asian Financial Crisis, which started in Thailand and quickly spread to several countries in the region, with Indonesia suffering the worst effects, led to fundamental changes in Indonesian national politics as well the development of ASEAN. The collapse of President Suharto's New Order authoritarian rule after more than three decades in power was followed by a transition to democracy. This momentous development in ASEAN's largest member coincided with a collective realization by all the member-states of the inadequacy of the existing ASEAN structure and ways of doing business in dealing with the myriad geopolitical and transnational challenges facing Southeast Asia. A decision was taken in 2003 to establish an ASEAN Community and promulgate an ASEAN Charter in 2007 that would transform ASEAN into a more integrated and efficient regional organization, capable of taking decisive collective action. Nevertheless, while looking to the EU as an inspiration and lately also as a model, it would be quite inconceivable to believe that there would really be strong support for the development of ASEAN into an EU-like supranational

organization that would totally negate the old established ASEAN Way based on respect for national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Jürgen Ruland's fascinating and meticulously researched book focuses on the newly democratized Indonesia and the lively debates surrounding the drafting and ratification of the ASEAN Charter, seen as a major development in the "Europeanization" of ASEAN. The primary aim of Ruland's study is to challenge world polity theory that tends to over-emphasize the converging characteristics of organizations in any given field over time due to a process of emulation of the successful model by others (p. 3). As Ruland argues, "Difference is the overarching paradigm of the multiple modernities literature, which fundamentally questions the modernisation theory's credo of a trend toward homogenisation and convergence of social phenomena as a result of globalisation and the concomitant bureaucratic rationalisation" (p. 5). The ultimate objective of this study is to develop a more global International Relations theory, away from "unabated hegemony of Western scholarship" (p. 228), a pluralistic approach that helps to demonstrate "a multiplication of the ideational roots of regionalism" (p. 229).

Ruland bases his analysis on the diffusion theory developed by Amitav Acharya about "constitutive localisation" which gives agency to local actors instead of simply treating them as "hapless norm recipients", giving attention to the "cognitive prior" or pre-existing cultures, norms and practices that continue to influence how various stakeholders respond to new modernizing ideas coming from outside. The book seeks to answer two main questions: firstly, the extent to which the European model of regional integration has changed the thinking of Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders about regionalism in Southeast Asia; and secondly, the extent to which processes of ideational diffusion have taken place (p. 6). Skilfully applying the diffusion theoretical framework of "framing", "grafting" and "pruning", Ruland examines the responses of six Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders: the Indonesian government; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the legislature; the academe; the press; and the business community towards the ASEAN Charter.

In addition to its important theoretical contribution to regional integration studies — highlighting the complex processes of localization and that of omnidirectional diffusion, signifying that Europe is not the sole source of inspiration about regional integration

— Ruland's book also provides colourful insights into the dynamics of foreign policy decision-making in post-Suharto Indonesia. It is important to note the proliferation of stakeholders and the ways that they help shape policies, the emergence of a new foreign policy agenda as well as the continuing influence of many long-held views and priorities.

The book highlights the importance of democracy promotion for most of the Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders that needs to be included in the ASEAN Charter. To a greater or lesser degree, most of the stakeholders believe that democratizing ASEAN, by making it more participatory in nature as well as by making ASEAN care about the democratic state of its members, is essential for transforming the regional organization, regarded in this book as "Europeanizing". Many members of the Indonesian academic community and NGOs were keen to see ASEAN pay greater attention to the human rights of its citizens that can best be protected under democratic governance, which means a dilution of ASEAN's principle of non-interference. As the largest member of ASEAN, and the world's third largest democracy, Indonesia is seen as having an interest and an obligation in elevating democracy within ASEAN, displaying in certain cases a more assertive leadership in pursuing this agenda. Disappointments with the final ASEAN Charter that watered down the democracy and human rights provisions resulted in a more sceptical attitude towards ASEAN among important elements of Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders. Ruland also shows the inconsistency and double-standards among some of the stakeholders. This book is a welcome addition to the literature on Indonesia's foreign policy and ASEAN.

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