

of some Western political thinkers such as Rousseau, and De Tocqueville. The author noted that the perceptions of “common good” differ from one society to another. These perceptions also apply to the definitions of democracy. There are many different views on the concept and theory of democracy but she finds that there are some elements in those arguments that did not contradict one another. Both Islamic and Western political thinkers argued that democracy is not a unilateral project and elections are not the hallmark of democracy. To the author, “Enlightenment rationalism” which rejects any role of religion in political life is deeply flawed. The author believes that Muslims should define democracy individually and formulate their own unique versions of just governance.

This book of Deina Ali Abdelkader is informative. However, Deina, chose three different figures that contribute to Islamic political thought. The difference between them is clear : al-Qaradawi is considered by many as clerics and Islamic theologian and not a political thinker. The same can be said about al-Shatibi. The author considered the two along Ghannouchi as political thinkers and that they represent Islamic political thought. However, these figures are not political thinkers though they had prominent roles in Islamist movements in their own countries. Their views mostly reflect their grievances against the government and therefore, their ideas reflect their own political interest. It is important for scholars not to generalize their ideas and views and assume the three figures to be the representative of Muslims.

The author indicates her dislike of the American views on democracy and the Enlightenment views of some of the Western political thinkers. In the preface, the author clarifies that this book aims at clarifying a certain discourse unfamiliar to the Western world. Therefore, the book is written for the Western audience who may want to know about Islamic contemporary political theory. Nevertheless, the book is a good read for serious students and scholars of Islamic political theory. Deina Ali Abdelkader tried to explain and compare Islamist ideas by focusing on their views of democracy. The author was hoping to remove any confusion of Muslims and the non-Muslims in West on the theory of democracy and the conflict over relationship between religion and faith.

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**International relations in Southeast Asia : Between bilateralism and multilateralism.** Edited by N.Ganesan and Ramses Amer. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010, pp. 372. ISBN : 9814279579.

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Since the post- Cold War period, multilateralism has gained prominence as an approach for forging international consensus on a number of issues. Multilateralism refers to three or more countries coming together to deal with issues of common interests. During the Cold War, forging multilateralism consensus on issues tended to be more difficult because of ideological differences between the two blocs. However, the end of the Cold

War in 1991, accelerated the process of global development which had an impact on international relations of many regions and, specifically, of Southeast Asia. It led to the expansion of ASEAN in the 1990s to include all ten Southeast Asian countries and subsequently, they introduced a number of multilateral initiatives on their own.

The lead editor, N. Ganesan, is a Professor of Southeast Asian politics at the Hiroshima Peace Institute in Japan. His research interests are in intrastate and interstate sources of tension and conflict in Southeast Asia. The other editor is Ramses Amer, an Associate Professor in peace and Conflict Research and a senior Research Fellow at the centre for Pacific Asia Studies, Department of Oriental Languages, Stockholm University. His major areas of research include security issues and conflict resolution in Southeast Asia. This work is the result of papers presented at two international workshops held in Hiroshima and Kuala Lumpur in December 2007 and October 2008. The project concentrated on bilateralism and multilateralism in Southeast Asia.

In the first part, the book gives details concerning the evolution of bilateralism and multilateralism in international relations theory and examines the general dynamics of international relations in Southeast Asia, specifically the evolution of multilateralism in the region. In order to provide the case studies with common frames of reference as well as a number of common questions. The authors provide definitions of such concepts as multilateralism, multilateral/regional institutions, regionalism versus regionalization, networks, forum shopping, and bilateralism. Another concept dealt with is "democratic clubs." These clubs need not be global or regional institutions, they can also operate as networks.

There are questions about how effective are they? Have ASEAN and its offspring gained traction? Do they function as a security community? Have they aggregated political and economic interests collectively? Have they worked together to resolve their internal security problems and protect each other against external threats? The answer to these questions are either negative or non-equivocal. ASEAN's inability in resolving persistent sub-regional tensions, include the Thai-Myanmar confrontation over the latter's drug trafficking and allegations by Myanmar that Thailand provides sanctuary for Myanmar's Karen minority who are fighting to create a separate homeland, Thai concerns about support from northern Malaysia to separatists in southern Thailand, discord between Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta over huge amount of illegal Indonesian workers seeking jobs in Malaysia, a similar problem with illegal Philippine labourers in Sabah, and the dispute over the Spratly Islands where China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Brunei contest ownership. It was suggested that the primary reason for ASEAN's inability to deal effectively with these issues is its normative attachment to the principle of non-interference. If regionalism is to be more than a process of multilateral policy coordination and negotiation of competing stakeholder interests, then a sense of collective inter-subjective identity among members is required.

