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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the question whether ASEAN as a regional organization is a provider of regional security governance. There is already a lively theoretical debate on the question whether ASEAN is a relevant and effective security organization and opinions on this question considerably diverge (see, e.g. Acharya and Tan 2006; Kang 2003; Martin Jones and Smith 2007). In this paper, I ask whether the concept of regional security governance provides a better theoretical fit for the empirical security practices of the member states. I argue that the governance concept provides a weak fit, primarily because ASEAN's security understanding and conceptions are orthogonal to the assumptions of the global governance concept. While one could hardly speak of a 'a' governance concept, governance approaches appear to converge on the central assumption that actors actively contribute to it. In the case of ASEAN security has been achieved through a set of norms and security practices that do not require active cooperation but only restraint from specific actions and the commitment to strengthening individual state-capacity. Theoretically, to speak of security governance through ASEAN thus constitutes conceptual overstretch. It is a useful heuristic, however, to reflect on the concept of 'state' in IR theories. I do not argue that ASEAN has not produced security in the region, I argue that the framework of security governance is an inadequate concept to evaluate that security function.

Key words

Regionalism, ASEAN, Southeast Asia, Regional Security Governance, International Relations

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Introduction

Established on 8 August 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is arguably the most successful regional organization among developing countries.¹ It currently comprises ten member states and a population of 600 million people, 8.8% of the world population. In comparative perspective, and especially during the early 1990s when most ASEAN members collectively experienced an ‘economic miracle’ and became part of the East Asian development model, ASEAN was commonly perceived to be an alternative to the European model of regionalism (Camroux and Lechervy 1996; Gilson 2005; Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2005). Whereas the EU appeared to represent ‘regionalism’, a government-driven process of successive pooling of sovereignty into common institutions (integration), Asia represented ‘regionalization’, a business and production-network driven process of regional cooperation (Aggarwal 2005; Katzenstein 2005: 44). It might therefore come as a surprise that scholarly debates on ASEAN still revolve around the key question whether “ASEAN exists” (Chesterman 2008; Martin Jones and Smith 2007).

This paper is concerned with the question whether ASEAN as a regional organization is a provider of regional security governance. The concept of ‘governance’ is theoretically sophisticated and applies to a wide range of potential entities, such as states, regional arrangements and international institutions (Fürst 2007; Gourevitch 1999; Grugel 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2001). Approaches to global governance usually assume that many problems that nation-states face today have reached a global scale that cannot be solved by any single state alone. Political scientists and IR scholars have thus become concerned with various governance arrangements that might be able to provide solutions for global or regional problems beyond intergovernmental cooperation. In this context, the governance concept has also entered theoretical debates on ASEAN without much reflection on the utility of the governance concept for ASEAN as regional organization. There is already a lively theoretical debate on the question whether ASEAN is a relevant and effective security organization and opinions on this question considerably diverge (see, e.g. Acharya and Tan 2006; Kang 2003; Martin Jones and Smith 2007). In this paper, I ask whether the concept of regional security governance provides a better theoretical fit for the empirical security practices of the member states. I argue that there is some evidence that member states’ security practices have contributed to regional security. However, from the perspective of mainstream approaches to international and regional security, it is unclear through which causal mechanism this has occurred. The paper then explores the concept of regional security governance and asks whether this concept might provide the better concept to explain what occurs on the ground. I argue that the governance concept provides a weak fit for the security practices in the region, primarily because ASEAN’s security understanding and conceptions are orthogonal to the assump-

¹ This is revised version of a paper first presented at the international conference ‘Regional Organizations and Security: Conceptions and Practices’, organized by the ETH Zurich, Switzerland, 17-18 June 2011.

tions of the global governance concept. While one could hardly speak of a ‘a’ governance concept, governance approaches appear to converge on the central assumption that actors actively contribute to it. In the case of ASEAN security has been achieved through a set of norms and security practices that does not require active cooperation but only restraint from specific actions and the commitment to strengthening individual state-capacity. Theoretically, to speak of security governance through ASEAN thus constitutes conceptual overstretch. It is a useful heuristic, however, to reflect on the concept of ‘state’ in IR theories. I do not argue that ASEAN has not produced security in the region, I argue that the framework of security governance is an inadequate concept to evaluate that security function.

