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Constructing Regionalism Domestically: Local Actors and Foreign Policymaking in Indonesia

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Abstract

There is a dearth of studies exploring the construction of ideas on regionalism outside Europe. This paper seeks to make a contribution to close this gap. It examines the construction of ideas on regionalism in Indonesia, the largest member country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Theoretically the paper draws from Acharya's concept of "constitutive localization" which it develops further. It offers an alternative explanation to studies which argue that as a result of mimetic behavior regional organizations across the world become increasingly similar. While this may be the case in terms of rhetoric and organizational structure, it is not the case at a normative level. The Indonesian case shows that even though foreign policy stakeholders have increasingly championed European ideas of regional integration after the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/1998, they have skillfully amalgamated them with older local worldviews through a process of framing, grafting and pruning. European ideas of regional integration thereby served to modernize and re-legitimize a foreign policy agenda which seeks to establish Indonesia as a regional leader with ambitions to play a major role in global politics.

Key words

Sociological Institutionalism, Norm Diffusion, Localization, Nationalism, Regionalism, ASEAN, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Foreign Policy

Copyright

Introduction

Indonesia is Southeast Asia's by far largest and most populous country, attributes which seemingly destine the country for regional leadership and a major role in international relations. And, indeed, Indonesia had played a significant part in the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia's oldest and most prestigious regional organization. Indonesia is also the country in Southeast Asia which in the last decade has gone through the most far-reaching political transformation. The resignation of President Suharto after 32-years of autocratic rule in May 1998 ushered in a process of democratization which has been widely commended. But ASEAN too underwent fundamental changes in the last decade which culminated in the signing and eventual ratification of the ASEAN Charter in late 2008. The Charter re-casted and modernized the grouping's objectives and cooperation norms, with democratizing Indonesia being a driving force in this process.

Indonesia's democratization has also transformed the country's foreign policymaking process. Being no longer an exclusive executive affair, it has become more open, more pluralistic and less top-down than during Suharto's New Order regime (Anwar 1994; Suryadinata 1996; Dosch 2007). It can thus no longer be taken for granted that Indonesia's age-honored foreign policy doctrines reflect a national consensus of views on the external world. One of these doctrines largely uncontested for more than four decades has declared ASEAN the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy.

The debate on the ratification of the ASEAN Charter created the opportunity to explore how much Southeast Asian regionalism still matters for Indonesia's major foreign policy stakeholders and how they position their country in the Southeast Asian region. The paper approaches this puzzle by examining which external and local ideational sources determine their views on regionalism and to what extent and in what way they amalgamate these diverse ideational influences. By investigating how Indonesian domestic stakeholders (re-)constitute images of Southeast Asian regionalism, the subsequent analysis takes a bottom-up perspective which sets it apart from the top-down and state-centric views prevailing in the study of Southeast Asian regionalism. With this agenda, the paper straddles the borderlines of the disciplines of International Relations, domestic policy research and the study of political ideas, a perspective rarely taken in the study of Southeast Asian regionalism as well as in the more recent research on regional powers (Nolte 2009; Prys 2010).

The paper proceeds in six steps. Following the introduction, I develop, second, a theoretical framework capturing the processes underlying the construction of ideas and norms shaping Southeast Asian regionalism and the blending of external and local ideational influences. This framework is strongly inspired by sociological institutionalism and Acharya's theory of "constitutive localization" (Acharya 2004, 2009) and elements of more recent practice theory (Adler & Pouliot 2011). The section concludes with a short discussion of the methodology used in the study. In the third step, I briefly outline the existing normative orthodoxy, the "cognitive prior" (ibid.), shaping

ASEAN's regional identity, the doctrinal foundations and actual practices of Indonesia's foreign policy prior to the Asian financial crisis of 1997/1998. Step four identifies the Asian financial crisis as a watershed for Indonesian perceptions of ASEAN. The crisis has severely eroded existing beliefs and expectations associated with the ASEAN Way as the grouping's established repository of cooperation norms and given rise to normative challenges seemingly inspired by European regionalism. Step five examines how major Indonesian stakeholders respond to the external ideational challenge. I argue in this section that although the external ideas associated with an European model of regional integration such as deepening regionalism through legalization and institutionalization have been rhetorically appropriated by the main protagonists in the Indonesian discourse, they have been localized in various ways and to varying degrees. Indonesian foreign policy stakeholder groups have framed foreign ideas on regionalism in ways which make them compatible with nationalism as the firmly entrenched key norm and practice of the country's foreign policy. By linking Indonesian nationalism with European norms of regional integration, they do not only revitalize Indonesian regional leadership claims, but also modernize and revalidate Indonesian nationalism and endow it with fresh legitimacy. The sixth section summarizes the main arguments of the paper and provides a short outlook on the future course of Indonesian foreign policy.

Theoretical and Methodological Premises

The encounter of the old norms of regional cooperation embodied in the ASEAN Way with new European-inspired ideas of regional integration in the post-Asian crisis era provides the empirical context for this paper, embedding it theoretically in the more recent norm diffusion literature of sociological institutionalism. The latter's strength is its ability to shed light on the cognitive dimension of institution-building. It focuses on the norms, ideas and values underlying regional cooperation arrangements and how they change over time. These norms are regarded as socially constructed, the result of discursive interaction. Sociological institutionalism offers a potentially greater explanatory scope than other approaches as it transcends the Cartesian instrumental logic of rationalist theories, both in their realist as well as institutionalist variant. By endogenizing change and by focusing on the appropriateness of norms, sociological institutionalism facilitates tracing the ideational roots of institutions, exploring their evolution, capturing their cultural peculiarities and conceptualizing the cognitive dimension of power (that is, "productive power").[1] Moreover, sociological institutionalism tallies well with more recent theorizing on (everyday) practices as it maps perceptions which can define reality understood as actual political practice but which in a mutually (re-)constitutive process are themselves shaped by political practices (Adler & Pouliot 2011).

Research on norm diffusion has been particularly thriving in the field of Europeanization studies. Originally focussing on the question as to what extent the new Eastern European member states have adopted the norms, rules and practices propagated by the EU in the

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[1]   For the various dimensions of power in international relations, see Barnett & Duvall (2005).

process of accession, more recent studies also cover the interaction of regional organizations. They argue that by actively exporting its norms and values to and being emulated by other regional organizations, the EU has become a "transformative power" (Börzel & Risse 2009). This is why in their view regional organizations outside Europe increasingly resemble the EU. For ASEAN, Anja Jetschke has made the argument that the grouping has persistently emulated the EU (Jetschke 2009).

It is one of the merits of the "transformative power of Europe" literature to have revealed that many non-Western regional groupings have indeed adopted the EU's organizational nomenclature, but also that often this appropriation is paralleled by glaring rhetoric-action gaps. Unfortunately, though, these studies rarely look beyond the rhetoric of the norm recipients. This traps them in the fallacy that the mere rhetorical adoption of European norms predicates a transformative process. What they fail to see is how and to what extent norm recipients reinterpret imported European norms, and more or less subtly undermine the transformative power ascribed to Europe.

An approach providing the analytical tools for transcending transformative rhetoric is third generation norm diffusion research. Acharya's theory of "constitutive localization," for instance, attaches agency not only to external norm entrepreneurs but also to local norm recipients (Acharya 2004, 2009). It perceives normative change as a process with varying outcomes. Local norm recipients rarely fully reject or completely adopt new external norms; in fact, normative rejection and wholesale normative transformation are the exception rather than the rule (Ibid.). Much more likely is it that norm recipients re-construct external norms in a way that they match locally existing norms. They adjust the new norms to the normative orthodoxy, thereby modernizing the latter and endowing the old order with fresh legitimacy. The result is a normative third, which differs from both, the challenging external norms as well as the challenged local norms, although the new set of amalgamated norms is often closer to the ideational orthodoxy than the novel external norms. Localization is thus not merely a transitional stage in a trajectory of transformation, dissociating it from the modernization theory-driven early norm diffusion literature with its universalist teleological perspective and "cosmopolitan proselytism" (Ibid.: 10). Rather is it a complex process of normative adjustment in which local actors deliberately make the new external norms and ideas congruent with the normative orthodoxy through framing, grafting and pruning in an open public discourse (Ibid.). Framing is a process of agenda-setting by using language to highlight and dramatize issues (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998: 897; Acharya 2004: 242), grafting "is a tactic norm entrepreneurs employ to institutionalize a new norm by associating it with a pre-existing norm in the same issue area" (ibid: 243) and pruning denotes a process of "selecting those elements of the new norm which fit the pre-existing normative structure and reject those which do not" (ibid: 251).

