W(h)ither the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), w(h)ither Constructivism: fixity of norms and the ASEAN Way

Abstract:

This article uses the reflection on the direction (whither) and health (wither) of Constructivism and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that was witnessed in 2017 to see what these deliberations reveal about the fixity of norms and their contestation. The argument presented is that constitutive norms create fixed parameters of shared understandings but that within those parameters the meaning and application of the norm can be contested and debated. This insight helps to bridge the gap between conventional and critical constructivists and shows that the premise of jettisoning the ASEAN Way as necessary for ASEAN to achieve its ambitious community-building project is flawed. The argument relies on insights from the constructivist literature on norm degeneration to show how contestation is not one part of a norm's life cycle but rather a constant companion. However norms are not just contested but they have fixity and here practice theory can help show that the social world is just as much about continuity as it is change. The ASEAN case study is timely as introspection about the efficacy of its constitutive norms - the ASEAN Way - was prominent in 2017 as ASEAN turned fifty.

Introduction:

Turning fifty in 2017 elicited a number of opinion pieces on the health (wither?) and future direction (whither?) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and this coincided with a similar reflection on the health and direction of Constructivism in International Relations. In both cases the debates and discussions were not new, but given Constructivism's application to ASEAN this introspection provides an opportunity to discern whether the w(h)ither of both helps to inform the other?

The inspiration for this article's title lies in Swati Srivastava's contribution to the 2017 online symposium, "Seizing Constructivist Ground? Practice and Relational Theories".[1] In reference to an International Studies Association-Northeast conference roundtable in 2012 entitled "Whither Constructivism?", Srivastava noted that the participants, instead of discussing the direction of constructivism (whither), deliberated about its demise (wither). The demise

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focuses on what David McCourt's article, which inspired the online symposium, refers to as the *fractal distinction* of constructivism, which is essentially the division of the constructivist approach into a number of camps, as a consequence of a cyclical rise and fall of theories' prominence.[2] Of these divisions within constructivism the distinction between conventional or mainstream and critical is the clearest, with the prominence of the former over the latter, and the extent to which this reflected a betrayal of the early constructivist writings, underpinning the sense of lament about wither constructivism.[3]

Whether constructivism is on the wane drew different interpretations of a 2014 Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) survey of the profession. In keeping with McCourt's fractal distinction, Jarrod Hayes interprets the TRIP as a discouraging picture for constructivism with its fragmentation as a coherent research programme and the infighting between the conventional and critical factions. It is only by overcoming these divisions – 'the need to reclaim constructivism from itself by raising awareness of these social dynamics, combating them, and refocusing attention on the core of the intellectual agenda' – that constructivism can be more than a 'convenient foil for rationalist approaches'.[4] In contrast, Ted Hopf interprets TRIP as evidence of constructivism's rude health, and that it is precisely its breadth and ability to accommodate diverse social theories that has 'spawned a lively and growing interest' in constructivism and, along with realism and liberalism, it constitutes IR's 'Holy Trinity'.[5] If the future direction and health of constructivism is open to debate then much the same can be said for ASEAN. The year 2017 witnessed a range of opinion pieces commenting on ASEAN as it turned fifty. As with constructivism, not all lamented the state of the Association, and some were positively glowing about its achievements – 'transformative'[6]; 'miracle', 'world star' and one deserving a Noble Peace Prize[7] – but there was a distinct sense that ASEAN faced a series of crises and adjectives such as, adrift, confused, divided and weak were and remain common place. In essence, that ASEAN's future direction (whither) is far from certain, including a future of increasing irrelevance (wither).[8]

In this article I seek to determine whether it is whither or wither for constructivism and ASEAN by examining what is at the heart of both; socially constructed norms and how the answer to w(h)ither relies on understanding the fixity of constitutive norms. By fixity I mean different actors acknowledge the existence of a constitutive norm – which is a 'set of practices that make up a particular class of consciously [or unconsciously] organized social

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activity-that is to say, they specify *what counts as* that activity' (emphasis in original)[9] – and in so doing establish parameters within which the shared meaning of the norm, both what it is and its application, can be contested. It is not the same as norm rigidity, which implies that the shared meaning is uniformly agreed and non-compliance is exposed by norm violation. I argue that constructivism's core intellectual agenda – explaining why the international system, and its component units, are socially constructed and therefore subject to change – is broad enough to encompass the continuity that arises from a norm's fixity while concurrently appreciating that contestation exists that marks different interpretations of the norm. That is, a shared understanding need not mean unambiguous agreement as to content and application of the norm, but rather a vague but nevertheless deeply entrenched understanding of the norm's parameters. Indeed, it is this looseness of definition that makes the norm more resilient as it provides a site for contestation. Although constructivism divided into conventional and critical camps, this article shows that as the norm literature has evolved the distinction between how the camps interpret norms has grown closer and that Practice Theory is a significant contributor to this outcome. The notion that Practice Theory is constructivist is controversial and the article will explain why it can be interpreted in this way by showing how it is compatible with the logic of appropriateness.

The article proceeds by firstly delineating the similarity and difference between conventional and critical constructivists before utilising the literature on norm degeneration to reveal that ambiguity makes norms more resilient. The article then examines the seemingly paradoxical statement that norms are both a shared understanding and contested. It is this correlation that enables norms to be both fixed and ambiguous. This is important because while constructivism is interested in change, the social world is just as marked by continuity. Here notions of practice and habit can assist in explaining both continuity and change. ASEAN is helpful in illuminating this because its modus operandi, the ASEAN Way, is both fixed in what its constitutive norms are but the meaning and application of these norms is routinely contested. Not only does this help to show how both conventional and critical constructivist approaches can complement one another, but it also shines a light on the current introspection on ASEAN and why contestation over its constitutive norms is not a degeneration of the ASEAN Way, but rather a reaffirmation of the ASEAN Way as it adjusts to different contexts.

Wither Constructivism?

The promise of constructivism is that it offers the chance for actors in the international system to change the nature of the environment in which they operate; hence the classic constructivist overtones that 'the world is of our making'[10] and 'anarchy is what states make of it'.[11] It is not though confined to just altering the structure of the international system but constructivism also posits change at the level of the agent. Thus not only does state interaction determine whether the nature of the international system is conflictual or cooperative, but this interaction can also change the actor's sense of their own self-worth and their self-identification. It is, via the process of interaction and engagement, that ideas mould a shared understanding about what constitutes best practice and this leads to a desire amongst these actors to adopt these practices; which is referred to as socialisation. States can thus change their identity through an understanding of the world they inhabit, not just as a consequence of material factors but ideas about how the world operates. The shared understandings that emerge from such interactions are referred to as norms, and it is the extent to which these norms become "fixed", "hardened", "crystallised" that is one key point of contention between conventional and critical constructivists.