The paper is organized as follows: I first provide a brief historical overview of the regional organization, and describe the self-understanding of security as it is defined by ASEAN members in key documents of the regional organization. Here, I argue that the Association’s norms reflects a sovereignty regime designed specifically for post-colonial states that need to build up empirical statehood. This term has been introduced into the IR literature by Robert H. Jackson in the early 1990s to describe a relative recent development in international law: the emergence of an alternative sovereignty regime that acknowledges post-colonial states and guarantees their existence even if they lack the basic preconditions for effective statehood, like effective government control over people and a territory (see also Ayoob 1989; Jackson 1993). The second part discusses the limitations of major approaches to IR and introduces the concept of governance as a potential competitor. This section then shows that the Association’s security conception lies orthogonal to the key assumptions of the governance concept. It is useful to discuss the state-centric assumptions of existing concepts, however.

Historical overview

There is little dispute about the primary security threats that ASEAN members faced during the Cold War and thereafter. According to Buzan and Waever (2003: 93-100; 128-143) regional security in Asia exhibits a “realist quality”, where “old-fashioned concerns about power still dominate the security agendas of most of the regional powers, and war remains a distinct, if constrained, possibility” (Buzan and Waever 2003: 93). During the Cold War, the Southeast Asian region was – like the other regions Northeast and South Asia – heavily penetrated by superpower rivalry, so much that its security dynamics were heavily affected by it. Southeast Asia effectively split into a Communist (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) and a Western oriented sub-region (Indonesia after 1965, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand). In Southeast Asia, several great powers exerted their influence beyond the two superpowers US and Soviet Union. China was inhibited in its power projection until the end of its own civil war in 1950, but then exerted some influence in Southeast Asia (most visibly through the sanctioning of Vietnam’s invasion in Cambodia in 1979). Japan, as the economically most advanced state in the region also wielded some influence, but primarily through financial assistance. After the Cold War, it was China that most benefited from the decline of Soviet power and the reduction of US

troops in the early 1990s.

The formation of ASEAN in 1967 was the beginning of Southeast Asia transformation from a conflict formation to a security regime (Buzan and Waever 2003: 97). At the time, Southeast Asia was a major war zone, as illustrated by the Indochina wars and the Indonesian *konfrontasi* against Malaysia (1963-1966). Since then, Southeast Asian states had experienced a number of militarized inter-state conflicts (most recently between Thailand and Cambodia), although these conflicts were neither so protracted or great as to prevent cooperation altogether.

ASEAN, according to some observers, was a truly ‘indigenous’ organization built on Asian norms of non-interference, non-alignment and the principle to avoid public discussion of contentious issues as agreed upon during the Bandung Conference of 1955 (Acharya 2009: 78-89). The Association’s founding document, the Bangkok Declaration – a short document of less than two full pages length - defined the goal of the regional organization vaguely: The aim was, most importantly, to “accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavors in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community” (Bangkok Declaration 1967: Art. 1). An important goal was to provide a unified front against external encroachments, to insulate the region from superpower competition and to provide stability for its members so that they could politically survive and economically thrive (Hoadley and Rüländ 2006).

ASEAN did not make much headway for about ten years and after its first decade, external observers credited the organization for a single achievement: that it had survived (Melchor 1978; Poon-Kim 1977). However, according to some observers this changed with the onset of the Cambodian conflict and – more importantly – the changed role of the US in Southeast Asia after the loss of the Vietnam War in 1975 and the rise of Vietnam as a Communist state. External threats to Southeast Asian governments increased after the US lost the Vietnam War and the Soviet Union began to exert greater influence over Vietnam. Now, the primary threat came from outside the region and not from within the states. This is the more obvious as most of the simmering internal conflicts within Southeast Asian states had ended or declined by that time (see Table 1). ASEAN members now feared Vietnamese support for internal Communist subversion movements, which kicked member governments into action. Their international environment was fundamentally shifting. According to Shaun Narine “ASEAN truly started to function as an international organization” (Narine 1997: 968). In the following years, and until the signing of the Paris Peace Accords of 1991, which officially ended the Cambodian conflict, ASEAN carved out for itself a diplomatic role in the management of the Cambodian question, and members managed to maintain their solidarity. It is significant, however, that ASEAN members were not united in their threat perceptions, most importantly regarding China. Whereas Thailand due to its conflict with Vietnam always regarded China as a potential ally, for Indonesia and Malaysia the reverse was the case. In part due to their substantial numbers of ethnic Chinese, they felt wary of China and its determination to spread the revolution through its external support for revolutionary movements. ASEAN successfully lobbied the United Nations (UN) against official recognition of the Cambodi-

an government installed by Vietnam, and supported the Coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea led by exiled Prince Norodom Sihanouk, even if this meant support for Khmer Rouge, who were part of the Coalition government (Narine 1997).