Acharya's theory of "constitutive localization" also goes beyond the state-centrism of earlier constructivist theorizing. It accommodates the often aired criticism that constructivist studies, like neo-realism, treat states as unitary actors (Landolt 2004:581). Open for the study of domestic policy processes, localization theory may shed light into the proverbial black box of foreign policymaking and adds a bottom-up dimension to the

dominant top-down perspective in the construction of norms and institutional change.

Yet, norm diffusion is more complex than Acharya suggests. Not only norm recipients localize, also foreign norm entrepreneurs may do so. Localization by external norm entrepreneurs denotes a pre-emptive strategy to make the new norms more palatable to the targeted recipients if these are suspected to reject them. The latter must be expected if the external norm encounters a deeply entrenched normative orthodoxy which is buttressed by political practice. However, "pre-emptive" localization by the external norm entrepreneur may inadvertently have repercussions on the latter's own normative order. This type of localization thus attests to the fact that normative interaction is by no means the one-way avenue as it is often depicted in the early Western-centric norm diffusion literature. It is part of a process of ideational entanglement, albeit one which is often quite asymmetric.

Finally, norm recipients may also resort to "reverse localization." Unlike in Acharya's "constitutive localization" in which old norms are framed with the new external ideas, "reverse localization" denotes a process in which norm recipients make new external norms compatible with the local normative orthodoxy by framing them in the language of the ideational orthodoxy. In other words, norm recipients propagate extant local norms in order to legitimize the new external norms and ideas.

My claim that Indonesian nationalism localizes European norms of regional integration finds its theoretical support in the work of Jack Snyder. Snyder argues that especially newly democratizing countries are susceptible to the appeal of nationalism (Snyder 2000). In non-Western regions, two factors account for this phenomenon: First, the historical legacies of decolonization and, second, the mode of democratic transition. In countries which, like Indonesia, had to fight a war of independence, and where independence was associated with great human and material loss, nationalist ideology tends to be deeply entrenched in the nation's collective memory. Therefore, any group that exposes itself to doubts about its patriotism jeopardizes mass support. In Indonesia even parties representing Political Islam thus adhere to a nationalist rhetoric (Rüland 2009:377). Moreover, in "pacted transitions," which are typical of the majority of "third wave" democracies including Indonesia, the domestic power equation is in flux. New democracies are thus often characterized by an intense competition for political power between old and new elites. As a "doctrine for the people, but not necessarily by the people" (Snyder 2000:36) nationalism is attractive especially for old elites, because it allows them to respond to the opening of the political space without fully granting civic rights (ibid). In the absence of strong and mature democratic institutions, and due to the historical legacies mentioned above, even reformist forces have no alternative but to resort to nationalist populism in order to mobilize popular support. Competing elites, outbidding each other in nationalist rhetoric, thus also transform foreign policymaking into an issue area where safe-guarding national self-interest becomes an important benchmark for political success.

Methodology

The objective of this paper is to reconstruct Indonesian attitudes towards ASEAN and to explore how the interplay of foreign and local ideas shapes these visions. To this end, my analysis concentrates on six major stakeholder groups in the Indonesian foreign policy discourse: Legislators, the academe (including university lecturers and think tank experts), representatives of development NGOs, members of the business community, the (print) media and the government. These stakeholders are not only central in the Indonesian policy discourse, I also expect them to be important localizers. Straddling the global and the local, they are knowledgeable of both worlds and thus well-positioned intermediaries (Shawki 2011: 4). Given the centrality of security, welfare and rule functions to any system of governance (Czempiel 1981), I paid particular attention to the question of how stakeholders assess ASEAN's performance in these three broad policy areas.

Data have been collected during several field trips to Indonesia. I conducted field research in Indonesia in February to April 2008, July 2009, March and April 2010 and August 2010. Data collection relied on triangulation, with a total of eighty-three expert interviews[2] and content analysis of 170 newspaper articles as the two most important sources of information. The media analysis included English-language dailies such as *The Jakarta Post* and *The Jakarta Globe* and newspapers published in Bahasa Indonesia such as *Kompas, Media Indonesia, Republika, Suara Pembaruan* and *Jawa Pos,* news magazines such as *Tempo Interaktif*, *Gatra* and *Kabar Bisnis,* and, finally, articles published by the Indonesian government news agency *Antara* and internet news portal *DetikNews.* These texts include opinioned articles, editorials and interview statements. Yet, the distribution of the texts across the six stakeholders groups is uneven, to some extent reflecting the intensity of their involvement in the debate. Not unexpectedly, the most prolific contributors were members of the academe, followed by the government, development NGOs, the media, the business sector and legislators. However, the scarcity of articles by legislators is more than compensated by the fact that media reports on Indonesian foreign policy are replete with interview statements of parliamentarians, even though it must be cautioned that mediation of views through the media may be biased and distorting.

Finally, in order to find out how consistent the views articulated by the stakeholders on ASEAN were, the analysis also included the responses of domestic actors to two major issues emerging already during the Charter debate, but which have been more intensively discussed after Charter ratification. Both issues, the dispute with neighbouring Malaysia over Indonesia's maritime boundaries as well as the coming into full effect of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) on 1 January 2010, have major repercussions on the public's view of ASEAN.

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[2] Fifty-three of these interviews were conducted in an earlier project together with Maria-Gabriela Manea on legislature-military relations (funded by the German Peace Foundation, Osnabrück). Many of these interviews covered security and foreign policy issues.

The "Cognitive Prior:" ASEAN and Indonesian Foreign Policy

The current Indonesian debate on the ASEAN Charter and ASEAN's relevance for Indonesia's external relations cannot be understood without recourse to the norms, ideas and practices previously guiding Southeast Asian regional cooperation and Indonesia's foreign policy. This "cognitive prior" (Acharya 2009:21-23) has become part of Indonesians' collective memory and tells us what is considered appropriate and hence legitimate (Hopf 1998). The more resilient these established ideas, norms and practices are, the less likely is wholesale normative transformation and the more likely is it that norm recipients reject or at least localize external normative challenges by making them compatible with the ideational orthodoxy.

The ASEAN Way: A Southeast Asian Regional Agenda

ASEAN was founded in August 1967 after two earlier attempts of regional cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) and Maphilindo had faltered in the wake of the Indonesian confrontation policy *(konfrontasi)* against neighboring Malaysia (Gordon 1966). However, *konfrontasi* isolated Indonesia internationally, depriving it of urgently needed (Western) development aid and precipitating the country's economy into a deep crisis (Solidum 1974; Leifer 1983). The new Indonesian government led by Maj. Gen. Suharto, which came to power after the aborted 30 September 1965 coup, thus initiated a complete about-turn of the country's foreign policy. By giving priority to economic development it ended *konfrontasi*, rejoined the international organizations Sukarno had left and sought a rapprochement with the West. One way of rebuilding international confidence in Indonesia and at the same time curtailing Great Power influence in Southeast Asia was the formation of a new regional organization (Weinstein 1976; Leifer 1983; Anwar 1994; Narine 2008; Ba 2009). ASEAN's founding document, the Bangkok Declaration,[3] thus made the establishment of peaceful intra-regional relations a major objective. A peaceful community of Southeast Asian nations, ASEAN's founding fathers believed, creates favorable conditions for economic growth and political stability which, in turn, would markedly reduce the threat of communist expansion in the region.