Conventional constructivists have focused their attention on how these norms emerge and diffuse throughout the international system. While initially the focus was primarily on successfully norm creation and adoption more recent studies have concentrated on those instances where norms have failed to take root; either they did not gain traction or they degenerate. It is a veritable hive of scholarly activity and does not, at first glance, appear to give the impression of constructivism on the wane. The literature on how ideas are propagated in the first place (there is no normative vacuum) has empowered the role of non-state actors, and these norm entrepreneurs have been joined in the literature by "antipreneurs"[12] and "rival entrepreneurs".[13] These tools explain the contestation that marks the emergence of understandings about what constitutes appropriate practice. Models exist that provide a framework for understanding the different stages of norm development – norms have life cycles[14] and they can emerge and diffuse through a spiral model,[15] which has been refined.[16] When norms spread to different regions of the world they can be further contested as they are adapted to different contexts; hence a process of localisation,[17] subsidiarity[18] and mimicking[19] can occur.

Why then do scholars bemoan the demise of constructivism? It is in large part about what some early constructivists saw in the potential of constructivism to challenge the positivism of IR scholarship and thus to question the epistemology of the dominant rationalist approaches.[20] If the world is of our making then the world we inhabit reflects the wishes of the powerful elites and our interpretation is constrained by the discourse that entraps our understanding. If ideas shape our social world then challenging conventional interpretations of the world is what scholars should be doing. Constructivism thus held out the promise of challenging what the purpose of IR theory was and casting new light on how we see the world. The lament about wither constructivism is that as it evolved it did not do this, and those scholars have subsequently abandoned the label constructivism and found refuge in a variety of reflectivist approaches, such as post-structuralism and post-modernism. Why constructivism evolved as it did has been explained by a cyclical understanding of how ideas rise and fall[21] and a pernicious academic environment that silences alternative ways of thinking; hence Srivastava's claim that 'Constructivism was not simply going through the motions of paradigmatic turnover; it was deliberately cut down to privilege certain perspectives over others'.[22] So, what did conventional constructivists do "wrong"?

The broader answer lies in getting too cosy with the positivism of rational explanations but I want to examine this divergence through the importance attached to norms, in particular their fixity and ability to guide and restrain actors' behaviour. Conventional constructivism's examination of where new ideas emerge to challenge the pre-existing social world appears to take the notion that the world is of our making as the exception rather than the rule of international relations. That is, a norm entrepreneur engages in a verbal battle with antipreneurs and rival entrepreneurs as they use forums and institutions to persuade states that a new understanding is needed. This period of contestation will determine the success, or failure, for the new norm's emergence. Whether it is successful will be determined by a number of factors including those beyond the control of the actors, such as the context in which the verbal contestation is occurring. It is the cut and thrust of debate, negotiation and persuasion, that captures the notion of change that is central to constructivism. If the norm entrepreneur is successful then a tipping point will be achieved in the norms uptake and a cascade will follow as states adopt the norm. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm is a good example of where a changing context – the increase in humanitarian intervention following the Cold War – created propitious conditions to challenge the prevailing view that sovereignty protected a state from intervention in its domestic affairs from other states. The

problem with this conventional constructivist explanation is that the change has come to an end. A new norm is formed that guides state's behaviour and as long as no new norm emerges to challenge it, the norm will restrain states as they are obliged to act in conformity to it. The norm has become fixed, hardened, crystallised.

Given its restraining effect on state action this appears to replace material considerations that guide and regulate state behaviour in Realism with ideas that do the same; hence the accusation that if conventional constructivism is a bridge between rationalism and reflectivism it is closer to rationalism. Norms, for critical constructivists, do not regulate behaviour they are a product of state interaction that are forever undergoing interpretation and reinterpretation. Contestation is not a stage in a norm's life cycle; it is a description of the interaction that states engage in as they converse. R2P is not rigid it remains, and always will, deeply contested and if actors act in accordance with the norm this reflects their interpretation and one likely to be contested by others. Norms are not therefore the product of uniform shared understandings, but rather beliefs or practices that states draw upon to understand the world they inhabit and how to engage in it. It is this process of interpretation and reinterpretation through state interaction that gives critical constructivism its understanding of why change happens. It understands the power games played in framing the contention and trying to crowd out alternative voices, which remain ongoing, rather than creating spectrums along which one can place a norm's evolution.

While these two positions appear to be polls apart, and I acknowledge that they have a different epistemology, I contend that actually there is a middle ground that enables both to benefit from the insight of the other. This has arisen from the conventional constructivist literature and its refinement over the fixity of norms.

Whither Constructivism?

It was noted earlier that the current literature on norms is increasingly focused on norms that do not get adopted or disappear. That is, the norm does not become fixed, or it did but is no longer. This reveals that contestation is not one part of the life cycle but rather a constant companion through the stages (conventional) or interactions (critical). If contestation marks the existence of a norm then what does this mean for the notion of shared understanding? I contend that a shared understanding need not imply a specific, even agreed upon

understanding, but rather a vague and possibly incoherent understanding. For example, a national identity has meaning and is a shared by many, but when scrutinised as to what it means to be, for example British, or that immigrants wishing to live in the UK should learn British values, the discussion that follows reveals more deviation than conformity.[23] This idea that shared understandings can be divergent in their meaning reveals an ambiguity that closes the gap between conventional and critical constructivists. Why? Because it fits with the latter's focus on contestation and interpretation but also, and this will appear counter-intuitive, the former's revelation that the vaguer the norm the more resilient it is. How then can it be both resilient and contested?