After the Cold War ASEAN was seen as becoming an essential part of an East Asian regionalism and actively started to shape regional institutions. Key factors influencing institution-building in the 1990s were the concerns of ASEAN member states about the continuing US presence in the region and economic and military rise of China (Beeson 2010: 63). ASEAN became actively involved in the set-up of interregional and intraregional discussion forums (Katsumata 2006; Pempel 2005; Solingen 2008). Institutionalization of the Asian security complex occurred according to the ideas and practices of ASEAN, which assumed the 'drivers' seat' because of competition for hegemony between China, Japan and the US. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), established in 1994, brings together twenty-eight states in a Forum dealing with Asian security issues (Katsumata 2006; Simon 2006).² Inter-regional dialogue forums like the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM 1996) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC 1989) complemented the web of regional institutions (Aggarwal 1993; Hänggi, Roloff, and Rüländ 2006). ASEAN Plus Three (China, South Korea, Japan) institutionalized a similar discussion forum between ASEAN members and East Asian governments (Nabers 2003).

The fundamental military and economic shifts associated with the global ascendance of China and India have raised concerns about a power transition at the top of the global hierarchy of states, and provided great impetus to ASEAN regionalism. ASEAN started to actively engage China in international institutions, most importantly through the ASEAN Regional Forum established in 1993. It was here that ASEAN is said to have socialized China into the ASEAN Way, a claim that is heavily disputed in academic debates (Acharya 1995; Johnston 1999; Martin Jones and Smith 2007). At the same time, ASEAN members ensured through the overlay of regional institutions with US and other states' membership that the influence of China would be balanced. The region has seen a virtual proliferation of institutions for security management and the emergence of an informal network of policy-makers constituting "track-2 diplomacy" (Evans 2005; Job 2003). The Association seeks to both to prevent a repeat of great power intervention in their domestic and regional affairs as well as a future calamitous conflict between the United States and China. This has resulted in 'multi-pronged engagement' seeking to engage all major regional powers. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), first adopted in 1976 and until the adoption of the ASEAN Charter in 2008 the only formal treaty of the organization, has become the center piece of regional security governance (Haacke and Williams 2009). TAC commits members to the principles of the ASEAN Way, like resolving disputes peacefully and abiding respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-interference. China was the first major power to sign the TAC in 2003, a step that marked a major reassessment of Beijing's earlier troubling assertiveness over territorial claims. The US joined

² ARF participants are as November 2010 (in alphabetical order): Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, United States, Vietnam.

the TAC in 2010, and even the European Union has signed it, after initial reluctance. The latest achievement in this regard is the ASEAN Charter (2008) envisioning an integrated ASEAN Community (AC) along the lines of the European Community. Initially triggered by the financial crisis of 1997-1998, the ASEAN Charter answers the concerns of ASEAN member states that the Association will disintegrate and become irrelevant given the centrifugal forces of India and China.

Content and Nature of Conception of Security

Against this background of a realist security complex, it is interesting to look at South-east Asian governments' own understanding of national and regional security. As will become evident, members did not aim at increasing their military and political power in the region, nor did they seek welfare gains through cooperative solutions to problems created by interdependence. One important thread running through ASEAN statements and informing security conceptions and practices among members is the need, felt by its members, to build up 'empirical statehood' to use a concept introduced by Robert Jackson. Jackson argues that although ex-colonial states have been enfranchised and possess the same external rights and possibilities as other sovereign states (juridical statehood), they in effect lack the institutional features of sovereign states. Governments essentially lack state capacities and institutional authority to guarantee their populations security from civil wars or economic well-being. Ex-colonial states, according to Jackson, only had limited 'empirical statehood' (Jackson 1993: 21). Juridical statehood had an important effect on international relations, according to Jackson: Ex-colonial states would not be allowed to juridically disappear, like earlier states had been. They could not be deprived of sovereignty as a result of war, conquest, partition or colonialism. The new sovereignty regime was an "insurance policy for marginal states" where elites were beneficiaries of non-competitive international norms (Jackson 1993: 24). The security conception of ASEAN essentially is embedded in and continues to form a part of this new sovereignty regime. While the term 'regional resilience' is certainly a concept localized by Southeast Asian elites (Acharya 2004), the basic concept that Southeast Asian states belong to a different category than developed states resonates with the new sovereignty regime designed for post-colonial states.

