

Thailand's Domestic Political Turmoil in 1992 and Its Impact on ASEAN Integration: An Analysis of Key Events and Decisions

Xiangyun Li

Thai Studies Center, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University
Email: 6588303722@student.chula.ac.th

Received November 5, 2023; **Revised** December 10, 2023; **Accepted** December 31, 2023

Abstract

This article aimed to study (1) the influence of Thailand's domestic political events in 1992, including the Black May crisis and the subsequent changes in leadership and governance, on the integration process of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); (2) the role of Thailand's domestic politics, particularly the economic and foreign policy decisions under the Anand Panyarachun and Chuan Leekpai administrations, in shaping ASEAN's economic integration, specifically the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA); and (3) the broader implications of Thailand's internal political dynamics on regional cooperation and stability within ASEAN. The study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing interpretive analysis and documentary research as the primary methods for data collection. Historical documents, official records, and archival materials from the period under examination served as the primary sources. The analysis was conducted using Descriptive statistics and Content Analysis. The research results revealed that Thailand's domestic political turmoil in 1992 had a significant impact on ASEAN's integration process. The establishment of AFTA was notably influenced by Thailand's internal political changes, reflecting the country's proactive role in promoting regional economic development. Furthermore, the study underscored how national political developments, characterized by a mix of democratic reform efforts and military influence, shaped Thailand's foreign policy towards ASEAN, thereby affecting the trajectory of regional cooperation and integration efforts within ASEAN.

Keywords: Thailand Domestic Politics; ASEAN Integration; ASEAN Free Trade Area

Introduction

Since its inception in 1967 with the Bangkok Declaration, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been pivotal in promoting regional cooperation among Southeast Asian countries. Initially comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore, ASEAN aimed to foster social progress, economic growth, and cultural development among its members (Aini, 2022). However, the organization's journey was impeded by various challenges, including Cold War dynamics, historical legacies, and internal political issues within member states. These complexities often led to unmet objectives from the late 1960s to the late 1980s. The end of the Cold War in 1991 brought a significant shift in global politics, impacting ASEAN's dynamics and necessitating an adaptation to the new international environment (Papp, 1919). While the literature acknowledges the influence of regional and global changes on ASEAN, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific

impact of Thailand's domestic politics in 1992—a year marked by intense political turbulence—on ASEAN's integration process.

Thailand, a founding member of ASEAN, has been instrumental in the organization's initiatives. Its political landscape in 1992 was particularly tumultuous, experiencing significant events like the Black May crisis and the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) during the ASEAN Summit in Singapore (Annie, 2017; Maisrikrod, 1993). These events were critical in shaping both national policies and ASEAN's broader integration efforts. However, the existing literature largely overlooks the direct correlation between Thailand's internal political events and ASEAN's trajectory in this crucial period. This research aims to address this gap by exploring the interplay between Thailand's domestic politics and its contributions to ASEAN's integration process in 1992. The target audience for this research includes scholars and practitioners in international relations, particularly those focusing on Southeast Asian studies and regional integration.

The objective of this paper is to examine the influence of Thailand's domestic politics on ASEAN integration in 1992 through the lens of the two-level games theory. This research seeks to provide a detailed analysis of how Thailand's domestic politics during this period influenced ASEAN integration, contributing to a deeper understanding of the political dynamics of regional states and their impact on regional integration. By focusing on the specific context of 1992, the paper aims to explore the roles played by major ASEAN member states in the development of ASEAN integration and to bridge the gap in the literature regarding the relationship between national political events and regional cooperation.

Research Objectives

1. **To Analyze the Impact of Thailand's Domestic Politics in 1992 on ASEAN Integration:** This objective focuses on evaluating how Thailand's political events and transformations in 1992, especially the Black May crisis and the change in government, influenced the process of ASEAN integration.
2. **To Examine Thailand's Role in the Establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA):** The research aims to scrutinize Thailand's contributions and stance during the establishment of AFTA in 1992, as discussed during the ASEAN Summit in Singapore, and how these actions reflected the country's domestic political situation.
3. **To Explore the Interplay Between Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in Thailand:** This objective seeks to understand how the internal political dynamics in Thailand during 1992, under different leaderships and amidst political unrest, shaped its foreign policy decisions regarding ASEAN.
4. **To Contribute to the Literature on the Influence of National Politics on Regional Cooperation:** By focusing on the specific case of Thailand in 1992, the study aims to provide insights that enhance the understanding of the relationship between a member state's domestic politics and its impact on the dynamics of regional organizations like ASEAN.