Panke and Petersohn's work on norms that disappear[24] or Krook and True's that they are dynamic and this dynamism makes them resilient, provides the answer.[25] Panke and Petersohn interpret norms as having a prescriptive character that regulates and prohibits certain state actions, and it degenerates if it loses this prescriptive status. Adopting the life cycle's terminology of cascade they argue that a norm will disappear, 'when an actor's norm violation triggers a non-compliance cascade because other states also adjust their behaviour and violate the norm'.[26] The cascade thus marks a spiralling process of non-compliance and the norm dies when 'the emerging new practice is no longer framed as non-compliance'.[27] Panke and Petersohn are interested in why some norms are replaced or just disappear, and why some do so quickly while for others the process is incremental. Their approach is conventional constructivism – 'International norms regulate state behaviour on the international level'[28] – and adopts a rational explanation; 'If the norm is regarded as functional, it is not likely that many states will seek to abolish the norm'.[29] Whatever the merits of this approach, one of their significant findings is that imprecise norms, which they define as norms with poorly defined procedures and exceptions to its applicatory scope, are less vulnerable to cascades than precisely defined norms. This is because the vagueness of the norm enables a state to disguise its violation and this could lead to the norm's disappearance, and if it does, it is likely to be incremental and not rapid. It is pertinent to note that the ambiguity of the norm is the vagueness of its application rather than its core meaning. While this bears little resemblance to the critical constructivists' understanding of norms it does enable us to identify imprecision as a criterion for making norms resilient. The link to critical constructivism can be seen in Krook and True's article where the focus is on norms as processes, rather than things that have fixed meaning.

In their article, Krook and True are interested in the process of diffusion and how that process alters norms. They distance themselves from the notion that the meaning of a norm becomes fixed as it cascades and they instead see the life cycle of the norm, both as it emerges and diffuses, as a constant arena of contestation. For Krook and True this contestation is marked by discursive battles in which actors interpret and reinterpret the norm and draw upon the existing normative environment to help clarify the norm's meaning. They argue that because norm emergence and its adoption is an outcome of this contestation, 'norms diffuse precisely because – rather than despite the fact that – they may encompass different meanings, fit in with a variety of contexts, and be subject to framing by diverse actors'.[30] This is why they see norms as a discursive process. Two findings emerge. First, norms are more resilient if there is ambiguity about their meaning because this gives actors more leeway in their interpretation. This goes further than the application of the norm as noted by Panke and Petersohn to the actual meaning of the norm. Second, norms emerge and exist because of state action, which could be discursive but not be limited to this, and thus they do not become something separate from the actors which can constrain them. Once conceived as an arena of contestation we are moving closer to critical constructivism and here Niemann and Schillinger help to close the gap.[31]

Niemann and Schillinger are interested in how the meaning of the norm, not just its application but what it actually is, can be continually and consistently contested and be a shared understanding; they write, 'A *contested* norm…represents almost a contradiction in terms, as it is difficult to imagine that norms can be both contested and shared at the same time' (emphasis in original).[32] Consequently they see contestation as a 'profound challenge to [norm research's] theoretical core'.[33] They utilise the work of Antje Wiener[34] who adopts a critical constructivist approach.[35] In Wiener's reflectivist reading of norms, the meaning of norms are not fixed but determined by the context in which they are used. That is, the norm has meaning for an actor only in a particular context; hence Wiener's "enacting meaning-in-use".[36] Niemann and Schillinger though critique Wiener's work, and in so doing, raise questions more broadly for the critical constructivist approach. If the actors engage in dialogue, discussion, interpretation and reinterpretation of the norm and this contestation is on-going, what determines their understanding of the norm? Where do the actors' understandings come from? For Niemann and Schillinger, Wiener's answer lies in the actors' normative background knowledge and the contestation is a form of "cultural validation" of each actor's position. Hence Wiener argues 'individuals are prone to carry normative

baggage wherever they go'.[37] Contestation is thus undertaken between actors with different "cultural scripts" which are fixed. This is beginning to resemble the conventional constructivist position, hence Niemann and Schillinger's critique of Wiener: 'Cultural structures rather than contextual interpretation (that is, meaning-in-use) becomes the source of norm meaning'.[38]

This is the move that begins to close the gap between the two constructivist positions. Normative baggage is the result of internalised cultural practices that are, largely unconsciously, guiding and directing behaviour. They are for the most part invisible and only become visible, as Niemann and Schillinger argue, when diverging interpretations of the norm clash. From a conventional constructivist position norms are replaced by the actor's cultural script as the fixed element that is explaining behaviour. Norm contestation is thus likely when actors with different normative cultural backgrounds engage one another. This does of course presume that culture is stable and uncontested. From a critical constructivist perspective it enables the meaning of norms to be contested because international actors come from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. Wiener's examples are drawn from the different cultural scripts amongst European states and the cultural diversity of the ASEAN membership is no less marked. This means that we can understand the meaning of norms to be open to contestation, as critical constructivists would endorse, as the actors rely on their separate cultural scripts to interpret and reinterpret the norm depending upon the context.

It is this notion of an unconscious cultural script, or normative background, guiding, or providing parameters in which actors operate, which makes Practice theory a bridge between the two constructivist positions. It was Iver Neumann in 2002, while working in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who introduced to International Relations a body of thought he called "practice theory". He wanted to answer the question: how does one know what diplomats do?[39] Practice is the everyday activity of diplomats, or for IR, actors. Their activity is an enactment process based upon a, largely unconscious, cultural script. It contains both continuity and change. Continuity, in that practice entails routines that are regularly repeated and thus produce predictable behaviour. Change, in that this repeated routine can produce altered process that can lead to adjusted behaviour. For example, the idiom "practice makes perfect" contains both the routine behaviour of continuity (perseverance, dedication) and change (correcting, improving). This is never ending, as in sport where players are always training because no matter how good they are they can always be better. While the

idiom "practice makes perfect" is easily recognisable and thus helpful to illuminate the point, as with all parsimony it obscures as well as enlightens. The point is not betterment; in the example of the sportsman the adjustments are deliberately made to change/improve their ability. Practice theory is that adjustments in everyday routines can be made unconsciously thus making the routine different from before. The only routine that is unchanging is automation by non-sentient beings, such as robots on a production line. Practice theory therefore does provide an explanation of how change can occur, but I contend its more important insight is that it explains continuity and here its relationship to the logic of appropriateness needs clarification.