While being part of this new global sovereignty regime, members localized the concept and gave it their own meaning. ASEAN have adopted a concept of security that has been described as 'comprehensive security', but they adopted their own term to denote this concept, 'national resilience' and 'regional resilience' (Hoadley 2006: 17): National resilience means a focus on domestic self-strengthening. It has been described as an inward-looking concept, based on the proposition that national security lies not in military alliances but in self-reliance deriving from domestic factors such as economic and social development, political stability and a sense of nationalism. Some Southeast Asian governments consequently noted that national security not only included the absence from Communist or other subversion or armed separatism, but also the slowdown of economic development, drug addiction, illegal immigration or religious extremism (Hoadley 2006:

17). As internal threats to domestic security were declining, the countries adopted a more outward looking approach to security coined ‘regional resilience’. Regional resilience rested on the assumption that to achieve truly national independence, Southeast Asian governments had to guarantee themselves a considerable measure of autonomy and abstain from intervention. This included a commitment that they would not interfere in each other’s affairs and that they would equally not give great powers, such as China, the United States and the Soviet Union an opportunity to interfere into the region (Jetschke 2006: 292).

It becomes clear that the territorially defined nation-state has been the early object of security governance. It was only over time that the Southeast Asian ‘region’ became a referent object for security in the discourse of Southeast Asian governments. As post-colonial states, Southeast Asian governments sought up and foremost state security from internal threats to governmental authority and territorial disintegration (Jetschke 2011), a need that is likely to be maintained in the near future (Drexler 2009). This concept has some empirical validation, as the main conflicts in Southeast Asia (even more pronounced since the accession of the Indochinese countries Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos) were internal to the states themselves and not external. Almost all of the old non-communist ASEAN members have had to cope with communist insurgencies during the Cold War; given the structure of Philippine society, communist insurgents are active in the Philippines until today. Myanmar and Cambodia as new members, most importantly, have a long history of civil war (see Table 1). The governments of Myanmar and the Philippines have seen their authority continuously challenged by armed movements. Since 1967 and 1970 respectively, there has not been a single year without rebellion.

Table 1: Militarized Disputes ASEAN members, adapted from PRIO Armed Conflict Data Set

YEAR	Location	International	Civil	Contested Issue
1967-1998	Cambodia		KHMER ROUGE, KPRLF	
1980-1991	Cambodia	Vietnam	FUNCINPEC, KPRLF, KR	
1977-1978	Cambodia, Thailand	Thailand		Common Border
1975-1976	Cambodia, Vietnam	Vietnam		Common Border
1975-1998	Indonesia		Fretilin	East Timor
1990-2005	Indonesia		GAM	Aceh
1967-1981	Indonesia		OPM	West Papua
1986	Laos, Thailand	Thailand		Common Border
1987	Laos, Thailand	Thailand		Common Border
1989-1990	Laos		LRM	
		South Vietnam,		
1967-1973	Laos	USA	Pathet Lao	
1974-1975; 1981	Malaysia		CPM	
1988	Malaysia	Thailand		Common Border
1967-1972; 1992	Myanmar		ANLP, CPA, BMA	Arakan
1967-1988	Myanmar		CPB	
1967-1992	Myanmar		KIO	Kachin
1967-1984; 1996-				
2009	Myanmar		SSA, SURA, SSNLO, TRC	Shan
1973-1981	Myanmar		LNUP	Lahu
1974-1977	Myanmar		RPF	Arakan
1976-2009	Myanmar		KNU	Karen
1985-1995	Myanmar		MTA	Shan
1990	Myanmar		NMSP	Mon
1994	Myanmar		RSO	Arakan
1990-1994	Myanmar		ABSDF	
1996	Myanmar		BMA	Mon
1987, 1992, 1996,				
2005	Myanmar		KNPP	Karenni
2009	Myanmar		MNDAA	Kokang
2006	North Vietnam, South Vietnam		CPN-M	
	North Vietnam, South			
1967-1974	Vietnam	North Korea	South Vietnam	South Vietnam
1996	Philippines	Brazzaville		Bougainville
1993-2009	Philippines		ASG	Mindanao
1969-2009	Philippines		CPP	
1970-1988; 1999-				
2009	Philippines		MIM, MNLF	Mindanao
1974-1982	Thailand		CPT	
2003-2008	Thailand		Patani insurgents	Patani