Literature Review

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been a central topic in international relations research, with numerous studies exploring its developmental stages and various facets. Scholarly works have delved into ASEAN's economic integration, examining it from diverse theoretical angles. Examples include "ASEAN: Economic Integration and intra-regional trade" by Sharma and Chua (2000), "Challenges for the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN)" by Denoon and Colbert (1998). "ASEAN's Regional Integration Challenge: The ASEAN Process" by Guan (2004), and "The Economic Transformation of the ASEAN Region in Comparative Perspective" by Intal Jr (2017). These studies analyze ASEAN's economic integration and contrast its approach with models like the EU.

In relation to Thailand, the year 1992 has been frequently referenced in academic discussions on domestic politics. Studies such as "The Constitutional System of Thailand: A Contextual Analysis" by Harding and Leyland (2011), "Constitutions, Regimes and Power in Thailand" by Hewison (2007), "Democratization in Thailand" by Neher (1996), "Thailand Since the Coup" by Pongsudhirak (2008), and "The Politics of Reform and the Future of Thailand" by Aphornsuvan (2018) explore Thailand's political landscape, including its constitutional system and significant events like the Black May incident.

The work of Surin Maisirikrod (1993) provides an extensive analysis of Thailand's domestic politics in 1992, examining the roles of key forces like the King, the military, demonstrators, and media during the crisis. This research also touches upon Thailand's foreign policy in 1992, particularly its approach towards the ASEAN Free Trade Area and relations with neighboring countries.

Additionally, studies have investigated Thailand's role in ASEAN's integration. Zhou (2008) conducted a historical examination of Thailand's relationship with ASEAN, while Ren (2019) analyzed Thailand's status and trends in ASEAN's economic integration. Moreover, Ma (2015) explored the impact of Thailand's politics on ASEAN's geopolitical dynamics, primarily focusing on the 21st century.

This paper seeks to fill the literature gap by focusing on the influence of Thailand's domestic politics in 1992 on ASEAN integration, providing a comprehensive view of the interplay between Thailand's internal politics and its role in ASEAN during this transformative period.

Research Methodology

In this research, the interpretive paradigm, complemented by qualitative methods, documentary analysis, and the application of the two-level games theory, forms the core theoretical framework. This blend of approaches aims to dissect the complex interplay between Thailand's domestic political developments in 1992 and its foreign policy, subsequently influencing ASEAN integration. The interpretive paradigm, as articulated by Duangratana (2022), provides the primary lens for examining Thailand's political landscape during this tumultuous period. This perspective underscores the significance of subjective interpretations, enabling an exploration into the motivations and intentions of key political figures in 1992, thus offering a deeper understanding of their actions and decisions. Qualitative analysis, recommended by Taguchi (2013), further enriches this study by delving into the subtle and specific contextual elements that shaped the political events of that year. This methodological choice allows for a more nuanced understanding of the political dynamics at play. Documentary research, as emphasized by Odiemo and Okoth (2020), plays a crucial role in data gathering for this study. It involves a thorough examination of historical documents, official records, and archival materials from 1992, providing a solid empirical foundation for the research. Lastly, the two-level games theory, a concept introduced by Kirdiş (2015), offers a strategic analytical framework. It facilitates an understanding of how domestic political considerations and international diplomatic engagements interact, particularly in the context of

Thailand's foreign policy decisions and their impact on the ASEAN integration process. By integrating these theoretical and methodological frameworks, the research aims to uncover the complex relationship between Thailand's domestic political environment in 1992, its foreign policy strategies, and their collective influence on the progression of ASEAN integration.

Thailand's Domestic Politics in 1992: A Year of Transformation

This section delves into the turbulent political landscape of Thailand in 1992, a year marked by significant upheaval and transformation, known historically as the Black May. This era was characterized by a blend of economic challenges, social unrest, and a strong push for political reforms.

Understanding the historical significance of 1992 requires a comprehensive examination of Thailand's economic and political background. The 1980s were a period of remarkable economic growth for Thailand, a time when the nation shifted its focus towards an export-driven economy. This strategic move catalyzed rapid industrialization and economic expansion (Buch-Hansen, 2003). Despite these advancements, the era also saw a rise in income disparity, a factor that contributed to the growing social and political tensions leading up to 1992 (Ikemoto & Uehara, 2000).