Although the first decade of ASEAN was overshadowed by serious crises, acrimonious disputes and little tangible progress in cooperation, the association remained intact. It was only with the communist victory in Indochina in the mid-1970s that ASEAN embarked on closer cooperation. Crucial in this respect was the grouping's first summit held in 1976 in Bali. One of the summit's major outcomes was the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), which subsequently became a regional code of conduct.

Building on the 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung and the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, the TAC accentuated Westphalian norms. Foremost among them was national sovereignty, complemented by mutual respect for independence, equality, territorial integrity, national identity, non-interference into the internal affairs of other states and the renunciation of threat and the use of force (Haacke 2003:6).

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[3] For the text of the Bangkok Declaration, see http://www.asean.org/1212.htm (accessed 29 August 2011).

After the end of the Cold War, ASEAN's Westphalian norms increasingly came under siege. Championing democracy, human rights, good governance and rule of law, the new world order propagated by U.S. President George H.W. Bush explicitly rested on liberal values. Western countries and regional organizations such as the EU soon began to actively promote these values on a global scale, linking development aid to progress in democratization, human rights, good governance, rule of law and development-orientation. Southeast Asia's mostly authoritarian regimes responded critically to these Western conditionalities which they regarded as interference in their internal affairs. Buoyed by their unprecedented economic success and growing confidence that the global political and economic gravitation is tilting towards the Asia-Pacific region, they vociferously rejected the universalist liberal agenda of the West. To counter the Western normative offensive they constructed an East Asian political identity based on a set of values putatively shared by the societies of the region. These "Asian values" relished authority, power and hierarchy and prioritized collective socioeconomic human rights over individual political rights (Mahbubani 1993).

The exceptionalist claims associated with an Asian political culture reinvigorated the sovereignty norms enshrined in the TAC. They sharpened notions of a unique Southeast Asian regionalism which explicitly dissociated ASEAN from the Western "other" embodied in the European model of regional integration. While the EU pursues regional integration through the pooling of sovereignty and "deep" institutionalization, the so-called ASEAN Way as the repository of ASEAN cooperation norms stands for intergovernmentalism and "soft" institutionalization. The ASEAN Secretariat, the grouping's bureaucratic support structure, has only coordinative powers and employs a staff of less than 200, no comparison to the over 20,000 employees of the European Commission. For ASEAN member governments, bureaucratization, "thick" institutions and legalization of regional cooperation constituted serious obstacles to respond fast and flexibly to the challenges of globalization and to reach pragmatic solutions for regional problems. This entrenched aversion to legalization and institutionalization found its equivalent in the essentially non-binding nature of ASEAN decisions. Compliance with decisions was largely voluntary and enforcement mainly relying on peer pressure. Derived from Malay village culture, the ASEAN Way calls for consensual decisions which are the outcome of intensive deliberation among members *(musyawarah dan mufakat)*. Quiet diplomacy and compromise thus take precedence over confrontational bargaining. As the latter creates winners and losers, it may easily lead to loss of face for member countries forced to make concessions. In order to maintain social harmony, ASEAN member governments tend to bracket contentious issues which they either relegate to the bilateral level or shift to non-official track two dialogues where they discuss until the contours of a solution transpire. Finally, in order to facilitate confidence-building among highly diverse members, the ASEAN Way relies on "relationship-building" (Ba 2009), elevating close personal ties among officials and informality to significant norms in the ASEAN Way's ideational orthodoxy (Dosch 1994:9-10; Acharya 2003: 376; Katsumata 2003:106).

Independent and Active: Parameters of Indonesian Foreign Policy

Ideational basis and practice of Indonesian foreign policy are strongly informed by political realism. For the majority of Indonesian politicians power is the driving factor in international relations (Weinstein 1976: 63), a worldview reflecting the vicissitudes of Indonesia's history. The waxing and waning of pre-colonial empires and kingdoms, the colonial trauma (ibid.: 356), the Japanese occupation during the Second World War (1942-1945), the armed struggle for independence (1945-1949), the exigencies of the Cold War and the seeming capitalist exploitation of the developing world by the economically advanced countries, all these experiences inculcated in Indonesian leaders a deep distrust towards a seemingly hostile external world, a profound sense of vulnerability and victimization (ibid.: 30) and great sensitivity to global and regional power shifts.

This realist worldview tallies well with traditional perceptions of the external world. Javanese variants of the ancient Indian *Arthasastra* (a political guide book for rulers) which reached the Indonesian archipelago together with other Hindu-Brahmanic political ideas during the first millennium AD, conceptualized the external world in concentric circles *(mandalas)*. The court of the ruler is the center of this system. His neighbors, that is, the circle of kingdoms surrounding him, are his natural enemies, while in the next circle the neighbors of the neighbors are his putative allies. As kingdoms are inherently instable at their peripheries, the *mandala* system of states entails an in-built need of expanding the kingdom's territory. The result is persistent warfare with its unpredictable fortunes. In such an insecure world, in which apart from neighboring kings also domestic pretenders for power constitute permanent threats, the ruler is permitted to do everything what keeps him in power. Politics, driven by power, is thus an amoral process. This is the more so as Javanese believe that the amount of power is finite and that a ruler in order to secure his legitimacy must possess all of it (Anderson 1972).

The strong legacy of these ideas must be attributed to the fact that the Indianized pre-colonial empires of Sri Vijaya (seventh to thirteenth century) and Majapahit (thirteenth to sixteenth century) represent Indonesia's glorious past. For many politicians Indonesia is a continuation of these two empires (Suryadinata 1996: 6). As a "usable past" the myths of the Majapahit era still give inspiration and guidance to contemporary policymakers (Prasetyono 2005). In the process, they unwittingly reproduce the political ideas of this past, which modern conceptualizations of political realism further revalidate.[4]

Contemporary Indonesian foreign policy and security doctrines have retained the geopolitical perspective of the *mandala* system. Especially the armed forces still use the geopolitical lens for identifying security threats. Trained in the writings of modern geopolitical thinkers ranging from Ratzel and Kjellen to Haushofer (Sunardi 2004; Anggoro 2005) and familiar with the ideational representations of the Majapahit era, military strategists of the Suharto regime devised for Indonesia a foreign policy doctrine of concentric circles in which Indonesian domestic politics was the inner circle, followed by a second circle including Indonesia's Southeast Asian neighbors and Australia and a

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[4] See also Indonesia diplomat Siwso Pramono in *The Jakarta Post*, 4 March 2010.

third circle the remainder of the globe (Anwar 1994; Widjajanto 2008). In view of the great significance the *mandala* system attaches to the immediately bordering region for state security, it is hardly surprising that Indonesia has made ASEAN the cornerstone of its foreign policy (Anwar 1994: 7). ASEAN is not only an organization bestowing respectability and credibility on Indonesia's foreign policy and creating a peaceful international environment which is conducive for development. It is also an institutional device to keep Great Powers with their potential infringements on Indonesian sovereignty out of the region. Geopolitical is also the archipelagic principle *(wawasan nusantara)*, the unity of land and water *(tanah air kita)*, on which Indonesia bases its territorial claims (Leifer 1983:48; Dupont 1996:287).

Another ideational root of Indonesia's realist foreign policy outlook is collectivist state theory. Indonesia's nationalist leaders skillfully amalgamated European and local conceptualizations of an organic state (Reeve 1985; Simantunjak 1989; Bourchier 1999) which found its most elaborated embodiment in the corporatist order of Suharto's New Order regime (King 1992; MacIntyre 1994). In order to unite the population for modernization from above, especially developmental states are prone to establish a state corporatist order. As late development is also a process combating international power asymmetries, these states invariably tend to pursue a realist foreign policy (Schmitter 1979:120).