Empirical statehood was also considered to contribute to regional security. In the understanding of ASEAN members, strong nation-states that were regionally united were the best guarantee against regional war resulting from external interference. One of the main characteristics of ASEAN's security concept was that it embarked on a policy to collectively keep great powers out of the region. Political division was seen as a primary entrance door to great power intervention, and hence governments united to speak with one voice. This can be deduced from a key theme of their joint regional endeavor: to gain weight - or standing - in international affairs, to let members' voice be heard in international affairs and to unite sufficiently so as to give great powers no opportunity to intervene in a member states' internal affairs. These goals were intended to ensure the survival of member states in an environment that was perceived as extremely hostile to new states that had just gained independence. With the notable exception of Thailand, all Southeast Asian states had been colonized, either by Great Britain (Malaysia, Singapore), the Netherlands (Indonesia) or the US (Philippines). Adam Malik, Presidium Minister for International Affairs of Indonesia pointed out that regional cooperation would allow the grouping to "stand on its own feet, strong enough to defend itself against any negative influence from outside the region" (Adam Malik, as quoted in *The Founding of ASEAN*, <http://www.aseansec.org/20024.htm>). This is also reflected in ASEAN's most recent statements: The joint ASEAN statement of 08 May 2011 articulates as goal to establish a common platform allowing members to take a "more coordinated, cohesive, and coherent ASEAN position on global issues of common interest and concern, based on a shared ASEAN global view", which would be "ASEAN's common voice" in relevant multilateral fora. The joint statement also emphasizes the need to develop an ASEAN capacity to contribute and respond to key global issues of common interest and concern. (ASEAN 2011)

At the same time, it needs to be emphasized that taking common positions toward outside powers has always been a commitment to rhetorical unity only; it did not include mutual formal security guarantees. ASEAN's approach to security cooperation was distinctly individualist and self-determined in the sense that it relied on individual undertakings, not collective defense. Indonesia and the Philippines insisted that ASEAN would neither become a security pact serving only great powers nor provide mutual assistance to its members. "Each state must look after its own security" according to Philippine foreign minister Narciso Ramos (as quoted in Acharya 2009: 89). Members embarked on an official policy of creating a nuclear weapons free zone (Declaration on a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, ZOPFAN, 1971), with little bearing on mutual security guarantees that included the suspected stationing of nuclear weapons (as in the Philippines). Despite an official consensus on the need to prevent great power intervention, ASEAN members respected each others' individual security agreements with great powers. Although official statements continued to deny a military role for ASEAN (Acharya 2009: 90), the regional security concept did not foreclose bilateral military cooperation or the continuation of defense pacts with outside powers like the US and Great Britain. ASEAN members relied on the security umbrella supplied by US (US-Philippines mutual defense treaties of 1957/1983; Thailand-US Thanat-Rusk communiqué of 1962) and to a lesser degree by the UK (Five-Power Defense Agreement between the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore).

The 'ASEAN Way' of cooperation became a trademark of the regional organization well beyond Southeast Asia. The ASEAN Way has been promoted as a specific form of cooperation emphasizing informal rules, consensual decision-making, loose structure and conflict avoidance instead of conflict management (Acharya 1995). The key words characterizing cooperation are 'restraint' in the form of a commitment to non-interference, 'respect' for each member states as expressed through frequent consultation and 'responsibility' as expressed in the consideration of each member state's concerns and interests (Narine 1997: 965). Given member states' post-colonial ('subaltern') identity (Ayoob 1995), the Westphalian state became the centerpiece around which standards of appropriate behavior for regional cooperation have been designed: all the organization's declarations and official statements emphasize Westphalian norms such as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, and non-interference. The ASEAN Way of cooperation stresses the principle of flexible adaptation and circumvents over-institutionalization and bureaucratization. ASEAN cooperation is strictly intergovernmental. Consensus is the dominant decision rule, although various projects (especially in the economic realm) allow for a departure from the principle to 'unanimity' in the form of an ASEAN Minus X-decision rule.