This exploration into Thailand's domestic politics during 1992 aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the various factors that converged to shape this critical year in the country's history.

Addressing Economic Challenges in Thailand: Late 1980s to Early 1990s

The late 1980s and early 1990s represented a critical period of economic difficulties for Thailand, characterized by unemployment, inflation, and a decline in living standards. These challenges, as detailed by Hesse (2007), laid bare the vulnerabilities of the Thai economy and sparked widespread public dissatisfaction, serving as a catalyst for political mobilization.

During this time, Thailand underwent financial liberalization, leading to a significant inflow of foreign capital, which profoundly influenced the economic landscape (Hesse, 2007). Concurrently, the era was marked by the effects of globalization, which were intricately linked to domestic political settings. Thailand, among other nations, experienced a notable threshold of globalization in this period (Kwon & Pontusson, 2010). Gottschalk (1999) highlights an important societal shift during these years, with increasing demands for a single-payer healthcare system, reflecting a broader call for systemic change.

The amalgamation of these economic factors - unemployment, reduced living standards, and the influx of foreign capital - created an environment that discouraged collective workplace solutions, paving the way for the rise of political activism (Mills, 1999). The impact of minimum wage policies was particularly significant in Thailand during this period, further exemplifying the socio-economic challenges confronting the population (Fairris et al., 2008).

In essence, Thailand's economic struggles in the late 1980s and early 1990s had deep socio-political implications. The combination of foreign capital inflow, the nuanced effects of globalization, and the issues surrounding minimum wage policies were key elements fueling public discontent and fostering the emergence of political activism.

March 1992 Elections and the Ensuing Political Unrest in Thailand

The March 1992 elections in Thailand marked a pivotal moment in the nation's political history, unfolding in the wake of significant political changes. In late February 1991, the Thai military seized power from Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan's civilian administration, leading to a suspension of the 1978 Constitution (McDorman, 1993). Subsequently, Anand Panyarachun was appointed as Prime Minister in March 1991, and his interim government introduced a new constitution in December 1991, setting the stage for the general elections scheduled for March 1992. Contrary to public expectations of a democratic restoration, the March 22 elections deviated from the anticipated path of returning democracy to the people, a promise made by the military after their 1991 coup (Maisrikrod, 1993).

The military's engagement in politics, particularly evident in the 1990s, followed a decade of semi-democratic governance under General Prem Tinsulanonda in the 1980s (Maisrikrod, 1993). April 1991 saw the formation of the Samakkhi Tham Party (STP), reflecting the military's ambition to continue its political dominance. The STP's endorsement of Suchinda for the prime ministerial role, backed by influential financiers within the party, intensified public dissatisfaction and fortified the pro-democracy movement (Maisrikrod, 1993).

Despite oversight by election watchdog groups, the military managed to secure victory through widespread vote-buying during the March 22 elections. While these groups exposed the malpractices, they were unable to eradicate vote-buying, highlighting its detrimental impact on Thailand's political development (Maisrikrod, 1993).

1992 was also a year of significant civil unrest in Thailand, with three major protest rounds occurring between April and May. The first two rounds, on April 20 and from May 4 to May 11, were orchestrated by a coalition of political parties, students, academics, and NGOs, collectively known as the "Campaign for Democracy Committee" (Maisrikrod, 1993). The third round, led by Chamlong on May 17, was a response to the government's failure to amend the constitution. This phase of demonstrations culminated in violence when Chamlong led thousands to the Government House, resulting in his arrest on May 18 and a subsequent four-day military crackdown. This event, known as the Black May incident, brought Bangkok to a standstill and drew international condemnation. The intervention of the King on May 19 was crucial in preventing further escalation (Maisrikrod, 1993).

The Black May incident had grave consequences, including the loss of 52 lives, with over 200 people missing, and an estimated economic loss of around 32.89 billion Thai baht due to demonstrations, riots, and business disruptions (Maisrikrod, 1993).

King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Mediating Role in Thailand's 1992 Political Crisis

In the tumultuous events of 1992, the significant and transformative role of King Bhumibol Adulyadej was at the forefront. His intervention was pivotal in bridging the gap between the conflicting parties and easing the tensions that had escalated during the Black May crisis. Upholding his constitutional and ceremonial duties, King Bhumibol Adulyadej addressed the nation through television, advocating for peace and reconciliation, a gesture that resonated deeply with the Thai people (Jatchavala & Vittayanont, 2021). His call for a peaceful resolution to both the military and the protesters was impactful, reflecting the long-standing respect and reverence for the Thai monarchy as a symbol of unity in times of national crisis (Jatchavala & Vittayanont, 2021).