Practice theory is often posited as separate from the logic of appropriateness, whereas it is actually an example of one type of appropriate behaviour. McCourt writes,

> Practice theory opposes IR's two main ways of accounting for social action: the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness…often people behave in certain ways neither because they want to nor because they feel they should, as rationalist and norm-centered approaches suggest, but because it is "what one does".[40]

The logic of appropriateness does though account for actors behaving as they do because it also explains "what one does". Ole Jacob Sending refers to this understanding of the logic of appropriateness as 'motivationally internalist'; since the norm constitutes who and what the actor is, it is 'beyond the reach of criticism, reflection and potential violation'.[41] This reading of the logic of appropriateness makes its logic the same as that underpinning practice and indeed habit.[42] Both Ted Hopf and Vincent Pouliot argue that operating according to logic of either habit or practice does not entail a conscious decision on the part of the actor at all; hence Pouliot argues practice is 'unreflexive', 'thoughtless and inarticulate',[43] while Hopf writes that, 'Habits are unintentional, unconscious, involuntary, and effortless'.[44] Consequently, both see action according to their logics as automatic because rather than having a normative bias – in circumstance X, you should do Y – a habitual response is that in circumstance X, action Y follows. However, Sending's 'motivationally internalist' reading of the logic of appropriateness produces the same result. The founders of the logic of appropriateness, James March and Johan Olsen, write that while 'behavior is intentional it is not willful', that is, it is not deliberated over, and so 'Action stems from a conception of necessity, rather than preference'.[45] To further emphasize the automaticity of this logic they

conclude actor's actions are a response to the 'dictates of their identities' and a failure 'to fulfil the identity-defining duties and obligations is equated to approach the insane'.[46] Thus while Practice theorists may wish to distance themselves from the logic of appropriateness, when conceived as internalised and constitutive of the actor, it does not require self-reflection and captures the unconscious automaticity of practice (and habit).

Practice theory is thus a means of examining everyday routines that are the manifestation of deeply-embedded beliefs. While these deeply-embedded beliefs can change, if they are conspicuous at all it is for their continuity. Thus, I contend, Practice provides order by establishing parameters that delineate what is acceptable (or appropriate) behaviour. These practices or habit establish the arena for contestation. This contestation could be manifest in adjusted practices but these will be interpreted as an affirmation of the deeply-embedded beliefs.

Practice therefore provides a framework that enables an understanding of why actors behave in a particular way, while also providing a means of understanding that such behaviour evolves and adjusts. This is the basis of McCourt's article; his argument is that both Practice theory and Relationalism – actions are a consequence of forces (such as interests, preferences, institutions) rather than individuals with immutable goals – are constructivist. McCourt writes,

> Taken together, practice-relationalism can be considered a twin approach because the aim in each is to recover a more appropriate understanding of the *social* in social explanation by foregrounding process over fixity (emphasis in original).[47]

While sympathetic to McCourt's interpretation of Practice as constructivist I contend that the social is not "process over fixity" but process and fixity. As the actor's behaviour adjusts and evolves, rather than asking, is the actor complying with the norms in place, it is more pertinent to ask, what does the actor's altered behaviour reveal about their understanding of the norm in this current context? It could be that the shared understanding of the norm remains amongst the actors because the flexibility of its meaning is sufficient to accommodate such adjustments. Niemann and Schillinger recognise this when they write, 'our findings could also be interpreted as demonstrating that focusing on intersubjective sharedness *rather than* contestation is what defines norm research (emphasis added).[48]

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However, contestation is not separate from a shared understanding of the norm but rather it reveals that shared understandings can be ambiguous, and here the processes involved can be analysed, including whether different cultural scripts are evident, and that this ambiguity reveals what is not contested. That is, the process reveals the parameters – the fixity – in which the social takes place.

In summary, utilising the norm degeneration literature to show that ambiguity in meaning makes a norm more resilient helps to close the gap in the conventional/critical divide by focusing attention on the contestation that arises in the norm's ambiguity. That is a shared understanding broadly interpreted exists – it is fixed – but its meaning and application is subject to various interpretations depending upon the actors' understanding of the context. In order to explain the origins of these different interpretations we can appreciate that actors carry normative baggage with them into their encounters. Rather than thinking of these cultural scripts as fixed it is useful to see them as part of the unconscious, deeply embedded, beliefs that actors have and here practice theory reveals that these beliefs about what is appropriate has both elements of continuity and change. However, rather than seeing actor interactions as a battle between different interpretations with the goal to achieve an agreed understanding - that is, contestation producing a uniformed shared understanding as to the norm's content and application - we should instead see contestation as an ongoing and inherent feature of these interactions and what these discursive battles reveal is different meanings and applications of agreed norms. Thus we can have actors sharing an understanding of a norm, such as the example of a British identity, but their understanding of what this means (its content) for how they behave (its application) can be different.

Agonistic Institution

What though are the implications of this ambiguity for understanding norms as the source of legitimacy for regional organisations? If the members of organisations are forever disputing the meaning and application of the organisation's norms then it presumably it has neither direction (whither?) nor much of a future (wither). An answer lies in what Wiener calls "agonistic institutions".[49] Agonism sees value in contestation and specifically that the goal of debate and discussion ought not to be the achievement of consensus and harmonious agreement, but rather the empowering of different positions and to provide an arena where

differences can be confronted.[50] The value of contestation is captured in Bonnie Honig's claim that for agonistic theory, 'to affirm the perpetuity of the contest is not to celebrate a world without points of stabilization; it is to affirm the reality of perpetual contest, even within an ordered setting, and to identify the affirmative dimension of contestation'.[51] Agonistic institutions thus provide an arena for this contestation. They enable contestation to become visible as the actors' understandings are exposed; it is the visibility of the ambiguity in meaning that enables actors to share a contested understanding. Essentially we agree on the norm but we reserve the right to agree to disagree about its meaning and application depending upon the context at the time. This becomes apparent in the case study: ASEAN is an agonistic institution.

ASEAN as an agonistic institution

ASEAN has ten member states and the membership is often divided into the Cold War and post-Cold War members, with the latter referred to by their initials; the CMLV countries.[52] This division, while ostensibly on economic/development terms, is often used to distinguish the ASEAN membership politically between those that interpret the modus operandi of ASEAN – the ASEAN Way – broadly and those that have a narrower interpretation. Thus references to a two-tier ASEAN are not only used to show a development gap in ASEAN between the founders and the CMLV, but also the desire amongst some of the former group to develop and adjust its procedures, which is often opposed by the latter. It is the combination of an increased membership with diverse needs, coupled to the increasing institutionalisation of ASEAN with its community building ambitions, that has raised questions about the efficacy of the ASEAN Way and the need to adjust it to better reflect the challenges the Association faces. The claim that the ASEAN Way is not fit for purpose is thus prevalent in many thoughts about ASEAN as it turned fifty. However to interpret this as norm degeneration is to misinterpret the fixity of the constitutive norms that underpin the ASEAN Way, and the contestation about them that reveals, not their decline, but their enduring quality. What therefore is the ASEAN Way?