Debating Security Governance

Proponents of various theoretical approaches to IR have explored the explanatory power of their respective theories. Mainstream IR theories all seek to explain the relative stability of the Southeast Asian region in the sense of a substantial reduction of bilateral militarized disputes or war or the absence of a major war as the dependent variable. To sum up this debate, one can argue that mainstream IR approaches reveal limited explanatory power for ASEAN. There is some empirical evidence that the establishment of ASEAN has lessened the likelihood for bilateral militarized conflicts and war in the region. At the same time, it is not clear through which causal mechanism this has occurred, as the security practices of ASEAN members partly deviate from the expected behavior.

One important question is whether ASEAN norms and practices and its cooperation in a regional albeit loosely structured institution amounts to anything like 'regional governance'. Although not specifically framed in terms of security 'governance', the theoretical debates on ASEAN's relevance can be related to this question. They essentially evolve around the question whether ASEAN can be regarded as an organization that has some autonomy from its member states and that manages to shape member states' preferences. Answers to this question vary according to the theoretical perspectives one applies and it needs to be emphasized that the empirical evidence does not necessarily lend itself to a definite test.

Proponents of realism emphasize that ASEAN has not significantly contributed to 'security governance' in the region. Stability in Asia during the Cold War was guaranteed by a policy of 'extended deterrence' of the US and the USSR, consisting of the much-touted 'hubs-and-spoke network' of security guarantees for Western oriented states by the US on the one hand and security guarantees for Communist states by the USSR on the other.

The pattern of bilateral security guarantees and military pacts ensured mutual deterrence and stability between the two superpowers, and by extension, within Southeast Asia, which was firmly under the US security umbrella. From this perspective, ASEAN members do not have the capacity to control their regional security environment and until today rely more or less on the US to guarantee their security. While this appears to be a convincing explanation for the stability of the Southeast Asian region, it is not clear through which causal mechanism Realism has contributed to regional stability. (Neo-)Realism expects weak states to balance against or to bandwagon with the stronger state. Balancing is a strategy defined as allying with others against a dominant threat, whereas bandwagoning (in its classical definition) is defined as accommodation to external pressures. Randall Schweller, however, in his key contribution to the debate emphasizes alliance choices and opportunities and defines bandwagoning as a strategic reaction to a potential threat ('bandwagoning for rewards') (Schweller 1994). Accordingly, while there is little evidence that ASEAN served as a military alliance against the US, the Soviet Union, or China, Realists argue that ASEAN member states have engaged in bandwagoning with the US during and after the Cold War, as it promised greater benefits in terms of military assistance even in the absence of a predominant threat. However, there is considerable division about the predominant strategies that Southeast Asian states employ. Some argue that ASEAN members engage in bandwagoning or hedging against China (Kang 2003; Roy 2005), while others argue that balancing with the US against China is the dominant strategy (Schweller 1999). Critics of Realism argue, however, that Realists are overestimating the impact of the US factor in providing security in Southeast Asia and that the effects of ASEAN should be factored in explanations on the relative stability of Southeast Asia (Acharya and Tan 2006; Khong 2004).

From a neo-liberal institutionalist perspective, there has been a clear functional demand for a regional institution at the end of the 1960s, even if this was not as large as in Europe after World War II. Through its norms and practices (the ASEAN Way) and the effective shelving of conflicts, ASEAN members established a regional institution (albeit little institutionalized) contributing to the transformation from anarchy to a state society. What remains puzzling for this approach, however, is how institutions as little formalized as ASEAN and the ARF contribute to peace. The key question within security studies on Asia here is why ASEAN never developed the strong institutional framework that can be observed in Europe – and perhaps in other regions (Acharya 2005; Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002) and whether or not ASEAN as a regional organization contributed to peace within the region. One author even argued that to speak of a conflict-resolving capacity of ASEAN would be a category mistake (Leifer 1999): ASEAN members never intended to resolve their bilateral conflicts. Academics struggle with the phenomenon of a “self-blocking security multilateralism” (Katzenstein and Okawara 2004: 116), that is, security dynamics that appear to be stuck between the establishment of cooperative security institutions such as the ARF and self-interested, opportunistic and sometimes even militaristic behavior as displayed in relation to the disputed Spratly islands in the South China Sea or the recent militarized border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia. Others identify a “perennial under-institutionalization” (Beeson 2010: 330), or an “organizational gap” (Calder and Fukuyama 2008).