Behind the scenes, King Bhumibol Adulyadej's diplomatic engagements with key representatives from the military and the pro-democracy movement were crucial in fostering a conducive environment for dialogue and eventual reconciliation (Jatchavala & Vittayanont, 2021). Nonetheless, his active involvement in mediating the crisis sparked discussions regarding the monarchy's role in the political domain, posing significant questions about the essence and boundaries of the constitutional monarchy in Thailand (McCargo, 2020).

The King's intervention during the Black May crisis subsequently became a key topic in the ongoing discourse on political reforms and democratic governance in Thailand. It highlighted the delicate balance between the constitutional role of the monarchy and its esteemed position in Thai culture. The King's actions played a decisive role in the resolution of the crisis, leading to the resignation of General Suchinda and paving the way for a more democratic governance structure (McCargo, 2020). As Thailand progressed, this episode prompted a reexamination of the monarchy's role within the nation's evolving political framework (McCargo, 2020).

In summary, King Bhumibol Adulyadej's intervention in the Black May crisis of 1992 underscores the complex role of the Thai monarchy in navigating political turmoil. His actions during this period have continued to influence discussions on the nature of constitutional monarchy, its role in Thai politics, and the evolving relationship between the monarchy and the state, underpinning the ongoing dialogue about political reform and democracy in Thailand.

September 1992 Elections and the Emergence of the Chuan Administration in Thailand

September 1992 was a watershed moment in Thailand's political narrative, marked by the Chuan administration's ascent to power. This period, following the tumultuous Black May events, heralded a significant shift in Thailand's political landscape, necessitating a critical reassessment of the existing political framework (Maisrikrod, 1992). The establishment of the Chuan government represented a collective call for democratic reforms and a move away from the entrenched military influence, embodying the nation's desire for a more democratic and inclusive governance model (Neher, 1992).

Chuan Leekpai, a distinguished figure in Thai politics and the leader of the Democrat Party, assumed the role of Prime Minister following a victory in the democratic elections (Maisrikrod, 1992). Recognizing the imperative for political stability and economic advancement, his government prioritized strengthening democratic institutions, reinstating public trust, and cultivating an inclusive political climate. This focus on democratic values was indicative of the administration's dedication to fostering a political environment characterized by pluralism, accountability, and active citizen participation.

On the economic front, the Chuan government undertook initiatives to spur growth and attract foreign investment, aiming to establish Thailand as a key player in the regional economy (Maisrikrod, 1992). Efforts to liberalize markets, implement business-friendly policies, and promote trade were instrumental in driving economic progress during this period. Additionally, the government embraced a diplomatic stance that underscored regional cooperation and international engagement, acknowledging Thailand's important role in the ASEAN context (Maisrikrod, 1992).

In conclusion, the tenure of the Chuan government marked a pivotal phase in guiding Thailand towards a future characterized by democratic governance and robust economic growth. The administration's steadfast commitment to democratic principles, economic development, and regional collaboration laid the groundwork for further political evolution in Thailand, aligning with the nation's aspiration for a more democratic and inclusive society in the post-Black May era.

Thailand's Domestic Political Transformation in 1992 and Its Impact on ASEAN Integration

The year 1992 was a turning point for Thailand's political scene, especially in the wake of the Black May events, which instigated a profound reassessment and restructuring of the country's governance. This era was marked by a shift in power dynamics, moving from bureaucratic control to civilian-led governance. The ramifications of these internal political changes had a far-reaching impact on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), influencing its economic, social, and political spheres (Bhattacharyya, 2010). Notably, the strengthening of political parties and changes in demographic trends, such as a declining birth rate, led to a reduction in family representation within the Thai parliament, resulting in a more stabilized legislative environment (Ockey, 2015). Additionally, the post-1992 period saw a deepening commitment to democratic principles in Thailand, particularly following the violence associated with the military coup attempt in the same year (Ganesan, 2001).