The deep-seated realist worldview of Indonesian politicians and international relations scholars almost by definition entails a nationalist foreign policy (Anwar 1994:17). It is thus hardly surprising that, in coincidence with Morgenthau's classical realism, "national interest" is the most frequently cited category in the Indonesian foreign policy discourse. Foremost in this respect figures national sovereignty, which Indonesian governments pursue by a combination of struggle *(perjuangan)* and diplomacy *(diplomasi)* (Leifer 1983:19; Anwar 1994:25). In Indonesian eyes, this is not a recipe for an aggressive foreign policy, but one in which, if diplomacy fails to achieve its ends, Indonesia is also prepared to fight for its national interest, including – as *ultima ratio* – the use of military force.

Ever since the famous speech of Vice President Mohammed Hatta in September 1948, a nationalist foreign policy is one that is "free and active" *(bebas dan aktif)* (Leifer 1983:27; Anwar 1994:36). Although the original intention of the *bebas-aktif* doctrine sought to isolate Indonesia from the Cold War superpower competition, its meaning soon expanded and has become synonymous with autonomy and self-reliance. "Passivity," concludes Weinstein, "connotes acquiescence to circumscribed independence" (Weinstein 1976: 189). For Indonesia, an independent foreign policy is thus a matter of self-respect and dignity (ibid.: 1976:30).

A free and active foreign policy does not only stand for pragmatism (Sukma 1995: 308) and "keeping all options open" (Perwita 2007: 19). Even more important is *bebas-aktif* for Indonesia's self-styled role of a regional leader and major player in world politics. Indonesians base their country's leadership claims primarily on their history, large territory and population size, combined with the geopolitical and at the same time

ethnocentric argument, that the country is the "nail of the universe." This claim for regional pre-eminence has been most strongly articulated during the Sukarno era. After retreating to a more informal regional leadership role during the first two decades of Suharto's New Order in which Indonesia confined itself to acting as *primus inter pares*, the country returned to a more assertive foreign policy in the late 1980s and 1990s (Vatikiotis 1993: 354). Yet, as Weinstein argued, the leadership which Indonesian foreign policy elites envisaged had very little concrete content. Leadership was equated with having a sphere of influence, being consulted by neighbours on developments of significance in the region, being a mediator in regional disputes and an agenda setter (Weinstein 1976: 202). It contributed to a sense of frustrated entitlement that Indonesia's neighbours only reluctantly accorded the country the deference it expected from them. In times of tensions this lack of recognition could fuel shrill nationalist rhetoric in Indonesia's domestic politics.

The External Challenge: Europeanizing ASEAN?

The Asian financial crisis of 1997/1998 was a watershed for ASEAN. The crisis had disastrous effects for the region's economies, comparable only to the Great Depression of the 1930s. In 1998, the countries hit worst in Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Thailand, saw their economies contract by 13.2 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively. Malaysia's economy, too, shrunk by 7.5 percent. The crisis was precisely the external shock which the theoretical literature regards as trigger for fundamental ideational change (Legro 2000). It virtually paralyzed ASEAN, shattering the expectations associated with Asian values and the ASEAN Way. ASEAN's virtually non-existent crisis management forced Thailand and Indonesia under the tutelage of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and to accept the latter's onerous conditionalities and infringements on their sovereignty. The crisis plunged ASEAN in the deepest crisis since its formation. For years, the grouping was in disarray. With old disputes and animosities breaking up anew, the future of Southeast Asian regionalism appeared gloomy (Rüland 2000).

As the contagion effects of the financial crisis had highlighted the growing interdependence of regional economies (ibid.) and the subsequent haze pollution the cross-border nature of many regional problems (Nguitragool 2011a), critics of the ASEAN Way began to target the non-interference norm as no longer functional. At ASEAN's 31st Ministerial Meeting held in July 1998 in Manila, then Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan proposed a relaxation of the non-interference norm through "flexible engagement." His proposal was a more diplomatic version of Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's earlier call for "constructive intervention." Although Surin's proposal was rejected, with ASEAN eventually settling on Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas' compromise formula of "enhanced interaction," the ASEAN Way had come under siege. Also academics and the media criticized ASEAN's "soft" institutionalization as "fair weather cooperation" (Rüland 2000). They shifted attention to a widening rhetoric-action gap (Smith & Jones 2007; Jetschke & Rüland 2009) and the grouping's penchant for declaratory and symbolic politics.

ASEAN subsequently embarked on a strategy of damage control. Starting with the Hanoi Plan of Action (1998-2004) it initiated a flurry of activities designed to restore the grouping's cohesion. Interestingly, the ensuing reform debate, driven by academics, the media and non-governmental organizations increasingly tilted towards a European type of regional integration. At the Bali Summit of 2003, ASEAN officialdom and the grouping's member governments responded to these pressures by broadening the normative foundation of the ASEAN Way. Norms hitherto prominently championed by the EU such as democracy, human rights, good governance, rule of law and the outlawing of military coups as a mode of changing government found their way into ASEAN documents such as the Bali Concord II and the Vientiane Action Program (2004-2010). Also the nomenclature of the organizational reforms initiated in Bali exhibited affinities with European regionalism. In Bali ASEAN leaders also resolved to establish an ASEAN Community by 2020 (later accelerated to 2015) and to create a Single Market. The ASEAN Community is supposed to be an institutional edifice resting on three pillars (a security-political community, an economic community and a socio-cultural community). Symptomatic for these changes was the fact that since Bali concepts such as "community" and "regional integration" have crept into ASEAN vocabulary, concepts which a decade earlier Southeast Asian governments consciously avoided due to their affinity with European regionalism.

At their 2005 Summit in Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN leaders went even one step further and decided to write an ASEAN Charter. Often likened to a constitution,[5] the Charter was expected to help deepening regional integration and making ASEAN a more cohesive, legalized, institutionalized and rule-based organization. The ten eminent persons mandated by ASEAN leaders to produce a Charter blueprint with bold and visionary ideas travelled to Brussels to seek inspiration but ruled out an emulation of EU institutions. Apart from a task force report prepared by the so-called fifteen wise men in the early 1980s (Anwar 1994: 85), the EPG report is undoubtedly the most far-reaching departure from the ASEAN Way and in many ways more than a mere rhetorical approximation to the European integration model. It proposed the establishment of an ASEAN Council as a major body of decision-making, a committee of permanent representatives, the strengthening of the region's existing parliamentary assembly (that is, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Association, AIPA), and the democratization of regional governance by transforming ASEAN into a people-centered organization. Even more importantly, the report addressed ASEAN's rhetoric-action gap head-on by referring to the grouping's ineffective implementation of decisions.[6] As remedies the report recommended an effective dispute settlement mechanism, compliance monitoring and sanctions in case of non-compliance. Indonesian scholar Jusuf Wanandi went even a step further and called for the creation of an ASEAN Court of Justice. All this raises the question: Is ASEAN moving towards a regionalism concept which is closely informed by the EU and are Indonesian stakeholders supportive of such a development?

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5 See, for instance, *Kompas,* 7 June 2007. Also former Foreign Minister Ali Alatas used this term. Alatas was Indonesia's representative in the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) appointed by ASEAN leaders in 2005 to prepare a blue print for the Charter. See *The Jakarta Post*, 17 January 2007.

6 Report of the Eminent Persons Group 2006, p. 4; see http://www.asean.org/19247.pdf (access 5 Sept. 2011).

The "New ASEAN Way": Localizing the External Normative Challenge

The aftermath of the Asian financial crisis has exposed Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders to ideas which many of them had rejected before as alien to the ASEAN Way. The following sections examine as *to what extent* they have appropriated these new ideas about regional integration. I will argue that rather than fully adopting these ideas, they have localized them to varying degrees. Three reasons account for this claim: First, wholesale ideational transformation is – as argued in the theoretical section – highly conditional and hence occurs relatively seldom. Second, localization is a likely response to external normative challenges, if the new foreign ideas are confronted with a "cognitive prior" that is deeply entrenched in the collective memory of the recipient society. The ASEAN Way and the ideas, norms and practices informing Indonesian foreign policy satisfy this criterion. And, third, localization is most likely to take place in political spaces which allow public discourse about new ideas. Newly democratic Indonesia also meets this requisite of localization. In accordance with Acharya's localization theory, the subsequent sections thus explore how in the debate on the ASEAN Charter Indonesian stakeholders framed the new ideas about regional integration and how they grafted and pruned them to make them compatible with the "cognitive prior" outlined earlier (Acharya 2009).