From a constructivist perspective, the great puzzle is less why ASEAN does not exhibit strong institutions. The great puzzle is how such a weak institutional design “explains the fact that in Southeast Asia, the members of the Association of ASEAN, defying all expectations, have not fought a war against each other since 1967?” (Acharya 1998: 199). Constructivists argue that what matters is not so much the formal institutional underpinnings of regionalism but the extent to which these institutions manage to form collective identities, a sense of belonging to an international community and identification with others (Acharya 2009; Busse 1999; Khong 2004; Narine 2002). ASEAN has managed to ‘socialize’ its members into a pattern of cooperative behavior and provided some socialization to China, who only had limited experience with international institutions (Johnston 2008). From this perspective, ASEAN has contributed to regional security governance.

Amitav Acharya has recently shed more light on regional variations concerning the acceptance and application of the non-intervention principle. He argues that Asian states – in contrast to other regions - have developed a regionalist cognitive prior converging on the acceptance of non-intervention and the rejection of collective defense. A global norm on non-intervention has been amplified and enhanced in a local context in the late 1940s and early 1950s, leading to an anti-colonial and anti-power politics orientation of Third World states. For ASEAN, this would lead to an emphasis on consensus-based decision-making, an ‘aversion to legalization’ and avoidance of any form of supranational bureaucratic structure. It would also lead to the rejection of great power-led regionalism, and other forms of collective defense function. Instead, defense cooperation would be undertaken on a bilateral basis (Acharya 2009: 69-70).

Does the concept of ‘regional security governance’ provide a better fit then? In my understanding of regional governance, which I take from James N. Rosenau’s classical definition (Rosenau 1992), global or regional governance mechanisms are triggered by two mega-trends in international relations: The first one is the observation that due to the greater interdependence among states, many international problems have assumed a global scale, like environmental pollution, economic interdependence, etc. No single state is capable of handling these problems and solving them. This development is exacerbated by the decline of the territorially defined nation-state. Because actors transnationalize and bypass their state, governments become less relevant in setting international standards and enforcing them. They are increasingly aided by other non-state actors and international institutions. Held and McGrew, for example, refer to global governance as characterized by a multiplicity of actors that bypass the state and “which pursue goals and objectives which have a bearing on transnational rule and authority systems” (Held et al. 1999: 50). Zürn, in his contribution to the Handbook of International Relations, equally emphasizes the creation of “new social spaces” that give leeway for “transnational participation and transnational networks” (Zürn 2002: 244). Key to the research agenda of the governance concept is the empirical evaluation of the respective effectiveness of specific governance arrangements: Which actor constellations and steering mechanisms are best able to produce the public goods that states have provided in the past, such as welfare, security, the rule of law or a clean environment (Mayntz 2005;

Rosenau 1992; Zürn and Leibfried 2005)?

The two key questions that need to be answered here are whether ASEAN as a regional organization can be considered as a regional governance mechanism in the above stated sense. To evaluate this question, we have look at the regional organization's ability to set standards and to compel its members to comply with these regional norms, and its interaction with civil society.

My answer is twofold: ASEAN is a standard setting organization in the sense that it spells out norms for interstate behavior that are oriented toward the peaceful resolution of conflicts. At the same time, the content of norms is decisive for evaluating ASEAN's role as an institution contributing to regional governance. The Association's constitutive norms and ASEAN's very understanding of security by definition cannot be regarded as contributing to the public good security, for the very reason that ASEAN security norms and practices never required ASEAN states to provide substantial resources or an active posture toward producing the public good security. It only required them to refrain from specific actions (especially from interference into their neighbor's affairs, use of military means to solve conflicts).

In the many cases for which ASEAN norms would eventually apply (avoid external interference in support of internal rebellions or separation movements), ASEAN norms would not even require member states to depart from their domestically defined preferences. Key Southeast Asian governments had a long-term self-interest in behaving in a non-interventionist manner and exert self-restraint as they had similar internal problems. I would argue so even if there is broad consensus that ASEAN members have managed to maintain peaceful relations among each other and therefore have obviously enhanced their security. Most states are neither capable nor willing to assume a military role in the management of regional security. As a result, major interventions were conducted by outside powers: The UN authorized intervention in East Timor in 1999 was led by Australia, and the Philippines were the only ASEAN member contributing military personnel. Historically, ASEAN members, most importantly Indonesia, have been willing to assume the role of a third-party mediator in bilateral conflicts, but ASEAN has to date not by itself undertaken a military intervention for humanitarian reasons.