In the economic realm, Thailand played a pivotal role in ASEAN's shift towards more structured economic integration. The proposal for the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1990, and the subsequent adoption of the "Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) Scheme" at the 4th ASEAN Summit in 1992, marked significant milestones in ASEAN's transition from a loosely structured economic group to a more formalized process of regional economic integration (Calvo Pardo et al., 2009). These developments transformed the landscape of ASEAN economic cooperation, accelerating the establishment of AFTA and showcasing Thailand's proactive engagement in fostering regional economic growth. Moreover, the unanimous approval by ASEAN member countries to expedite the completion of AFTA during the 5th ASEAN Summit in 1995 further underscores Thailand's dedication to enhancing regional economic integration (Calvo Pardo et al., 2009).

Anand Panyarachun's Tenure: Democratic Reforms and Foreign Policy Impact

Anand Panyarachun's ascension to leadership in Thailand, following the military's withdrawal, marked a new chapter in the nation's political history. Appointed directly by the king, Panyarachun oversaw the promulgation of a new constitution at the end of 1991, an event that became a cornerstone in Thailand's political evolution (Beleska-Spasova et al., 2016). The 1991 constitution, implemented in 1992, signified a decisive move towards a more democratic political system in Thailand. It laid emphasis on the separation of powers, checks and balances, and the safeguarding of individual rights, aiming to curtail military dominance and promote inclusive governance (Beleska-Spasova et al., 2016; Chambers, 2009).

Panyarachun's tenure was also notable for his foreign policy, which significantly influenced Thailand's regional and global engagements. Key aspects of his foreign policy

included liberalizing financial markets, boosting foreign investment, and fostering enhanced relations within the ASEAN community (Beleska-Spasova et al., 2016). Under his administration, Thailand engaged actively in ASEAN initiatives, such as the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), strengthening ties with neighboring countries and contributing to regional integration (Chambers, 2009).

Economically, Panyarachun's policies were geared towards enhancing Thailand's openness to foreign investment and economic growth. His approach to opening up financial markets was part of a larger strategy aimed at boosting Thailand's competitiveness and integrating its economy into the global market (Beleska-Spasova et al., 2016).

Panyarachun's leadership was characterized by a focus on democratic reforms and a progressive foreign policy. His governance not only stabilized Thailand's political landscape but also propelled economic development. His tenure laid the groundwork for further constitutional reforms and established Thailand as a proactive player in regional and global affairs (Chambers, 2009).

In summary, the implementation of the new constitution under Anand Panyarachun's leadership in 1992 was a pivotal moment in Thailand's political development. His administration, marked by democratic reforms and an open approach to foreign policy, played a significant role in shaping Thailand's future direction. The constitutional reforms and foreign policy initiatives during this period were instrumental in transitioning Thailand towards a more democratic system and an enhanced role in international relations.

The Impact of Thailand's "Black May" Crisis on Its ASEAN Foreign Policy

During the period of General Suchinda Kraprayoon's military rule in Thailand, the nation experienced significant turmoil, particularly evident in the large-scale demonstrations of April and May 1992 (Sopranzetti, 2016). These months were marked by widespread public discontent against the military's escalating political influence, culminating in the "Black May" events (Elinoff, 2019). The military's forceful response to these protests, leading to numerous casualties, significantly escalated political tensions and marked a critical juncture in Thailand's political history (Sopranzetti, 2016).

In the domestic realm, the fallout from "Black May" had far-reaching consequences for Thailand's internal governance. The public's response to the violence and the military's role in governance led to General Suchinda's resignation and prompted a thorough reassessment of the military's position in Thai politics, setting the stage for essential constitutional reforms (Elinoff, 2019).

The repercussions of these events extended to Thailand's foreign policy, particularly concerning its role within ASEAN. The international community strongly condemned the military's actions during "Black May," which adversely affected Thailand's reputation as a stable and democratic nation. This period underscored the need for a careful balance between civilian governance and military influence, leading to a significant reorientation of Thailand's foreign policy. The emphasis shifted towards upholding democratic values and ensuring political stability, essential for maintaining regional harmony and cooperation within ASEAN (Elinoff, 2019).

In the aftermath of "Black May," Thailand embarked on a journey towards political transformation. The country took decisive steps towards establishing a more democratic governance system, enacting constitutional reforms aimed at curbing military dominance. This shift in domestic politics had a profound impact on Thailand's international relations, aligning its foreign policy more closely with democratic principles and contributing to regional stability within the ASEAN framework.

