

ASEAN Political Studies

**DOMESTIC
POLITICAL STRUCTURES
AND REGIONAL
ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION**

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**DOMESTIC
POLITICAL STRUCTURES
AND REGIONAL
ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION**

Harold Crouch

ASEAN Economic Research Unit
INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
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Foreword

In 1981, a research project was launched by a group of political scientists, under the auspices of the Asean Economic Research Unit of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, to complement the work of economists in their investigation of the problems and obstacles that stand in the way of economic co-operation in ASEAN. It has been widely recognized that whilst ASEAN has been established since 1967 and received fresh impetus as a regional organization after 1975, very modest progress has been achieved in the area of economic co-operation, although this is one of the primary objectives laid down in the ASEAN Declaration. A team of economists therefore set the task for themselves to focus on specific aspects of economic co-operation in ASEAN, such as industry and trade, investments and finance, commodities and food and energy, to investigate in depth the nature of the problems and obstacles, and to discover possible areas of breakthrough in the process of economic co-operation in an effort to understand the dynamics of economic regionalism.

It soon became evident that a similar enquiry directed at the political dimensions of regional economic co-operation was necessary to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the problem. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation very generously provided the enabling funds for such a study.

Thus, nine political scientists came together in two separate workshops in 1981 and 1982 in Singapore to examine the political factors affecting ASEAN economic co-operation. The results of their research efforts are seen in the six monographs in this series entitled *ASEAN Political Studies*. The monographs examine the institutional factors, both domestic and regional, the bilateral relations, and the decision-making processes which impinge on regional economic co-operation.

Hopefully, the monographs listed below will each in their own way throw light on the political dimensions of regional economic co-operation:

1. Domestic Political Structures and
Regional Economic Co-operation

Harold Crouch

2. Impediments to Regionalism in Southeast Asia:
Bilateral Constraints among ASEAN Member States Hans H. Indorf
3. The Institutional Structure of ASEAN:
Evolution and Reform Chin Kin Wah
4. Decision-making in an ASEAN Complementation
Scheme: The Automotive Industry Seah Chee Meow and
Estrella Solidum
5. ASEAN Negotiations: Two Insights Pushpa Thambipillai and
J. Saravanamuttu
6. The World of ASEAN Decision-makers:
A Study of Bureaucratic Elite Perceptions Zakaria Haji Ahmad and
Withaya Sucharithianarugse

These studies were completed by June 1983 and do not take into account the entry of Brunei as the sixth member of ASEAN in February 1984.

Chan Heng Chee
Project Co-ordinator

Preface

This study is concerned with how the domestic political structures of the ASEAN states might affect regional economic co-operation. An attempt is made to compare the different political capacities of the ASEAN states to carry out policies opposed by particular vested interests and to examine possible implications for regional economic co-operation.

A comparative study of this sort inevitably lacks proper balance because it is in the nature of things that the author cannot have equal knowledge and experience of the states that he is discussing. In this case, the author is resident in Malaysia and had earlier spent several years in Indonesia, but his direct experience of the other three states is more limited. During the course of this study he was able to spend a month in Indonesia, three weeks in the Philippines and a week in Thailand, while several brief visits were made to Singapore. Much of the discussion, therefore, relies heavily on secondary sources and the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

The author wishes to express his thanks to the ASEAN Economic Research Unit of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies for the support given to this project.

July 1983
Bangi, Malaysia.

H.C.

