

**BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: THE ASEAN CHARTER AND ITS
IMPACT ON REGIONAL LEGITIMATION**

by

SIK TUNG HO

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Political Science)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

May 2025

© Sik Tung Ho, 2025

The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the thesis entitled:

Between Continuity and Change: The ASEAN Charter and its Impact on Regional Legitimation

submitted by Sik Tung Ho in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

in Political Science

Examining Committee:

Katharina Coleman, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, UBC
Supervisor

Arjun Chowdhury, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, UBC
Supervisory Committee Member

Abstract

This thesis investigates the influence of the ASEAN Charter on the legitimation discourses of ASEAN member states, focusing on Indonesia and Myanmar in 2023. The Charter, adopted in 2007, introduced “Western” norms such as democracy, human rights, and good governance, marking a shift from the traditional “ASEAN Way” norms which emphasized non-interference and consensus. This thesis addresses how significantly these Charter norms have reshaped the way member states justify ASEAN’s authority and governance. Using qualitative discourse analysis, I examine official statements from Indonesia, a norm entrepreneur, and Myanmar, a resistant member state, to identify references to Charter norms versus traditional ASEAN norms. Findings reveal that Indonesia frequently invokes high-level Charter norms like human rights and inclusiveness and often emphasizes concrete actions. In contrast, Myanmar predominantly references procedural norms and traditional “ASEAN Way” norms, indicating resistance to democratic normative shifts while still engaging with the Charter framework. The findings suggest a mixed normative space within ASEAN, where Charter norms compete with the pre-existing “ASEAN Way” framework. The study contributes to understanding norm diffusion in regional organizations and the ASEAN Charter’s role in shaping contemporary legitimation discourses.

Lay Summary

This thesis examines how the ASEAN Charter, launched in 2007, has changed how member states discuss and justify ASEAN's authority. The ASEAN Charter had introduced new ideas like democracy and human rights, shifting ASEAN away from its traditional focus on non-interference and consensus. Focusing on Indonesia and Myanmar in 2023, I analyze official statements of member states of ASEAN to compare how they refer to the ASEAN Charter's norms as well as traditional ASEAN principles. I find that Indonesia, a Charter supporter, often emphasizes democratic ideas in the Charter while Myanmar, more resistant to the Charter, sticks to procedural or conventional values. This suggests that while the Charter has influenced how ASEAN's legitimacy is viewed, older ideas still persist and compete with those in the Charter for predominance.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, and independent work by the author, Sik Tung Ho. No Generative Artificial Intelligence tools were used in the development or writing of the thesis.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Lay Summary	iv
Preface.....	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures.....	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Section 1: Introduction	1
Section 2: Conceptual Framework: Legitimacy and Legitimation in ASEAN	5
2.1 Legitimacy	5
2.2 Legitimation	7
2.3 Investigating Legitimation in ASEAN.....	8
Section 3: Research Design and Methodology.....	12
3.1 Methodology	14
3.1.1 Content	17
3.1.2 Format.....	18
3.2 Data.....	18
Section 4: Empirical Analysis	22
4.1 Basic Data Structure: Word Frequencies	22
4.2 Coding Analysis	24
4.2.1 Content	24
4.2.2 Format.....	31
4.2.3 Summary of Key Findings.....	32
Section 5: Conclusion.....	33
Bibliography	35
Appendix A: List of Articles (Indonesia)	43
Appendix B: List of Articles (Myanmar).....	44

List of Tables

Table 1 Levels of “thickness” of democratic Charter norms.....	18
Table 2 Coding examples.	21
Table 3 Comparison of coding results of the two cases (content).....	25
Table 4 Comparison of coding results of the two cases (format).....	31

List of Figures

Figure 1 Word cloud of high-frequency words (Indonesia) (Charter-related words highlighted in yellow).	23
Figure 2 Word cloud of high-frequency words (Myanmar) (Charter-related words highlighted in yellow).	24
Figure 3 Code point hierarchy chart of Indonesia (size represents frequency).	26
Figure 4 Code point hierarchy chart of Myanmar (size represents frequency).	27

Acknowledgements

I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Katharina Coleman, my supervisor, for her patient guidance, insightful feedback, and continuous encouragement. I would also like to thank my examiner, Dr. Arjun Chowdhury, for his valuable comments.