The ASEAN Way describes the process of engagement between the members and it emphasizes informality, consultation and consensus-decision making and the avoidance of unwanted interference in the domestic affairs of other members. Often posited in contrast to

Western decision-making the ASEAN Way avoids adversarial posturing, majority voting and legalistic governance structures to solve disputes.[53] Instead, the ASEAN Way is designed to ensure that in discussion there is no public shaming of other members and all can save face. The ASEAN Way is therefore a process explaining how ASEAN members interact and this process comes to inform the practice of member states' diplomats and the staff in the ASEAN Secretariat.[54] It has become so deeply-embedded that its component parts are constitutive norms for ASEAN.[55] In essence, a modus operandi that enables states that, for the most part, freed themselves from a controlling colonial power to create an institution that does not replace that colonial power with a supranational organisation that could also impinge on their independence. ASEAN is inherently inter-governmental and the ASEAN Way is a process that enables independent sovereign states to work cooperatively together in a familiar, non-threatening, environment. It is this familiarity that underpins the sense of friendship that ASEAN promotes and symbolises; the latter most visible in the routine arms-crossed handshake that is performed at public ASEAN meetings.

The ASEAN Way reveals that as a conflict resolution institution ASEAN is not a tool to resolve disputes but rather to manage them. For proponents of ASEAN this management equates to ameliorating tensions among the membership and enables them to settle their disputes peacefully. For critics, it reflects ASEAN's inability to resolve disputes; it is a mere talk shop that is largely irrelevant to understanding the foreign policies of Southeast Asian states. That ASEAN is a talk shop enables it to be an agonistic institution, and the vagueness of the ASEAN Way ensures that, despite the frequent questioning of its value, it has endured. It is precisely its ability to frame discussion and thus guide what ASEAN members can, and cannot do, that has attracted conventional constructivists to examine ASEAN. Although not straightforwardly a conventional constructivist, Acharya's work spawned a number of works that sought to identify the norms that guide members' behaviour, their origins, and their application.[56] While providing intellectual succour for the ASEAN Way, these accounts invariably highlighted a gap between what members said they would do and what they actually did. There appeared to be a compliance problem. Hence when reflecting on ASEAN as it turned fifty, Lee Jones, a critical scholar whose work on the ASEAN Way reveals the manipulation of the Association's modus operandi to further entrench the political/economic elites' dominion[57], framed incidences of non-compliance with the ASEAN Way as "departures", "violations", and abandonment.[58] For critical constructivists it is impossible to be non-compliant; the incidences of departures that Jones notes are routine reinterpretations

and thus contestations of the ASEAN Way as members recast the ASEAN Way to fit their prevailing beliefs and preferences as to its meaning. Hence the ASEAN Way is just as fertile a ground for critical constructivists because, as Acharya correctly states, it 'is a loosely used concept whose meaning remains vague and contested'.[59] Here Mathew Davies' focus on rituals and symbols becomes insightful. For Davies, ASEAN's rituals provide the explanation for its continuation, not because they represent a uniformed shared meaning by members, but because they 'generate order by creating shared experiences, even when those are interpreted in different ways'.[60] While Davies is seeking to distance rituals and symbols from constructivism, I contend these are the practices that bridge the constructivist divide by creating fixity on an agreed understanding of what the rituals and symbols are, while allowing within this parameter contestation over their interpretation.

Contestation within the ASEAN Way:

While it is to be expected that constitutive norms are not reflected upon because they have become deeply-embedded and thus guide behaviour without conscious thought, ASEAN acts as an agonistic institution because it reaffirms these norms frequently in its declarations and also in the practice of member states' diplomats in the ASEAN Secretariat, as well as the Secretariat staff themselves. They are also routinely used by critics when member states appear to be acting in contravention of them. The most dramatic example of this occurred in July 2012 when, for the first time in the Association's history, the Foreign Ministers were unable to agree on the text of their communique and did not release one. The sticking point was over reference to the disputed islands in the South China Sea and revealed that the Chair, Cambodia, was more concerned about offending China than in reaching a compromise with its ASEAN colleagues, notably Vietnam and the Philippines. According to Bilahari Kausikan, Ambassador-at-Large at the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this was a most 'egregious example of the disregard of regional interest' by an ASEAN member.[61] This impression of a divided membership was further corroborated by Malaysia's public rebuke to ASEAN over the 2017 Rohingya crisis. The 2017 crisis arose when government forces in Myanmar attacked the Rohingya people living in Rakhine state. This action was condemned internationally as "ethnic cleansing" and led to much criticism directed at Aung San Suu Kyi. In their September 2017 Chairman Statement ASEAN's condemnation of the use of force conflated the violence used by the government forces to that from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, and rather than an assessment of the conflict ASEAN focused on the

humanitarian disaster that unfolded on the Myanmar-Bangladeshi border. Malaysia not only took the step of publicly "disassociating" itself from the statement it also called it a "misrepresentation" of the situation. This appeared to show Malaysia failing to act in accordance with two component parts of the ASEAN Way; non-interference (for Malaysia the Myanmar government was culpable for the crisis) and consensus-decision making (the statement did not use the name Rohingya to describe the Muslims and so Malaysia would not agree to it). The Malaysian action was seen as evidence of the ASEAN Way faltering and evidence of ASEAN facing (another) crisis as it revealed a religious divide amongst the membership. Beyond these two headlining grabbing events there is a general concern amongst commentators that the ASEAN Way is ill-suited to achieving the ambitious community-building goals the Association has set itself. Is the ASEAN Way a problem to be solved to ensure that ASEAN does not wither? Can it instead adjust its modus operandi to better implement its community blueprints and thus alter its direction (whither)?