Framing the External Challenge

Framing is a communicative strategy of embedding ideas and norms in narratives promoting an envisaged policy agenda. It justifies why these ideas and norms are significant, how they may contribute to a better performance of existing institutions and why they are appropriate. As "framing can make a global norm appear local" (Acharya 2009: 13), Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders sought to frame post-Asian crisis ideas on Southeast Asian regionalism in ways that they find popular acceptance and at the same time help revitalizing the "cognitive prior." A closer look at the Indonesian debate of the ASEAN Charter reveals three major, albeit partly overlapping frames: First, a security-related frame which represents the ASEAN Charter as a response to global and regional power shifts. A rule-related second frame relates the ASEAN Charter to global normative shifts. It communicates that ASEAN will only be a legitimate organization if it democratizes regional governance. Closely related to this democracy-frame is a welfare and social justice-related third frame. The latter advocates people-centred regional governance as a precondition for transforming Southeast Asia into a socially more equitable and an ecologically more sustainable region.

The *security frame* is primarily found among academics and, here in particular, think tank researchers, and to a lesser extent in media editorials. In the view of these scholars, the main challenge facing Indonesia and, by coincidence, the rest of Southeast Asia is the rapid rise of China and India. Jusuf Wanandi and Rizal Sukma, for instance, both leading scholars of the country's premier think tank, the Jakarta-based Centre for Strategic and

International Studies (CSIS), unrelentingly intonated this theme. Even though doubts about China's benign intentions continue to linger in Indonesia's security community, Wanandi's and Sukma's point is not projecting a future military threat. The challenge China's and India's rise poses for Indonesia and the Southeast Asian region as a whole, is chiefly projected in geopolitical terms, that is, a growing political and economic influence of these two giants on the Southeast Asian region. Indonesia and the region, they conclude, can only cope with these challenges, if ASEAN is more than a "loose diplomatic institution and a limited economic entity."[7]

A more cohesive ASEAN presupposes a more consequent implementation of ASEAN decisions through greater compliance of member governments. ASEAN cooperation must increasingly rest on binding agreements, follow rules and transcend the lowest common denominator. The need for greater governance effectiveness calls for institutional reforms which in the view of many academics the Report of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) has well articulated. Foremost among these reforms are in their view the relaxation of ASEAN's sacred non-interference norm, the establishment of a dispute settlement mechanism, the possibility to impose sanctions on non-complying governments, majority voting to expedite decision-making, a greater budget[8] and to transform ASEAN into a more people-centred organization.

The final version of the Charter greatly frustrated these scholars. For them, the Charter strongly diluted the EPG blue print, thereby limiting the prospects of transforming ASEAN into a regional organization in which "delivery instead of declaration" prevails.[9] As a result, in a parliamentary hearing Wanandi and Sukma recommended to the House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) not to ratify the Charter, a position resonating well among many Indonesian international relations scholars.[10] Indonesia, argued Sukma, should leave the "golden cage" of ASEAN and break away from its long-cherished solidarity with the grouping. No longer should the association be the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy. Cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy must be its "national interest."[11] In what Sukma called a "post-ASEAN foreign policy,"[12] Indonesia should more rely on closer bilateral relations with Asia's rising powers, other forums in the Asia-Pacific such as the East Asian Summit (EAS), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and a still to be formed concert of major Asian powers, an Asian G8, a

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[7] Sukma in *The Jakarta Post*, 6 May 2008; 22 July 2008.

[8] Currently each member country contributes US$1 million to the ASEAN Secretariat. For Wanandi the practice that member's contributions are "defined by the least able member" is untenable as it incapacitates ASEAN in attending to its increasing scope of functions.

[9] *The Jakarta Post*, 21 December 2009.

[10] This assumption is based on conversations the author had with international relations scholars in the University of Indonesia Jakarta, Gajah Mada University Yogyakarta, Hasanuddin University Makassar, Andalas University Padang, University of Riau Pekan Baru and Mularwarman University Samarinda in March and April 2010. See also Sukma in *The Jakarta Post*, 22 July 2008; similar Aleksius Jemadu in *The Jakarta Globe*, 31 August 2009 and even a government representative, Djauhari Oratmangun, in *Suara Pembaruan*, 22 December 2009. However, by no means all subscribed to this view. Makmur Keliat, for instance, pleaded for ratification in the same hearing. Communication with the author, 29 April 2011.

[11] Wanandi in *The Jakarta Post*, 3 November 2008.

[12] *The Jakarta Post*, 30 June 2009.

proposal first ventilated by Wanandi.[13] Beyond the region Indonesia should deepen its influence in the G20, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Afro-Asian dialogue and the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).[14]

NGO representatives, but also many academics, journalists and, to a lesser extent, legislators framed their response to the ASEAN Charter in *normative* terms. Especially representatives of development and human rights NGOs discounted ASEAN as overly elitist and state-centered. They vociferously campaigned for a people-centered ASEAN in the meetings they had with the EPG and the Charter-writing High Level Task Force (HLTF) and at the annual meetings of civil society organizations such as the meanwhile suspended ASEAN People's Assembly (APA) and the ongoing Asian Civil Society Conference (ACSC). NGOs demand institutional channels for regular interaction between ASEAN leaders and officials of the ASEAN Secretariat, on the one hand, and civil society, on the other.[15] While such demands entail the expectation that advocates for the poorer segments of ASEAN's member societies will be empowered to contribute in a meaningful way to the formulation of regional policies, it is surprising that ASEAN officialdom was even able to inculcate their own, in fact, evasive participatory rhetoric into the NGOs discourse. The often used term "people-centered" has been appropriated from the technocratic New Public Management literature used by bilateral and multilateral development donor organizations and entails a top-down perspective of participation.[16] Much more than "participation in decision-making," which may dilute the effectiveness of governance by (bureaucratic) specialists, the concept of "people-centredness" entails "participation in implementation" in which the population is mobilized to actively support programs propagated from above.

Like many NGO representatives Charter critics in the academe also do not expect the Charter transforming ASEAN into a more people-centered organization. In Sukma's view, "many provisions in the Charter register a spirit of ASEAN as a leader-driven organization."[17] "The place of the people is nowhere to be found in the Charter. [.....] There is no provision in the Charter that establishes a mechanism by which the people could participate in the ASEAN process."[18] In the same direction points Wanandi's statement noting "that there is no article stating how society shapes ASEAN."[19]

But also legislators critically noted that the Charter "does not clearly explain ASEAN's relationship with its peoples."[20] Interestingly, however, in contrast to NGO representatives, legislators failed to call for an empowerment of civil society in regional governance. No legislator is on record to have publicly demanded the "democratization" of ASEAN decision-making. This may be attributed to the fact that even though the

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13 *The Jakarta Post*, 3 November 2008.

14 Wanandi in *Kompas*, 25 July 2008, p. 7; similar: M.H.B. Wirajuda in *The Jakarta Post*, 2 February 2009 and 26 May 2009.

15 Author's interview, 26 March 2010.

16 For an example, see Korten (1984).

17 *The Jakarta Post*, 22 July 2008.

18 *The Jakarta Post*, 22 July 2008; See also Sukma (2010: 47).

19 *Kompas*, 25 July 2008, p. 6; for a similar statement of Wanandi, see *The Jakarta Post*, 19 March 2009.