I would also like to thank my friends for their support and understanding, which provided great comfort during this process. Finally, I thank my family for their love and encouragement, which sustained me throughout my academic journey.

Section 1: Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was founded in August 1967 after two earlier attempts at regional cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) and Maphilindo, had faltered in the wake of the Indonesian confrontation policy (konfrontasi) against neighboring Malaysia (Rüland 2014). According to the Bangkok Declaration (ASEAN's founding document), the Association's major objective is to create a peaceful intra-regional relationship to foster economic growth and political stability. Accordingly, norms less relevant to economic growth and political stability, including human rights and rule of law, were avoided by ASEAN at that time (Acharya 2009; Kuhonta 2006; Radtke 2014; Spandler 2019).

ASEAN members' common interests were mostly about ensuring economic development, political stability and domestic regime security (Nesadurai 2009). For example, ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, signed by its founding members in 1976, emphasized mutual respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national identity of member states, as well as non-interference in members' internal affairs. These norms principally pertained to sovereignty and non-interference, which safeguarded national interests but worked against more effective cooperation which requires collective endeavours in developing a genuine regional community (Leifer 1989, 69).

Given such preferences of ASEAN member states, respect for members' sovereignty is embodied in ASEAN's decision-making style, i.e. consultation and consensus. As such, member governments rarely face regional pressure to adopt policies that were decided by other ASEAN states, i.e. not decided domestically (Davies 2012; Spandler 2019). Also,

members resolved problems by “quiet diplomacy”, i.e. dialogue between member states without public criticism by any one member of another. Collectively, these ASEAN cooperation norms were referred to as the “ASEAN Way” (Davies 2012; Yukawa 2018).

This equilibrium was challenged in 1997/1998 by the Asian Financial Crisis. Disastrous effects on the region’s economies triggered fundamental ideational change in ASEAN leaders’ expectations of regional cooperation. Their expectations regarding the ASEAN Way had been that ASEAN could prove successful without needing to emulate the European model of deep institutionalization and sovereignty pooling. However, these expectations were shattered by the Asian Financial Crisis. As a result, ASEAN’s influence was weakened (Acharya 1998; Ahmad and Ghoshal 1999, 2000; Rüländ 2000; Nesadurai 2009). ASEAN member states then implemented new strategies and roles to preserve ASEAN’s central role in the region, reinforcing its position through strengthened cooperation and integration initiatives. For example, under ASEAN states’ efforts, conversations about reforms were initiated through the Bali Concord II (2003) and the Vientiane Action Program (adopted 2004). These discussions included references to Western norms such as democracy, human rights, and good governance, alongside new concepts like “community” and “regional integration” (Rüländ 2014, 189). All these attempts crystallized at the 2005 Summit in Kuala Lumpur, where ASEAN leaders decided to write an ASEAN Charter (the “Charter”) for deepening regional integration and transforming ASEAN into a more institutionalized organization. This signaled a strong departure from the ASEAN Way and state-centric norms. It also brought ASEAN one step closer to the European regional integration model with more constitutive norms (Rüländ 2014).

Key concepts of the Charter include a “people-centered” ASEAN Community, entailing more active involvement of the civil society (Collins 2007) and emancipation of ASEAN people (Chang 2016), as well as security-political, economic and socio-cultural community-building. Proposed goals include boosting ASEAN’s capacity to provide solutions to conflicts (Roberts 2010) and manage major power relations in the Asia-Pacific (Jones 2015); furthering economic integration aiming at free movement of goods, services, investment and capital (Ishikawa 2021); and empowering ASEAN people, integrating human rights with good governance, and engaging non-state actors to create a sense of belonging, unity and mutual understanding (ASEAN Secretariat 2015). The ultimate goal of the Charter is to put ASEAN on a formal institutional footing (ASEAN Secretariat 2007) by forming new organs and implementing dispute resolution mechanisms as opposed to its previous informal and ad hoc decision-making manner (Woon 2017).