To summarize, the "Black May" events of 1992 had a lasting impact on Thailand, both in terms of its internal political development and its foreign policy orientation. The suppression of protests led to significant political reforms, reinforcing Thailand's commitment to democratic governance. Despite facing internal challenges, Thailand's resilience and adherence to democratic values not only reshaped its domestic political landscape but also influenced its standing and approach in the international arena, particularly within ASEAN.

Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's ASEAN Policy

During Chuan Leekpai's term as Prime Minister starting in September 1992, Thailand's interaction with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) entered a crucial phase. Chuan's foreign policy was notably marked by a dedication to enhancing regional cooperation and economic integration, as well as fostering diplomatic relations (Emmers, 2014). This period coincided with ASEAN's movement towards deeper economic integration, highlighted by the launch of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1992, a key initiative that Chuan's administration actively supported and participated in, recognizing its potential for bolstering regional trade and cooperation (Syarip, 2020).

Under Chuan's leadership, the significance of maintaining political stability within ASEAN was emphasized, with an understanding that a secure and stable regional environment is essential for economic prosperity (Narine, 1998). His administration upheld the core ASEAN principles of non-interference and consensus-building, contributing significantly to fostering a peaceful and cooperative political climate in the region (Narine, 1998). Additionally, Chuan's economic policies were geared towards attracting foreign investment and stimulating economic growth, thereby aligning with ASEAN's broader objectives of economic integration (Lee, 2022).

In summary, Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's ascendancy to leadership in September 1992 represented a period of renewed and strengthened commitment to ASEAN and its overarching goals. His administration's policies were in line with fostering economic integration, ensuring political stability, and enhancing diplomatic engagement within the ASEAN framework. This approach played a vital role in shaping a united and collaborative Southeast Asian region during a pivotal time in ASEAN's developmental journey.

ASEAN's Reaction to Thailand's Domestic Political Shifts

Thailand's domestic political events have consistently garnered significant attention from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its member states, as well as key global entities. The complex interplay between Thailand's internal political shifts and their implications for ASEAN's economic, social, and political spheres has been a focal point for observation and response.

ASEAN, as an organization dedicated to promoting collaboration and stability among its member states, remains vigilant in monitoring Thailand's political developments (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Adhering to its foundational principles of non-interference and consensus-building, ASEAN seeks to uphold regional harmony. In times of political turmoil or transition in Thailand, the organization often engages in diplomatic initiatives aimed at fostering constructive dialogue and aiding in the peaceful resolution of issues (Brenner & Theodore, 2002).

Reactions within the ASEAN community, particularly from Thailand's neighboring countries, vary in response to these political shifts. The close geographical proximity and shared economic interests underscore the importance of Thailand's political stability for its neighbors. Economic connections, trade relations, and regional security considerations are deeply intertwined, influencing the responses of individual ASEAN member countries (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Furthermore, major international players, including influential nations beyond the ASEAN region, keep a watchful eye on Thailand's political landscape. Their responses are shaped by considerations of economic investments, trade partnerships, and geopolitical strategies (Brenner & Theodore, 2002).

In essence, the dimensions of economic, social, and political security within ASEAN are closely linked. Thailand's internal political stability is a matter of concern not only domestically but also in the context of regional cooperation and overall prosperity within the ASEAN framework (Brenner & Theodore, 2002).

Conclusion

According to the two-level games theory, as expounded by Chiou (2010), the shifts in a country's foreign policy are deeply intertwined with systemic structures and domestic political dynamics. This concept is particularly relevant in analyzing Thailand's scenario in 1992, where internal political changes significantly influenced its foreign policy, thereby affecting its role and participation in ASEAN integration. This relationship is characterized by a sequential interaction: domestic politics influencing foreign policy, which in turn impacts ASEAN integration in 1992. The core of this analysis lies in comprehending how Thailand's domestic political environment shaped its diplomatic strategies and the subsequent implications for ASEAN integration.

The impact of these domestic changes in Thailand was two-fold. On one hand, they contributed positively by driving the promotion of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), strengthening economic ties, improving relations with the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam), and fostering a degree of political trust. However, on the other hand, the ongoing challenges of political instability, the democratization process, and the competition among various interest groups in the decision-making process presented significant hurdles. These challenges impeded full commitment to ASEAN initiatives, thus slowing down the pace of regional integration.

The dual nature of these impacts highlights the complex relationship between domestic political shifts and foreign policy decisions. While the positive aspects led to enhanced economic cooperation and diplomatic relations within ASEAN, fostering a sense of shared political trust, the negative aspects were marked by challenges in fully realizing proposed initiatives, ultimately affecting the momentum of ASEAN integration. This analysis underlines

the pivotal role of internal political dynamics in shaping a country's approach to regional engagement and integration efforts.