The author goes to explain how security regionalism in Southeast Asia remains weak. That the absence of interoperability among the region's armed forces, embedded

suspicious about neighbours' motivations, and an inability to set up effective arrangements to cope with transnational challenges, all tend to move security cooperation by default to the bilateral level. Nevertheless, with the new ASEAN Charter adopted at the 2007 summit, this situation could change. The point is that, non-traditional security (e.g., transnational crime, piracy, terrorism, pandemics, human and drug trafficking) require multilateral cooperation.

In the second and third sections, contributors deal with case studies of bilateral relations, comprising four case studies of bilateral relations among mainland countries and five case studies among maritime countries in Southeast Asia. Writers focus on identifying the most important and sensitive issues in such bilateral relationships and then, they identify further how these issues are dealt with at the bilateral level and whether there had been recourse to multilateralism.

After a long time of mutual suspicion and hostility (since 1975), Vietnam- Thailand relations could improve only in the post-Cold-War era. Vietnam began to change its foreign policy priorities towards Thailand and accepted the ASEAN mode of regional cooperation. The new worldview and the subsequent re-definition of national interests and re-ordering of foreign policy priorities after 1986 have led Vietnam to see Thailand in a new light, less influenced by ideological considerations and wartime experiences. In addition, when Vietnam and other Indochinese states joined ASEAN, the multilateral context helped to ensure relations between them, then they shared norms and identity which were consolidated by increased interactions at all level among ASEAN countries that helped standardize behaviour for them all. Therefore, the bilateral and multilateral dynamics have provided a good basis for stable and cooperative relations between the two countries in the post- Cold War era. In the case of Vietnam-Cambodia relations, the writer provided the empirical evidence of their bilateral relations since 1975. Their relationship has been plagued by two core issues : the territorial disputes and the situation of the ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia. However, the two countries officially claimed to be working closely in both regional and sub- regional framework (e.g., ASEAN, the Greater Mekong Sub- regional, and the Mekong River Commission). The main ambition of both Vietnam and Cambodia is to expand economic relations, if it can be sustained then the remaining issues such as the maritime disputes could be managed peacefully and their relationship may move from trouble to cooperation.

Thailand and Myanmar have also suffered from strained relations. Drugs and refugee flows remain as the central issues. Different regimes with different outlooks on foreign relations can certainly produce different thoughts on conflict resolution. So are there certain interests on both sides to keep contentious issues unsettled? Do they need some kind of bargaining power to get them through such a fragile relationship?

Among ASEAN countries, most of their bilateral relations are related to some kind of disputes, for example, the problems of cross- border intrusions, illegal migration and illegal fishing in Thai- Malay relations, and separatist group and Filipino migrants in Sabah, etc. In contrast, bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines have been stable and cooperative since the establishment in 1949. Their relations have never

been as close as the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia or Indonesia and Singapore, however, they have never experienced any turbulence in their relationship compared to Indonesia's bilateral relationship with Malaysia and Singapore. Any mutual problems faced by the two countries, have always been resolved successfully through dialogue between the heads of both government. Urgent issues such as security in the border areas can also be solved at the ministerial level or through cooperation between the militaries and the police forces.

The book makes it clear that there are many different forms of international cooperation with different meanings attached to them. The term multilateralism became a focus of analysis in the 1990s, it is a set of protocols demanding that states forego some of their own narrow interests in order to achieve general organizing principles in relationships characterized by diffused reciprocity. Solingen thinks that a convergence of domestic coalition strategies among dominant actors favouring internationalization provides a powerful incentive for multilateralism, and it was such convergence that spurred ASEAN. However, the cases analysed in the book have documented that bilateralism is a well-established policy response in Southeast Asian international relations. Bilateralism is a useful mechanism with substantial historical precedence in the resolution of problems between geographically proximate states, specifically, in the South Asian case.

In many instances, bilateralism preceded the onset of multilateralism in Southeast Asia. There appears to be a large number of reasons privileging bilateralism over multilateralism, mainly, because history has privileged bilateralism and provided policy formulators with an established practice and venue in dealing with adjacent states. This historical imperative in turn derived from the geographical necessity in coping with dense transactions and interactions. Consequently, history and geography combine to provide the forceful evidence in favour of liberalism. The accumulated interactions and knowledge derived from bilateralism subsequently serve to under grid the practice and establish it as a preferred medium through which international relations may be conducted. It may be argued that the levels of compliance in bilateralism is likely to be higher and attendant transactional costs significantly lower than what it would be in a multilateral setting.