Before the adoption of the Charter, the legitimization discourse about ASEAN – i.e. the manner in which bureaucrats and member states discussed and debated the organization’s legitimacy – had very little, if anything, to do with so-called “Western” norms, such as human rights, democracy, rule of law, etc. The Charter is seen as a turning point in ASEAN’s norm-building process given its incorporation of such values (Radtke 2014). While some see this as a mere gesture by ASEAN to appeal to the West (Acharya 2009), other literature argue for the possibility of ASEAN’s genuine turn to a more “Western” approach in its constitutive norms, particularly human rights (Nesadurai 2009). This debate provides us with an interesting research question: **How significantly has the Charter changed the legitimization discourse within ASEAN?**

This thesis investigates the contemporary legitimation discourse within ASEAN, defined as the rhetorical communications that justify the authority and governance of ASEAN as a regional body. This is a timely study that coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Charter's adoption and the year 2025, i.e. ASEAN's milestone year for achieving certain objectives of the Charter as stated in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (ASEAN Secretariat 2015). The findings hold important implications for research on the Charter's influence within the region, as well as the study of non-Western regional organizations and how they diverge from the traditional international organizations (IO) framework.

By case studies of Indonesia and Myanmar's legitimation discourses about ASEAN, I find that the Charter has influenced the legitimation discursive space of its member states in the contemporary period, though not in a fully transformative manner.

This thesis consists of five substantive sections. Section 2 conceptualizes legitimacy, legitimation and outlines the theoretical argument. Subsequently, I introduce the research design in Section 3 and present the empirical analysis in Section 4. In Section 5, I conclude the findings, outline their implications for further research, and discuss the limitations of this thesis.

Section 2: Conceptual Framework: Legitimacy and Legitimation in ASEAN

2.1 Legitimacy

Legitimacy can be understood by two sets of definitions, normative or sociological. Normatively, legitimacy refers to the basis on which an institution's entitlement to rule is judged (Steffek 2023). This involves the recognition of the ruler's right to rule, often in the context of a political hierarchy where one enjoys power or authority (Weber 1978). From a normative perspective, legitimacy is a causal variable generating support for an institution that is itself unobservable. Sociologically, legitimacy refers to the empirical existence of beliefs within a given constituency or other relevant audience that a political institution's exercise of authority is appropriate. According to this definition, the process of enhancing legitimacy is an observable empirical phenomenon (Tallberg and Zürn 2019). While the normative standards of the audience could influence their empirical beliefs regarding an IO's legitimacy, this perspective treats legitimacy as a sociological fact, refraining from endorsing or disagreeing with the audience's judgment. From this perspective, the observer's own normative evaluations of the ruler's legitimacy are immaterial. Instead, emphasis is placed on empirically capturing the group's belief in the institution's legitimacy, irrespective of whether such belief corresponds with broader normative benchmarks.

Transposing this categorization to the study of IOs, there are two distinct approaches to understanding IOs' legitimacy. The normative approach, more often adopted by the legitimation audience, focuses on whether IOs meet a set of values or criteria, such as transparency or accountability, i.e. whether IOs ought to be obeyed. The empirical

approach, more often adopted by IO scholars, focuses on the extent to which, how, and why a particular constituency views an IO as legitimate.