Suggestions Arising from the Study

This study's exploration of Thailand's political landscape in 1992 and its subsequent impact on ASEAN integration yields several critical suggestions for both policymakers and scholars in the field of international relations and regional studies. These suggestions are intended to provide guidance for future decision-making processes and academic inquiries.

Enhancing Political Stability for Regional Integration: Given the profound impact of domestic political stability on regional cooperation, ASEAN member states should prioritize maintaining internal political stability. This involves fostering democratic processes, ensuring transparency in governance, and addressing socio-economic disparities. Stable domestic environments in member countries are crucial for effective and harmonious regional integration.

Inclusive Policy-Making Process: ASEAN policymakers should consider adopting a more inclusive approach in decision-making. This entails engaging various domestic interest groups and civil society organizations to ensure that regional initiatives resonate with and benefit all stakeholders. Such inclusivity can enhance the commitment to and effectiveness of ASEAN initiatives.

Focus on Economic Cooperation and Trust-Building: The positive impact of economic cooperation initiatives like AFTA underscores the need for continued focus on economic integration within ASEAN. Strengthening economic ties can serve as a foundation for building political trust and cooperation among member states. Efforts should be made to identify and implement new areas of economic collaboration that are mutually beneficial.

Addressing the Challenges of Democratization: The study highlights the challenges posed by ongoing democratization processes within member states. ASEAN, as a collective entity, should provide platforms for sharing best practices in governance and democratization. Support for member states undergoing political transitions can contribute to a more stable and cohesive regional bloc.

Research on Domestic Politics and Regional Integration: Scholars should further explore the nexus between domestic politics and regional integration. There is a need for more in-depth studies focusing on individual ASEAN member states, examining how their internal political dynamics affect collective regional policies and strategies. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the ASEAN integration process and its future trajectory.

By addressing these suggestions, ASEAN can strengthen its unity and effectiveness as a regional organization, ensuring that it remains resilient and adaptive in the face of evolving political landscapes within its member states.