What a critical constructivist approach can reveal is not an answer to these questions, but rather to problematize the questions themselves and reflect on what the ASEAN Way is. Rather than a fixed set of regulative norms guiding practice, the ASEAN Way consists of constitutive norms that are recognised, accepted and can act as sites of visible contestation. However, as will be seen, this is not a problem to be solved but rather an essential part of how ASEAN manages intra-mural tensions. This can be witnessed in how ASEAN responded to Malaysia's public dissociation from its statement on the Rohingya crisis noted below. However, we need to understand what consensus means to appreciate the parameters in which this contestation occurred.

i. Consensus

Consensus has always meant that state elite could engage in a discussion in the knowledge that if a point of disagreement existed then the issue would be shelved until a time when the disagreement ceased to exist. In essence, it ensured that no decision could be taken against outright opposition and so it enabled the elite to be at ease with one another and no doubt helped develop the familiarity amongst the elite noted earlier. Very importantly it ensured a sense of equality among the members; there is no ASEAN Security Council. Consensus was thus about being comfortable, to a greater or lesser degree, with the subjects being discussed and decisions reached. This understanding of consensus was captured in the formula, ASEAN

minus X (A-X). That is, ASEAN can proceed with a decision where some ASEAN members are more comfortable with the decision than others, so long as those others are not opposed. It did not therefore equate consensus with unanimity. It did not require all members to agree to participate and it did not give one member a veto. This latter point is important to appreciate; how can equality exist if one member can prevent others from acting? If a member was opposed to an ASEAN decision, but it was in a minority of one, then consensus would publicly be said to have been achieved. Through a process of consultation, the anomalous one would be reassured that its concerns would be respected and in return it would not prevent the others from proceeding. Being opposed did not mean becoming estranged and consensus via consultation ensured ASEAN was united in how it managed the wishes of all members. In those circumstances where those for and against are more even, then it is not unusual for the publication of a statement to accompany a declaration. While the declaration is likely to contain passages that often appear contradictory and reveal different positions within the membership, the statement is used to clarify a particular interpretation. For example, when the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) was adopted in 2012 it was accompanied by the Phenom Penh Statement, which sought to counter the expected accusation that the AHRD fell short of international human rights standards. In those circumstances where more than one was opposed and no amount of consultation would resolve concerns then consensus equated to adjournment. Such an understanding of consensus thus creates broad parameters in which contention can play out. This understanding of consensus has though been challenged (contested) by two developments.

The first is the increasing size of the membership and specifically the approach adopted by the CMLV members. These members are generally more cautious about the direction that ASEAN's community building project is taking the Association. Do these ambitious goals foretell a more integrated Southeast Asia that will require a regional framework not dissimilar to the European Union to oversee its implementation and management? Where would this leave sovereignty and territorial independence? Given these concerns the four CMLV members, and on an issue-by-issue basis they can sometimes rely on the support of one or more of the other six, are able to present a sizable minority that is uncomfortable if not opposed to the direction other members are seeking. This ability to block initiatives, or hinder their implementation by resisting effective monitoring systems, has equated consensus with unanimity. Seen in this interpretation consensus is regarded as a problem and a bane rather than a boon for ASEAN.[62]

This interpretation of consensus can be clearly discerned in the second development. The second development is the codification of the A-X principle in the ASEAN Charter, but only in regard to economic commitments. This has led to a restriction of the principle's application with the implication that what was a general principle that underpinned a shared understanding of how consensus worked for all ASEAN decisions now only applies to economic matters. Hence Ralf Emmers' appeal to extend A-X to other areas of ASEAN activity can be interpreted as a contestation of how the A-X formula is currently interpreted.[63] It is not therefore that consensus needs to be replaced, but what can be witnessed is a contention over what consensus means, both in terms of its content (not unanimity) and its application (not solely economic matters).

This contestation over the meaning of consensus and the ensuing debate about wither and/or whither ASEAN can be seen in a different reading of the ASEAN fallout over the Association's response to the 2017 Rohingya crisis. In response to Malaysia's disassociation the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) issued a statement saying that the Philippines respected Malaysia's stance and that 'since Malaysia has different views on some issues, out of respect for its position, we decided that instead of a foreign ministers statement, we would issue a chairman's statement that would reflect the general sentiments of the other foreign ministers'. The DFA went on to add that the statement was issued after extensive consultations with Malaysia and that 'The Philippines as chair tolerates the public manifestation of dissenting voices', as this, 'demonstrates a new level of maturity on how we implement ASEAN's consensus principle when confronted with issues affecting national interests'.[64] This reveals continuity with a shared understanding of both non-interference and consensus. In the case of non-interference, according to Tang Siew Mun, Myanmar 'supported the Statement as it understood that ASEAN's credibility would be damaged otherwise. It was prepared to shoulder the heavy domestic political cost for going along with the ASEAN position'.[65] With regard to Malaysia, the ruling regime was also facing criticism although in this instance it was domestic. The specific matter concerned the fear in the ruling Malay party – United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) – that with a general election scheduled to occur within a year, and the Malay vote potentially divided between five parties, it was necessary for UMNO to be vocally supportive of the Muslim Rohingya otherwise its Muslim credentials would be impugned. It was in this context – that the Malaysian ruling regime felt it necessary to publicly support the Rohingya – that ASEAN reflected the

difficulty of achieving consensus by issuing a Chairman's statement and not a Foreign Ministers' statement. The sensitivity of the matter for Malaysia was also reflected in ASEAN members not publicly rebuking Malaysia for the rebuke that Malaysia gave ASEAN and instead they moved forward to the implementing of humanitarian assistance. Seen in this light ASEAN's statement and Malaysia's response can be seen as evidence of contestation *within* the shared meanings of consensus and non-interference and in compliance with the parameters established by the norms.

ii. Non-interference

What is important to recognise is that the 2017 Rohingya crisis is not exceptional but rather has precedence with the other constitutive norms. In the context of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, which also lead to questions about ASEAN's future, it was non-interference that became contested. In this instance the contestation came in the guise of flexible engagement, which was proposed in 1998 by the then Thai Foreign Minister and future ASEAN Secretary-General, Dr Surin Pitsuwan. Surin was though adamant that he was not seeking to replace non-interference with flexible engagement[66] but rather to adjust its meaning to better reflect the increasingly interdependent environment that ASEAN states inhabited. His proposal remained consistent with the support role that is core to non-interference – non-interference is not indifference it is designed to deflect criticism aimed at the state elite – and through a process of negotiation and consultation a consensus was arrived at with ASEAN adopting "enhanced interaction".[67] This was regarded as a rejection of flexible engagement, and it did represent a watering down of Surin's proposal, but the process of contestation that Surin initiated did reveal a willingness to adopt a more open approach to non-interference and the 2000s witnessed greater cooperation on transnational issues and engaging Burma. Non-interference therefore remained a constitutive, deeply-embedded, fixed, norm but what it meant and how it was applied altered to reflect the prevailing context the membership inhabited.[68]

iii. Informality

This contestation over the ASEAN Way can also be witnessed in another constitutive element; the notion of informality. This was originally epitomised by the Association's infrequent meetings – the first ASEAN Heads of States meeting occurred nine years after it