Legitimacy matters for IOs in three ways (Tallberg and Zürn 2019). First, legitimacy affects whether IOs remain relevant as focal arenas for inter-state coordination, i.e. to distinguish themselves when states are “forum shopping”. Second, legitimacy affects IOs’ capacity to develop new rules and norms. IOs with higher levels of legitimacy are more likely to gain support, especially in cases involving ambitious policy goals or ratification of new agreements. Third, legitimacy affects IOs’ costs, and therefore ability, to secure compliance with international rules and norms. IOs with higher levels of legitimacy often require fewer other resources to secure state compliance. This is particularly important because coercive tools to secure compliance are costly, and, in most circumstances, unavailable to IOs against sovereign governments. Legitimacy thus allows IOs to benefit from a belief in the appropriateness of compliance among the subjects governed by IOs without incurring significant costs. These subjects would be more inclined to defer to the IO and respect its decisions (Hurd 2019, 719). This contributes to the social order defined by that IO (Hurd 2019; Tallberg and Zürn 2019). Consequently, in the context of IOs, sovereign member states would be potentially subject to the authority of an IO if they recognized (an) IO(s) as legitimate, at least in policy areas that are more technocratic. In an anarchic international system, legitimacy signals the presence (or at least possibility) of a higher, superior authority held by legitimate IOs (Hurd 2008). IOs could therefore leverage legitimacy as a social control mechanism to monitor and constrain sovereign states (and non-state actors). This suggests that IOs’ long-term capacity to accomplish their

goals is at least partly contingent upon their legitimacy, as they could command compliance more effectively if they are viewed as legitimate by the public in member states.

2.2 Legitimation

Given the importance of legitimacy, key stakeholders including major member states of IOs, IO Secretariats, civil society organizations, etc. often actively engage in legitimation, i.e. the process by which a particular norm, rule, or institution comes to be seen as legitimate, either by production or maintenance of legitimacy (Hurd 2019; Binder and Heupel 2021). Legitimation contains a purposeful or intentional element, as this process is deliberately carried out by actors to make a political institution more legitimate by boosting beliefs of the appropriateness of its rule. Conversely, the goal of other actors may be to undermine legitimacy by challenging the appropriateness of IOs' exercise of authority; these actors would be engaging in de-legitimation (Tallberg and Zürn 2019). In this thesis, I draw on the definition of Dingwerth et al. (2020) in the context of IOs, which refers to legitimation as public statements made by IOs or their representatives to justify the normative appropriateness of IOs' authority. These narratives often focus on technocratic procedures and performance (Steffek 2015), legality and international fairness, or the democratic quality of decision-making process and output of the IOs (Zürn 2018).

The process of legitimation is shaped by the social and cultural environment of the actors involved (Goddard 2006). In the context of IOs, these social and cultural factors in the environment influence which rules, norms, or behavior of IOs are likely to be perceived by the public in the member states as legitimate. Consequently, the (de-)legitimizing actors adjust their legitimation strategies according to the social and cultural context, tailoring

their claims made and symbols used to resonate with their target audience (Hurd 1999; Binder and Heupel 2021). This process is crucial to the research design of this thesis, as legitimation discourses reflect the prevailing social and cultural factors including norms in the environment, which allows one to gain insights into shifts in regional norms within ASEAN after the adoption of the Charter.

2.3 Investigating Legitimation in ASEAN

Drawing from the above framework, this thesis seeks to understand the relationship between the introduction of the ASEAN Charter and normative shifts (if any) within ASEAN by investigating contemporary legitimation discourses. The theoretical argument proceeds in two steps. First, changes in regional norms, triggered by the ASEAN Charter, are expected to alter the regional normative environment (Step 1). These changes involve transforming ASEAN into a region with more emphasis on democratic governance norms as outlined in the Charter's preamble, including principles of democracy, rule of law, good governance, respect for and protection of human rights, etc. (Nesadurai 2009). Second, this altered environment leads to observable changes in the legitimation discourses of ASEAN by its member states, as they adapt to the normative context of ASEAN (Step 2). As the first step is not directly observable, this thesis concentrates on analyzing the second step, specifically how ASEAN member states discursively legitimate the organization.

To test for this theoretical argument, the study focuses on specific characteristics of legitimation discourses. In general, a legitimation discourse is characterized by: (1) agents conducting the legitimation (Binder and Heupel 2021), (2) the intended audience of the

legitimation discourses (Barker 2001; von Billerbeck 2020), and (3) the forms of legitimation employed (Tallberg and Zürn 2019).

Legitimation agents refer to those conducting the legitimation, i.e. whether they are internal or external to the organization being legitimated (Binder and Heupel 2021). This thesis focuses on ASEAN member states as the primary legitimation agents, i.e., internal agents.