So even if we might take the position that the norms ASEAN members adopted are part of a social structure that is independent of actors and shapes their behavior, a position constructivists usually take, one needs to bear in mind that there is a close link between the individual preferences of ASEAN members and these regional norms and the security conception. In my view, to argue that the non-production of a public good might constitute a form of 'regional governance' overstretches the very concept of 'governance'. As post-colonial states, Southeast Asian governments sought up and foremost state security from internal threats to governmental authority and territorial disintegration (Jetschke 2011), leading them to emphasize Westphalian norms. This undermines a key assumption of the governance concept, namely that globalization and the decline of the nation-state triggers various forms of regional governance. Judging from ASEAN's experience, one could argue that globalization might also have opposite effects on states: Not

only increasing cooperation in multilateral forums, but also strengthening the norms of sovereignty to secure the state from those forces that undermine its authority. However, the direction of this trend will be significantly determined by the role of civil society in the ASEAN region.

With regards to the interaction with civil society, civil society groups have substantially transnationalized in the past. On the agenda of civil society groups have been demands for the democratization of ASEAN in the sense of ensuring greater civil society participation and providing a mechanism to sanction human rights violations in member states. These efforts correlate with democratization trends in individual countries. The more democratized the member states, the more transnational activity is created. In this regard, ASEAN has particularly profited from the democratization of the Philippines and Indonesia, but also Thailand. At the same time, strongly authoritarian states also offer opportunities to transnationalize specific issues (Keck and Sikkink 1998). ASEAN was widely perceived as a club of autocratic states, and the ASEAN Way and its emphasis on non-interference as a function of this membership. The establishment of AIPO in 1977 might be seen as the earliest attempt to connect ASEAN as an elitist project to ASEAN societies. In 1997, Thailand was at the forefront of promoting a departure from the non-interference principle in relation to Myanmar (Haacke 1999). It took the democratization of Indonesia to provide these demands with greater leverage. Indonesia promoted the inclusion of a human rights mechanism in the ASEAN Charter (reluctantly supported by Thailand and the Philippines), and bottom-up pressures by a network of civil society organizations, like the Solidarity for Asian Peoples' Advocacy (SAPA). There was much indignation about the discrepancy of ASEAN's rhetoric on making the drafting of the ASEAN Charter participatory and the practice of the High Level Task Force to conduct behind the door negotiations on it (Pavin 2009).

Myanmar has been on the Association's agenda ever since its controversial accession in 1997, not least because of external pressures by the EU, the US and the UN. These developments propelled new discussions over the extent to which ASEAN promotes norms of good governance, human rights and democratic accountability (Katsumata 2009). Many hold that the relative stability produced by the Westphalian norms of the ASEAN Way comes at a price: that of more democratic political systems and a deepening of the ASEAN Community (Collins 2007; Kuhonta 2006; Rizal Sukma 2009). While ASEAN's contribution to good governance in the region can certainly be disputed, it is debatable whether this justifies claims that ASEAN contributes to the stability of authoritarian states. The variance among ASEAN member states in terms of their level of democracy and ability to undergo democratic transition rather suggests that these are determined by both domestic and international factors and that the ASEAN influence can be neglected.

Conclusion

I have argued in this paper that applying the concept of regional security governance to ASEAN poses conceptual problems that lead to conceptual overstretch. ASEAN members' self-understanding of regional security in the past has not necessarily included defining security as a public good that needs to be produced by cooperative efforts between governments, non-state actors and institutions. It includes a notion of the active production of security. I have argued, however, that ASEAN members' commitment to Westphalian norms and the nexus of these norms to regional security – while compelling in itself – are orthogonal to a governance perspective. The concept of regional security governance expects states to delegate more power to regional institutions and to have these regional institutions – in cooperation with non-state actors – to set standards and provide some compliance mechanism for them. This, however, was not foreseen in ASEAN. And despite important actions pointing at a greater role for ASEAN in the promotion of human rights, there is to-date not much evidence that ASEAN can compel member states to conform with these norms.

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