20 *Antara*, 9 February 2008.

interaction between parliamentarians and civil society representatives has increased markedly in the post-1998 period, many lawmakers still have an ambiguous attitude towards civil society. They regard civil society organizations as competitors for political influence challenging their legitimacy as representatives of the people.

Vice versa, civil society activists, too, harbour critical attitudes towards parliamentarians whom they rate as corrupt and part of the country's political elite. This explains why in their campaign for the democratization of ASEAN they have only reluctantly supported occasional calls for a parliamentarization of ASEAN. Interestingly, however, such calls came more frequently from scholars than from the legislators themselves. Indonesian lawmakers have supported the feeble moves of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization 2007:13) to strengthen interactions between the ASEAN Secretariat and AIPA,[21] but they did not demand more participatory powers in regional governance for legislators. This suggests a still largely national outlook of Indonesian legislators on regional integration.

Apart from a more people-centred ASEAN, human rights figure high in the normative frame. A major target of legislators' normative critique was the human rights mechanism envisaged by the Charter. Several legislators doubted that the Charter will foster a viable regional human rights regime. In the absence of an implementation mechanism, the human rights body was expected to be "toothless," lacking "clear guidelines of actions" and "a timeline when it should be formed."[22] Moreover, the human rights body would only allow promoting but not protecting human rights in the region. Lawmakers thus charged that Indonesian negotiators had "surrendered" the regional human rights regime to Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, countries known for their controversial human rights records (Susilo 2010: 66). As noted by Djoko Susilo (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN), the Charter does not address the question of "how the Burmese military junta can be persuaded to democratize the country and to improve its dismal human rights record."[23] Moreover, argued Djoko, without "rights protection and freedom of expression," ASEAN can hardly "become a people-oriented community."[24]

Many academics joined legislators' critique of the Charter's provisions on a regional human rights mechanism. In virtually each of their comments on the Charter Wanandi and Sukma noted that the Charter does not provide for a credible regional human rights body.[25] One year later, Sukma finds his misgivings corroborated in the tedious and acrimonious way ASEAN governments drafted the terms of reference for the envisaged ASEAN Human Rights Body.[26]

Finally, many NGO representatives, legislators and business spokespersons framed their

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[21] See, *The Jakarta Post*, 10 May 2006.

[22] *The Jakarta Post*, 6 February 2008.

[23] *The Jakarta Post*, 5 February 2008.

[24] *The Nation*, 1 March 2009 http://www.nationmultimedia.com/search/read.php?newsid=30096886&keyword=ASEAN+parliament (accessed 18 February 2010). Similar Djoko Susilo in *The Jakarta Post*, 10 December 2008.

[25] *The Jakarta Post*, 30 June 2009.

[26] *The Jakarta Post*, 22 December 2008.

views on the ASEAN Charter in a primarily material dimension. What may be called a *welfare frame* defined the utility of the Charter and ASEAN for the Indonesian people as main benchmark for assessing the Charter's relevance. In other words, it discussed who gets what and how much from ASEAN.

NGOs, for instance, reflected intensively how the Charter impacts on ASEAN's economic agenda, to what extent it will facilitate policies ensuring that economic growth will be distributed in a socially just manner, to what extent it will be ecologically sustainable and how it will contribute to upgrade the living conditions of the poor. With these parameters in mind, it is hardly surprising that many NGO voices heavily criticized what they regarded as the Charter's neoliberal economic agenda as embodied in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) project and its objective of creating a Single Market by 2015. Market opening, NGOs reasoned, will intensify foreign competition. The latter, in turn, jeopardizes the economic survival of local small-scale businesses, the backbone of the Indonesian economy. In May 2011, two-and-a-half years after Charter ratification, civil society organizations led by the Alliance for Global Justice filed a judicial review of Law No. 38/2008 on the Ratification of the ASEAN Charter with the Constitutional Court. The complainants took issue with the Charter's provisions on an ASEAN Single Market and the neoliberal economic policy it embodies which, they argue, violates the Indonesian Constitution and raises the specter of an annexation of the domestic market by foreigners.[27]

Surprisingly, legislators did not join NGOs in their opposition to the free-trade orientation of the Charter although the DPR had often taken a protectionist stance in the past.[28] But they shared NGO views that in particular the less affluent segments of the Indonesian population pay the price for regional integration as envisioned by the Charter. A topic frequently raised in this respect was Indonesian labour migration, certainly a critical concern given the fact that up to two million Indonesians work in neighbouring Malaysia, many of them undocumented (Rüland 2009: 383). Legislators also deplored that the Charter did not address other Indonesian grievances in its relations with neighbours: the "theft of Indonesia's natural wealth,"[29] in particular illegal logging and poaching fish in its territorial waters, and the extradition of fugitives who have fled to Singapore in order to evade corruption charges in Indonesia.[30] In conclusion, legislators conveyed to the public the message, often formulated in sweeping and populist language, that Indonesia is "on the receiving end in ASEAN matters."[31] However, this critical assessment by representatives of the foreign policy elite is not necessarily shared by the wider public. Even taking into account the rather rudimentary knowledge of the Indonesian public on ASEAN (Benny & Kamarulnizam 2011), it is striking that a staggering 83.5 percent of university students believe that ASEAN is benefiting Indonesia (Thompson & Thianthai 2008:17).

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[27] *Media Indonesia*, 5 May 2011.

[28] See, for instance, *The Jakarta Post*, 12 March 2001.

[29] PKS legislator Al Muzzamil Yusuf in *Kompas*, 5 February 2008, p. 11; similar Universitas Indonesia scholar Makmur Keliat in *Kompas,* 30 August 2010.

[30] *Kompas*, 5 February 2008, p. 11.

[31] *The Jakarta Post*, 3 January 2008, p. 21.

Academics largely abstained from evaluating the material benefits of the Charter for Indonesia. This may be attributed to the fact that, unlike politicians, they do not have to mobilize voters and thus have less need to resort to populist rhetoric. Surprising, however, was the silence of the business sector in the Charter debate. While economically outward-looking large firms seemed to be quite content with the Charter provisions on economic integration, the protectionist Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KADIN) and the organizations representing small-scale businesses questioned the utility of ASEAN in rather general terms. Former KADIN Chairman MS Hidayat, for instance, noted that Indonesian businesspeople have not received the benefits they expected from ASEAN as the latter's decisions and policies are often "irrelevant to the development of the national economy" and "inapplicable in practice."[32] One reason for this seeming indifference towards the Charter is that most Indonesian business associations, including KADIN, have only weak or no research capacities and are not very well equipped to study the effects of economic policies. Moreover, as especially small- and medium-scale firms are in constant struggle to survive, their orientation is short term and *ad hocist.* They worry about the issues of the day, but much less about a Single Market which will be implemented 7 years after the Charter was ratified and which, after all, affects only 20 percent of Indonesia's foreign trade.[33]

Grafting the New ASEAN Way

Grafting denotes in Acharya's localization theory the construction of a nexus between the old and the new ideas (Acharya 2004, 2009). In this section, I argue that the way in which the new external ideas on regionalism have been framed makes them compatible with the "orthodoxy" of Indonesian thinking on foreign policy and regional cooperation.

The democracy frame, to start with, tallies well with Indonesian notions of regional leadership and, surprisingly, even sovereignty. If Shils is right that in developing countries "foreign policy is primarily a policy of 'public relations,' designed not, as in advanced countries, to sustain the security of the state or enhance its power among other states, but to improve the reputation of the nation, to make others heed its voice, to make them pay attention to it and to respect it" (quoted in Weinstein 1976: 21), then the democracy frame precisely fulfils this function. Promoting democracy and human rights in ASEAN, norms which enjoy internationally great recognition, endows Indonesia with respectability and places its claims for regional leadership on an unassailable normative high ground. That Indonesia is currently the only Southeast Asian country rated as democratic by democracy indices, further buoys its leadership ambitions. It surrounds Indonesia with the aura of exceptionalism on which great powers often build their claims for (moral) superiority and leadership.