was formed – and lack of an institutional base. ASEAN has though had a secretariat in Jakarta since 1976 and now hosts hundreds of meetings a year. Informality is certainly no longer epitomised by the infrequency of formal meetings, but this was only the manifestation of informality. Informality captures the non-binding and non-legalistic procedures of ASEAN, which together avoid the authority for the implementation of ASEAN action plans residing anywhere else than national governments. Contestation over the shared understanding of informality is captured in the current battle over what member states understand by a rules-based ASEAN. In the ASEAN Charter the members gave ASEAN a legal and institutional framework, and one interpretation of this is that the rule of law, and the role of institutions to uphold the law, should develop alongside the ASEAN Way as the Association's new modus operandi. The Charter was adopted in 2007 and the fact that little has changed indicates that there is a lack of clarity over what conveying a legal personality on ASEAN actually means. However, it is precisely this vagueness that creates the site for contestation and various proposals are being floated and discussed that range from the formalization of an ASEAN judicial body, to creating a shared understanding of regional legal standards, to monitoring compliance with ASEAN action plans. What is pertinent is that, as with flexible engagement and the application of A-X, the debates also include discussing whether the ASEAN Way is the antithesis of a rules-based approach and thus an obstacle. What can be witnessed is the adoption of phrases in draft papers such as "flexible use of the ASEAN Way", the need "to invest effort in changing modalities" and distinguishing between a "pre-Charter flexibility and a post-Charter bindingness". In contrast one can also discern counter narratives that place the rule of law within the embrace of informality, where informality means identifying behaviours that are unacceptable, learning best practice from other regions and also ensuring that local or indigenous justice is not disparaged. The latter clearly placing the rule of law within the particularities of an ASEAN context. The site for contestation over what a rules-based ASEAN means and how it relates to ASEAN's non-legalistic culture for managing members' relations is being established. What ASEAN's history of norm contestation reveals is that rather than interpreting this as non-compliance with a constitutive norm, it is instead a reaffirmation of ASEAN's informality as its adjusts this norm to reflect the altering post-Charter context in which its community-building aspirations are pursued.

Conclusion:

Whither or wither for constructivism and ASEAN? For both it is surely whither. If the strength of a theory is that it has longevity and can be utilised by generations of academics and policymakers, then the cue for Constructivism is to replicate the broad church approach that has served Realism and Liberalism so well. Realism is riven with divisions from behavioural realists to structural realists, to offensive and defensive realists. For many the neo-liberal institutionalist turn seemed to jettison so much of liberalism it appeared more realist-lite than a branch of liberalism. Constructivists, conventional and critical, share the belief that the world is socially constructed and from this starting point many contestations can begin, including what is the purpose of theory anyway. In this article I show that when it comes to the fixity and guiding potential for norms there is room for both conventional and critical constructivists; within parameters established by practice and habit that creates a shared understanding, contestation is normality as it reveals the day-to-day negotiation and persuasion that is politics. Contestation therefore reveals not only different interpretations of a norm but the boundaries of the contention reveal what is not contested.

At fifty ASEAN is no more becoming irrelevant than at any other time in its history; it is not withering. The debates and discussions about the ability of the ASEAN Way to underpin the accomplishment of an ASEAN community are the latest debates and discussions that are a continuous feature of the contestation over the meaning and application of the ASEAN Way. ASEAN is not facing a crisis because its members are failing to act in accordance with the ASEAN Way it is experiencing the normality of its modus operandi being contested. The existence of an expanded, two-tier, ASEAN makes such contestation take on different forms but this is a replication of member states engagement over what the ASEAN Way means that will be familiar to ASEAN statesmen past and present. ASEAN's direction of travel is uncertain and thus it is a question of whither ASEAN as its community-building ambitions become realised.

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[1] Swati Srivastava, 'W(h)ither Constructivism', in *Seizing Constructivist Ground? Practice and Relational Theories*, 18 June 2017, https://www.isanet.org/Publications/ISQ/Posts/ID/5473/Seizing-Constructivist-Ground-Practice-and-Relational-Theories

[2] David M. McCourt, 'Practice Theory and Relationalism as the New Constructivism', *International Studies Quarterly* 60/3 (2016), pp. 475-485.

[3] For the division of constructivism into conventional and critical see Ted Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory', *International Security*, 23/1 (1998), pp. 171–200.

[4] Jarrod Hayes, 'Reclaiming Constructivism: Identity and the Practice of the Study of International Relations', *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50/1 (2017), p. 90.

[5] Ted Hopf, 'There are no Panaceas in Social Theory', in *Seizing Constructivist Ground? Practice and Relational Theories*, 18 June 2017, p. 2. https://www.isanet.org/Publications/ISQ/Posts/ID/5473/Seizing-Constructivist-Ground-Practice-and-Relational-Theories

[6] R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa, 'The Expansion of ASEAN and the Changing Dynamics of Southeast Asia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 39//2 (2017), p. 232.

[7] Kishore Mahbubani and Jeffery Sng, *The ASEAN Miracle: A Catalyst for Peace* (Singapore: NUS Press: Ridge Press, 2017), p. 6, 7.

[8] For crises and uncertainty over ASEAN's direction see John D. Ciorciari, 'ASEAN and the Great Powers', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 39//2 (2017), pp. 252-258; Donald K. Emmerson, 'Mapping ASEAN's Futures', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 39//2 (2017), pp. 280-287; Johanna Son, 'After 50, Asean's greatest threat is itself, not China', *The Bangkok Post* 9 August 2017. https://www.bangkokpost.com/archive/after-50-aseans-greatest-threat-is-itself-not-china/1302827; Tang Siew Mun, 'Is ASEAN Due for a Makeover?', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 39//2 (2017), pp. 239-244.

[9] John Gerard Ruggie, 'What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge', *International Organization*, 52/4 (1998), p. 871. By what counts as that activity Ruggie is emphasizing the existence of practices that enable something to exist. He notes sovereignty as constitutive of the modern state system; without sovereignty a state is not part of the international. While his chess example reveals constitutive rules can be precise in terms of content (the pieces) and the application (the rules of the game) in determining what exists (chess), interpretations of what sovereignty is, and what it enables, is more contentious. Hence, constitutive norms provide parameters around appropriate or expected behaviour, hence fixity, but how those norms are interpreted can vary depending on the context.

[10] Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998)

[11] Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46/2 (1992), pp. 391-425.

[12] Alan Bloomfield, 'Norm antipreneurs and theorising resistance to normative change', *Review of International Studies*, 42 (2016), pp. 310-333.

[13] Clifford Bob, 'The Global Right Wing and Theories of Transnational Advocacy'*, International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, 48/4 (2013), pp. 71-85.