References

- Aini, D. C. (2022). *ASEAN Regional Diplomacy and Cooperation in Reducing Poverty and Building Resilience: Towards Covid-19 Recovery*. Paper presented at the Universitas Lampung International Conference on Social Sciences.
- Annie, K. (2017). *Thailand Strategic to ASEAN (Cognition and Option)*[Doctoral dissertation, Wuhan University].
- Aphornsuvan, T. (2018). The Politics of Reform and the Future of Thailand. *Journal of Human Rights and Peace Studies*, 4(1), 143-184. Retrieved from <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/HRPS/article/view/164220>
- Beleska-Spasova, E., Loykulnanta, S., & Nguyen, Q. T. (2016). Firm-specific, national and regional competitive advantages: The case of emerging market MNEs—Thailand. *Asian Business & Management*, 15, 264-291. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41291-016-0009-8>
- Bhattacharyya, A. (2010). Understanding security in regionalism framework: ASEAN maritime security in perspective. *Maritime Affairs*, 6(2), 72-89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2010.559786>
- Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2002). Cities and the geographies of “actually existing neoliberalism”. *Antipode*, 34(3), 349-379. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00246>
- Buch-Hansen, M. (2003). The territorialisation of rural Thailand: between localism, nationalism and globalism. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 94(3), 322-334.
- Calvo Pardo, H. F., Freund, C. L., & Ornelas, E. (2009). *The ASEAN free trade agreement: impact on trade flows and external trade barriers*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (4960).
- Chambers, P. (2009). Edgy Amity along the Mekong: Thai-Lao Relations in a Transforming Regional Equilibrium. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 17(1), 89-118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185370902767664>
- Denoon, D. B., & Colbert, E. (1998). *Challenges for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*. Pacific Affairs.
- Duangratana, O. (2022). The dynamics of democratization and the implications on Thailand's foreign policy. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 8(3), 241-256.
- Elinoff, E. (2019). Subjects of politics: Between democracy and dictatorship in Thailand. *Anthropological Theory*, 19(1), 143-169.
- Emmers, R. (2014). Indonesia's role in ASEAN: A case of incomplete and sectorial leadership. *The Pacific Review*, 27(4), 543-562.
- Fairris, D., Popli, G., & Zepeda, E. (2008). Minimum wages and the wage structure in Mexico. *Review of Social Economy*, 66(2), 181-208.
- Ganesan, N. (2001). Thailand's Relations with Malaysia and Myanmar in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 2(1), 127-146. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1468109901000160>
- Gottschalk, M. (1999). The Elusive Goal of Universal Health Care in the US: Organized Labor and the Institutional Straightjacket of the Private Welfare State. *Journal of Policy History*, 11(4), 367-398. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898030600003389>
- Guan, B. T. C. (2004). ASEAN's regional integration challenge: The ASEAN process. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 20, 70-94. <https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v20i0.34>
- Harding, A., & Leyland, P. (2011). *The constitutional system of Thailand: A contextual analysis*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Hesse, H. (2007). Monetary policy, structural break and the monetary transmission mechanism in Thailand. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 18(4), 649-669.
- Hewison, K. (2007). Constitutions, regimes and power in Thailand. *Democratization*, 14(5), 928-945.
- Ikemoto, Y., & Uehara, M. (2000). Income inequality and Kuznets' hypothesis in Thailand. *Asian Economic Journal*, 14(4), 421-443. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8381.t01-1-00117>
- Intal, P. S. (2017). *The Economic Transformation of the ASEAN Region in Comparative Perspective*. ASEAN Member States: Transformation and Integration; Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia: Jakarta, Indonesia, 1.
- Jatchavala, C., & Vittayanont, A. (2021). King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Higher-Education Students from the Armed Conflict Region of Thailand. *Kesmas: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Nasional (National Public Health Journal)*, 16(3), 206-212.
- Kirdiş, E. (2015). The role of foreign policy in constructing the party identity of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP). *Turkish Studies*, 16(2), 178-194.
- Kwon, H. Y., & Pontusson, J. (2010). Globalization, labour power and partisan politics revisited. *Socio-economic review*, 8(2), 251-281.
- Lee, S.-H. (2022). ASEAN's economic security and regional economic cooperation: Past, present, and future. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 7(1), 10-28.
- Ma, Y. (2015). The Impact of the Thai Political Situation on ASEAN Geopolitics. *Journal of Wenshan University*, 28(2), 109-112.
- Maisrikrod, S. (1992). *Thailand's Two General Elections in 1992*. Democracy Sustained.
- Maisrikrod, S. (1993). *Thailand 1992: Repression and return of democracy*. Southeast Asian Affairs.
- McCargo, D. (2020). *Fighting for virtue: Justice and politics in Thailand*. Cornell University Press.
- McDorman, T. L. (1993). The 1991 Constitution of Thailand. *Washington International Law Journal*, 3(2), 257-298
- Mills, M. B. (1999). Enacting solidarity: Unions and migrant youth in Thailand. *Critique of Anthropology*, 19(2), 175-192.
- Narine, S. (1998). ASEAN and the Management of Regional Security. Pacific Affairs.
- Neher, C. D. (1992). Political succession in Thailand. *Asian Survey*, 32(7), 585-605.
- Neher, C. D. (1996). The transition to democracy in Thailand. *Asian Perspective*.
- Ockey, J. (2015). Thai political families: The impact of political inheritance. *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and-National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 3(2), 191-211.
- Odiemo, F. A., & Okoth, P. G. (2020). *Nature Of Media Diplomacy in Influencing Foreign Policy Decision Making Process in Kenya*. Kenya's Foreign Policy.
- Ren, Z. Y. (2019). Thailand's position, role, and development trends in the process of ASEAN regional economic integration. *Crossroads: Southeast Asian Studies*, 3, 70-75.
- Sharma, S. C., & Chua, S. Y. (2000). ASEAN: economic integration and intra-regional trade. *Applied Economics Letters*, 7(3), 165-169.
- Sopranzetti, C. (2016). Thailand's relapse: the implications of the May 2014 coup. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 75(2), 299-316. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911816000462>
- Syarip, R. (2020). Defending foreign policy at home: Indonesia and the ASEAN-based Free Trade Agreements. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 39(3), 405-427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810342093555>

- Taguchi, H. (2013). Trade integration of Thailand with Mekong region: An assessment using gravity trade model. *International Journal of Development Issues*, 12(2), 175-187. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJDI-02-2013-0015>
- Zhou, S. L. (2008). *A study on the relationship between Thailand and the Association of South-east Asian Nations in the 1960-1980s*[Doctoral dissertation, Guizhou Normal University].