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Interestingly, the economic nationalism of major foreign policy stakeholders is not shared by other segments of the public. A survey of Indonesian university students' attitudes towards ASEAN found a 78 percent agreement of respondents with the ASEAN objective of "economic cooperation" (Thompson & Thiangthai 2007: 50).

Being a regional democracy and human rights promoter endows Indonesia with "soft power," an attribute already salient in pre-colonial rulers chronicles (Nguitragool 2011b). The Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) launched by the Indonesian government in 2008 precisely pursues this objective.[34] For many legislators, academics, the media and the government democracy and human rights promotion are thus less ends in themselves than part of a strategic agenda to enhance Indonesia's regional political stature.[35] Promoting noble norms elevates Indonesia to a role model which others may emulate or from which they may draw inspiration. This is what President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has in mind when he presents Indonesia as a country which successfully reconciles democracy, modernity and Islam.[36] The democracy frame thus complements and ennobles the hitherto prevailing rationales for regional leadership which primarily rest on physical attributes such as territory and population size.

In Indonesia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia leadership is a culturally highly rated concept as its inflationary use suggests. The leader, often depicted as a "father" in familial terms, is a pivotal figure in societies with organicist and corporatist legacies. Indonesia is certainly one of these societies, as argued in the section on the "cognitive prior" of Indonesia's foreign policy. The ensuing corporatist order reached its climax during the Suharto era (1966-1998). Although post-Asian crisis democratization has broken up major institutional bulwarks of state corporatism, the collectivist ideology underlying organic state theory and corporatism still lingers in the minds of many Indonesians. It is an ideational source of the strong consensual dimension of Indonesia's democracy and it can be found in widespread popular aversion against party pluralism, legislatures and liberal ideology. Finally, leadership also correlates positively with the *bebas-aktif* doctrine. It is the essence of leadership to pursue an active foreign policy, which is characterized by political presence in international issues, and to act independently from external influence.

A foreign policy promoting democracy and human rights seems to indicate a fundamental departure from the erstwhile uncontested non-interference norm of the ASEAN Way. It also suggests that Indonesia is no longer concerned with infringements on its own national sovereignty and that of other ASEAN member countries. Closer scrutiny reveals that the latter is indeed the case. The Indonesian government has, for instance, repeatedly criticized the Burmese military junta for its dictatorial rule and flagrant human rights violations.[37] But while an interventionist policy may undermine the sovereignty of others, it would strengthen Indonesian sovereignty. As the

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[34] On the significance of "soft power" for Indonesia, see Opening Statement, H.E. Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia at the Inaugural Session of Bali Democracy Forum, Nusa Dua, Bali, 10 December 2008 http://balidemocracyforum.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=98:opening-statement-by-he-dr-susilo-bambang-yudhoyono-president-of-the-republic-of-indonesia-at-the-inaugural-session-of-the-bali-democracy-forum&catid=40:article&Itemid=137 (accessed 14 August 2010) and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marty Natalegawa in *The Jakarta Post,* 27 January 2010.

[35] Referring to the instrumental use of democracy promotion, see Jemadu in *The Jakarta Post*, 11 December 2008 and Sukma in *The Jakarta Post*, 21 December 2009.

[36] See MHB.Wirajuda and D. Hendropriyono in *The Jakarta Post*, 22 November 2009.

[37] See, *inter alia, The Jakarta Post*, 28 February 2008, 4 March 2008, 15 March 2008, 12 March 2010.

"cheerleader of democracy"[38] in Southeast Asia, it would be Indonesia that intervenes, while at the same time being immune to interference by fellow ASEAN members. The relaxation of the non-interference norm is thus well compatible with long cherished Indonesian ideas about the centrality of national sovereignty in its foreign policy. However, not all contributors to the Charter debate agree that Indonesia is indeed the shining democratic knight in Southeast Asia it claims to be. Scholars, NGO activists and occasionally business representatives have repeatedly argued against this self-congratulatory attitude that the government must first tackle the deficiencies of Indonesian democracy such as endemic corruption, impunity of security agencies and harassment of minorities before legitimately becoming a role model in the region.[39] "Indonesia," quipped human rights activist Rafendi Djamin, "is progressive within ASEAN and Asia, but still very conservative at the international level."[40]

The security frame and its main theme – the rise of new Asian powers – connect well with the power-sensitivity and the sentiment of vulnerability of Indonesian foreign policy elites. It resonates with the the *wayang* topos of the brave ruler who is surrounded by evil forces (Pye 1985: 114). President Yudhoyono's rhetorical figure portraying Indonesia as a country that is "navigating a turbulent sea,"[41] also refers to this topos (Tan 2007). Greater effectiveness of ASEAN cooperation and deeper regional integration would boost the competitive position of Indonesia and ASEAN in the global economy and strengthen bargaining power in international forums. This has several advantages: ASEAN would in this perspective serve as an institutional backup for the Indonesian foreign policy agenda and with a united ASEAN Indonesia would become a more significant actor and attractive partner in the eyes of extra-regional powers. The international prestige of Indonesia would increase, if it leads an organization that has a reputation of effectiveness. At the same time would greater regional cohesion in consonance with a relaxation of the non-interference norm enable Indonesia to exert greater control over its immediate neighborhood, as envisaged in the concentric circles doctrine. As the regional leader Indonesia could enhance its influence on the policies of its regional partners, bringing them in line with Indonesian national interest and simultaneously make sure that a more legalistic and rules-based cooperation closes loopholes for non-compliance. Especially the promotion of democracy and human rights would be better enforceable against the resistance of recalcitrant fellow members. From the Indonesian perspective it would thus be more difficult for external Great Powers to wield influence in Southeast Asia, to drive wedges in ASEAN unity and to challenge ASEAN's centrality in the region.

Finally, the welfare frame resonates with an old source of government legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The creation of a prosperous society. Wealth and prosperity have legitimated pre-colonial Indonesian kingdoms a well as the Suharto regime. Tellingly, Suharto's New Order collapsed when due to the Asian financial crisis the regime could no

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38 *The Jakarta Post*, 19 August 2008.

39 See, for instance, Mario Masaya in *The Jakarta Post*, 11 December 2008 and 21 December 2009 and KADIN executive John A. Prasetio in *The Jakarta Post*, 29 September 2009.

40 Cited in Sukma (2011: 116).

41 See, *The Jakarta Post*, 2 January 2007.

longer honor its developmental promises. While the vocal demand of many NGO representatives that the Charter must facilitate the creation of a more prosperous Southeast Asia does not contradict the intentions of the Charter writers, it is accentuated differently. The Charter drafters chiefly focused on economic growth, while their critics advocate a more equitable development, in other words, seek greater social justice. These ideas also have their roots in the "cognitive prior," in economic populism such as Sukarno's Marhaenism and the notions of a "people's economy" *(ekonomi kerakyatan)*, but also the cooperative movement and Marxist, Socialist and *dependencia* traditions of various shades. Most of this thought has been suppressed by the Suharto regime, but – except for full-fledged Marxism - has staged a revival in the *Era Reformasi.* Yet, all these anti-liberal economic ideas tally well with the organicist and collectivist state theory of pre- and post-colonial Indonesia. They dovetail the collectivist provisions of the Indonesian Constitution (for instance, Article 33) and the anti-colonial sentiments of the early Republic where liberal capitalism was regarded as essentially exploitative and a characteristic of colonial subjugation.

Pruning

To make ideas and norms compatible with the "cognitive prior" they have to be pruned. In other words, some elements of the original idea have to be cut and left out in the new ideational amalgam. In order to localize the norms seemingly associated with an alien European type of regional integration, Indonesian stakeholders had to prune both, the foreign ideas as well as the established orthodoxy of the ASEAN Way. They did so in three respects.