[14] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, 52/4 (1998), pp. 887-917.

[15] Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

[16] Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, *The Persistent Power of Human Rights: From Commitment to Compliance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

[17] Amitav Acharya, 'How ideas spread: whose norms matter? Norm localization and institutional change in Asian regionalism', *International Organization*, 58/2 (2004), pp. 239–75.

[18] Amitav Acharya, 'Norm Subsidiarity and Regional Orders: Sovereignty, Regionalism, and Rule-Making in the Third World', *International Studies Quarterly*, 55/1 (2011), pp. 95-123.

[19] Hiro Katsumata, 'Mimetic adoption and norm diffusion: "Western" security cooperation in Southeast Asia?', *Review of International Studies*, 37/2 (2011), pp. 557-576.

[20] For an excellent examination, and critique, of constructivism's application to Southeast Asian security that highlight its epistemological shortcomings see See Seng Tan, 'Rescuing constructivism from the constructivists: a critical reading of constructivist interventions in Southeast Asian security', *The Pacific Review*, 19/2 (2006), pp. 239-260.

[21] McCourt, 'Practice Theory and Relationalism', pp. 475-485.

[22] Srivastava, 'W(h)ither Constructivism', p. 22.

[23] See Patricia Hewitt, 'The quest for a British identity', *New Statesman*, 14/687, 17-30 December 2001, pp. 50-51. Uvanney Maylor, 'Promoting British values opens up a can of worms for teachers', *The Guardian* (UK), 12 June 2014. Telegraph View, 'The core British values that define our nation', *The Telegraph* (UK), 11 June 2014.

[24] Diana Panke and Ulrich Petersohn, 'Why international norms disappear sometimes', *European Journal of International Relations*, 18/4 (2011), pp. 719-742.

[25] Mona Lena Krook and Jacqui True, 'Rethinking the life cycles of international norms: The United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality', *European Journal of International Relations*, 18/1 (2010), pp. 103-127.

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[27] Panke and Petersohn, 'Why international norms disappear', p. 721.

[28] Panke and Petersohn, 'Why international norms disappear', p. 734.

[29] Panke and Petersohn, 'Why international norms disappear', p. 723.

[30] Krook and True, 'Rethinking the life cycles', p. 105.

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[32] Niemann and Schillinger, 'Contestation', p. 30.

[33] Niemann and Schillinger, 'Contestation', p. 31.

[34] Antje Wiener, *The Invisible Constitution of Politics: Contested Norms and International Encounters* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Antje Wiener, *A Theory of Contestation* (Berlin: Springer, 2014)

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[38] Niemann and Schillinger, 'Contestation', p. 41.

[39] For an introduction to Practice Theory and International Relations see Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger, *International Practice Theory: New Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2014).

[40] McCourt, 'Practice Theory and Relationalism', p. 478.

[41] Ole Jacob Sending, 'Constitution, Choice and Change: Problems with the "Logic of Appropriateness" and its Use in Constructivist Theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, 8/4 (2002), p. 453.

[42] For Practice Theory see Vincent Pouliot, 'The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities', *International Organization*, 62/2 (2008), pp. 257-288. For habit see Ted Hopf, 'The logic of habit in international relations', *European Journal of International Relations,* 16/4 (2010), pp. 539–561.

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[45] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: The Free Press 1989), pp. 160-1.

[46] See Sending, 'Constitution, Choice and Change', p. 457 and p. 454.

[47] McCourt, 'Practice Theory and Relationalism', p. 479.

[48] Niemann and Schillinger, 'Contestation', p. 48.

[49] Wiener, *The Invisible Constitution of Politics*, p. 211.

[50] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2009), pp. 101-105.

[51] Bonnie Honig,, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 15.

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[54] Aarie Glas, 'Habits of peace: Long-term regional cooperation in Southeast Asia', *European Journal of International Relations*, 23/4 (2017), pp. 833–856.

[55] Alan Collins, *Building a People-Oriented Security Community the ASEAN Way* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013)

[56] The path-breaking work was undertaken by Amitav Acharya. See Amitav Acharya, 'Do norms and identity matter: community and power in Southeast Asia's regional order', *The Pacific Review*, 18/1 (2005), pp. 95–118. Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community*. Acharya's works spawned numerous others applying constructivism to the region. For example, Alice D. Ba, *[Re]Negotiating East and Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Nicholas Busse, 'Constructivism and Southeast Asian security', *The Pacific Review*, 12/1 (1999), pp. 39–60. This constructivist "turn" provoked some critical rejoinders. See Nicholas Khoo, 'Deconstructing the ASEAN Security Community: A Review Essay', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 4/1 (2004), pp. 35-46; David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith, *ASEAN and East Asian International Relations: Regional Delusions* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar 2006).

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[58] Lee Jones, 'ASEAN Norms and Practices', in ISIS Malaysia (ed.) *ASEAN FutureForward: Anticipating the Next 50 Years* (ISIS Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur, 2017), pp. 89-98.

[59] Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community*, p. 62.

[60] Mathew Davies, *Ritual and Region: The Invention of ASEAN* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2018), p. 12.

[61] Quoted in Eileen Ng, 'More "difficult now for Asean to reach consensus"', *Today online*, 3 October 2017.

[62] See Seng Tan, 'Minilateralism: A Way out of ASEAN's Consensus Conundrum?', *ASEANFocus*, Issue 5 (October 2017), p. 9.

[63] Ralf Emmers, 'ASEAN Minus X: Should This Formula Be Extended?', *RSIS Commentary*, No. 199, 24 October 2017.

[64] Radio Free Asia , 'Malaysia Rejects ASEAN's Latest Statement on Rakhine Crisis in Myanmar', *Radio Free Asia*, 25 September 2017, http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/asean-rohingya-09252017165325.html

[65] Tang Siew Mun, 'Malaysia Drowns Out ASEAN's Collective Voice on the Rakhine Issue', *ISEAS Commentary* 1 October 2017.

[66] See Hiro Katsumata, 'Reconstruction of Diplomatic Norms in Southeast Asia: The Case for Strict Adherence to the "ASEAN Way"', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 25/1 (2003), p. 108.

[67] See Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community*, pp. 149-151.

[68] For detailed exposition of what motivated Surin to reinterpret non-interference see Jürgen Haacke, *ASEAN's Diplomatic and Security Culture: Origins, development and prospects* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), Ch. 7. What is noticeable from Haacke's explanation is the mixture of policy and ideational impetuses that motivated Surin.