First, and most significantly, they pruned from the European model the supranational dimension. Although many Indonesian stakeholders vocally lobbied for ASEAN reforms transcending pure intergovernmentalism, there is no genuine movement towards the establishment of supranational bodies. Proposals such as majority voting, sanctions against non-complying members and a stronger secretariat may, if implemented, have a centralizing effect on ASEAN, but they do not entail a transfer of sovereignty to a higher level of decision-making as implied in Haas' classical definition (Haas 1958). Yet, as we have seen, a majority of ASEAN member governments has actively prevented such centralizing reforms.

Pruning also took place with regard to the idealist underpinnings of European thinking on regional cooperation. For most Indonesian stakeholders regional cooperation is not driven by the functional need of solving or mitigating cross-border problems, a major rationale for deepening regional integration stressed in the liberal European discourse. Quite to the contrary, Wanandi, for instance, stressed the important role of the state – not of regional cooperation arrangements - in solving future problems.[42]

Vice versa, also the ASEAN Way was up for pruning. Many of the reforms Indonesian stakeholders supported in the ASEAN Charter debate would weaken, but not completely abolish the non-interference norm. Due to the leadership role Indonesia envisaged for

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42 *The Jakarta Post,* 6 May 2008.

itself, it would not mind sovereignty losses of ASEAN fellow members, but at no point would Indonesian foreign policy elites tolerate the interference of others into their country's internal affairs. In other words, Indonesian elites are carefully calibrating the concept of regional integration in a way that it will never jeopardize the national interest.

Localizing Regionalism, the ASEAN Charter and the Resurgence of Indonesian Nationalism

Localization is an amalgam of new and old ideas, a new third. Although it cannot be discounted that under favorable conditions localization may be a transitional stage in a trajectory ending in wholesale ideational transformation, which leads to full identity change of the recipients of foreign ideas, it normally modernizes and thereby revitalizes major elements of the "cognitive prior" (Acharya 2009). This is also what happened with the appropriation of European ideas of regional integration in the Indonesian debate on the ASEAN Charter. The appropriated European ideas have been made compatible with the ASEAN Way and age-honored Indonesian foreign policy doctrines. In fact, one may argue a Southeast Asian regionalism with European institutional traits is chiefly a vehicle facilitating Indonesia's ambitions for regional leadership and a greater international role.

This assessment is corroborated by a powerful resurgence of nationalism, a frequent occurrence in new democracies as argued by Snyder (Snyder 2000). Indonesia's neo-nationalist turn is a response to half a decade of humiliation and decline in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis and shared by most foreign policy stakeholders. Even civil society organizations join this discourse as their strong penchant for economic nationalism suggests. As a consequence of the severity of the financial crisis Indonesia had to subscribe to IMF conditionalities, while the East Timor debacle, separatist rebellions, endemic domestic violence and terrorist attacks gave rise to widespread concerns that the country is on the verge of becoming a failing state. But the nationalist resurgence is also driven by a new sense of pride over Indonesia's more recent achievements: the successful democratic transition, for which Indonesia has been frequently acclaimed, the economic recovery, the successes in the fight against terrorism and the pacification of the majority of separatist rebellions. These achievements, in consonance with the country's size, have spurred Indonesian elite's self-confidence and revitalized their leadership claims.

That nationalism is the driving force of Indonesia's current foreign policy agenda, and that – with the exception of NGOs - Indonesian foreign policy elites instrumentalize regionalism for the country's leadership claims is further affirmed by Indonesia's response to two intensively discussed issues: The dispute with Malaysia over the resource-rich Ambalat Block in the Sulawesi Sea and the economic consequences of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area. Both issues have strongly spurred nationalist sentiments. While in the Ambalat dispute most Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders plead for *bilateral* negotiations, and not the recourse to regional dispute settlement mechanisms,

even moderate observers, neither legislators nor scholars and government representatives completely rule out the use of military force should diplomacy fail to achieve results. For Indonesians such results can only consist in the recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty over the contested maritime area. The old duality of *diplomasi* and *perjuangan* is reconstituted in this response. Ultra-nationalist circles, including legislators, even used the dispute with Malaysia for a rehearsal of *konfrontasi* rhetoric. The slogan of "*Ganyang Malaysia*,"[43] emotional rhetoric accusing the Malaysian government of trampling on Indonesian dignity, the burning of Malaysian flags, the mobilization of volunteers to fight against Malaysia and comparisons of Indonesian and Malaysian firepower even in serious political magazines[44] are part of a nationalistic hype which overarches the regionalism discourse.[45]

No less nationalistic was the response of large parts of the Indonesian public to the full implementation of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) on 1 January 2010. Especially business organizations, supported by labor unions, members of the academe and even the government demanded a re-negotiation of the agreement because they believed that the heightened Chinese competition is detrimental to Indonesia's economy.[46] As China and ASEAN partners ruled out renegotiation, business representatives bluntly demanded the creation of non-tariff trade barriers in order to avoid a flooding of the Indonesian market with what they discredited as cheap and substandard Chinese products.[47] The strong nationalist backlash on the government's cautious neoliberal trade agenda has forced Indonesian authorities to resort to a policy of "reverse localization." As a strategy to make the government's trade policies palpable to the public, "reverse localization" entailed the framing of the government's neoliberal agenda in the rhetoric of economic nationalism (Chandra 2011). Reverse localization is thus an attempt to legitimize new ideas by framing them in the ideational orthodoxy. How crucial such a strategy is, can be appreciated in the light of the fact that less than a majority of surveyed Indonesian university students (48.6 percent) believe that the country's membership in ASEAN benefits them personally (Thompson & Thianthai 2008:18).

The two episodes demonstrate that a majority of Indonesian stakeholders only subscribe to the idea of legalizing regional governance if Indonesia expects to benefit from it. Both issues also suggest that Indonesia's *bebas-aktif* doctrine still dominates the country's foreign policy agenda and that the doctrine's inherent predilection for utmost flexibility stands in the way of a more rule-based process of regional integration.

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[43] *Kompas,* 4 September 2009, p. 6; *DetikNews*, 30 August 2010; *Tempo Interaktif*, 6 March 2005, 10 March 2005, 14 March 2005, 3 September 2010.

[44] *Tempo Interaktif*, 8 March 2005.

[45] In a survey covering six Indonesian cities, over 50 percent of the respondents regarded Malaysia as a "threat" while only 2 percent rated China as a threat (Benny & Kamalrunizam 2011).

[46] *Tempo Interaktif*, 12 August 2009; 1 December 2009; *The Jakarta Post*, 5 April 2010.

[47] *Jakarta Post*, 2 January 2010 and 5 March 2010; *Kabar Bisnis*, 18 May 2011 http://www.kabarbisnis.com/read/2820369 (accessed 12 June 2011).

Conclusion

The paper has shown that since the Asian financial crisis of 1997/1998 and the fall of the Suharto regime in May 1998, Indonesian foreign policymaking has become a more pluralistic and transparent process than in the past. At the same time, major tenets of regional cooperation as embodied in the ASEAN Way have come under scrutiny. Indonesian foreign policy stakeholders began to increasingly question the key norms of the ASEAN Way, in particular the non-interference norm. Many of them pleaded for reforms that seemed to appropriate European concepts of regional integration. Yet, the paper also showed that European ideational imports have been re-constructed in a way that they become compatible with the "cognitive prior" of both the ASEAN Way as well as Indonesian foreign policy doctrines and practices. With the exception of development NGOs, virtually all stakeholder groups regard a reformed Southeast Asian regionalism in the first place as a vehicle to support Indonesian regional leadership claims and ambitions for a greater international role. These ambitions are driven by a resurgent nationalism which reflects recent experiences of vulnerability and performance. A seemingly Europeanized regionalism provides an ideational blend which refines, modernizes and revalidates a foreign policy agenda which is much more impregnated by the realist paradigm than by idealist concepts of collective action and interstate cooperation.

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