Regarding audience, legitimation can be oriented either inward, targeting IOs, their members, and their secretariats to justify their claims of authority; or outward, directing at non-members of IOs' decision-making body (Barker 2001; von Billerbeck 2020). Conventionally, member state governments were considered the primary audience of IO legitimation because IOs require their compliance. However, recent trends suggest that the public within member states has become another relevant audience. First, the public's involvement in IO policymaking and implementation has increased in global crises, leading to greater visibility of IOs among the public (Abbott et al. 2015; Tallberg and Zürn 2019; Dingwerth et al. 2020). Second, there is a growing awareness of IOs' contested character stemming from their roles in global cooperation and resource distribution, which subjects them to politicization and public contestation (O'Brien et al. 2000; de Wilde et al. 2018), thus increasing the importance of legitimation efforts directed at the public (Ecker-Ehrhardt 2018). Third, the rise of right-wing populism challenges the legitimacy of global governance institutions (Copelovitch and Pevehouse 2019), thereby hindering their global and regional integration projects (Risse 2014; Hutter et al. 2016). Accordingly, IOs need to be perceived by citizens as legitimate systems of global governance to continue to function effectively (Hurd 2019; Tallberg and Zürn 2019).

In the context of ASEAN, adoption and subsequent implementation of the Charter reflects the first situation mentioned above, i.e. increased public involvement. While the Charter may have initially targeted a global audience (Nesadurai 2009; Radtke 2014; Rüländ 2014; He and Feng 2022), subsequent implementation reflects a narrower aim within ASEAN, as changes caused by the Charter norms and policies are most visible within the region and require citizens' support. Accordingly, the legitimation discourses examined in this thesis are directed at a dual audience, both regional and global. This extends beyond the immediate circle of member state governments and the ASEAN Secretariat by including the broader public within Southeast Asia, yet remains distinct from discourses solely aiming at an external audience beyond ASEAN.

The third key aspect of legitimation discourses involves examining different forms of legitimation. Legitimation can take a discursive (communicative rhetoric, such as public endorsements or critiques of IOs) or behavioral (actions taken by legitimation agents, such as institutional reforms, street protests, etc.) form (Tallberg and Zürn 2019). This thesis focuses on the discursive form of legitimation, i.e. official speeches and statements made by member states representatives, as this is a more common and less costly legitimation approach. Moreover, the influence of Charter norms is more readily observable in public statements where norms are clearly articulated than in behavioral actions, which can be interpreted in multiple ways, making it challenging to link them to specific Charter norms.

Discursive legitimation involves three dimensions: intensity, tone, and narratives (He and Feng 2022). In this thesis, to analyze the legitimation discourses of member states, narratives of the legitimation discourses are of particular interest. Narratives refer to the contents and standards invoked to justify or challenge IOs in legitimation, i.e. the reasons

cited to nurture beliefs in legitimacy. The choice of such narratives depends on the values and prior beliefs of the legitimation agents and their audiences, which are influenced by the social and cultural environment in which they are situated. As “norms prompt justifications for action and leave an extensive trail of communication” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 892), legitimation narratives could reveal the norms that IOs, member states and the audience consider important and interpret as normative standards (Dingwerth et al. 2020). For example, to appeal to the public, narratives that resonate with the popular rhetoric within the IO or the public will be adopted to shape the (de-)legitimation discourses. Therefore, (de-)legitimation discourses provide a window into the prevailing normative environment, reflecting what is considered a widely acceptable norm within that context. In this thesis, by analyzing these discourses, I expect to observe the otherwise “unobservable” shifts in the normative environment introduced by the Charter within ASEAN.

Building on the above, this research applies Tallberg and Zürn’s framework to the context of southeast Asia, i.e., a normative environment that is distinctly different from the West, to examine the discourses of (de-)legitimation surrounding ASEAN. Case studies of legitimation discourses about ASEAN by member states most supportive (Indonesia) and resistant (Myanmar) of the Charter respectively will provide evidence in addressing the research question.

Section 3: Research Design and Methodology

I suggest that legitimation discourses are suitable for studying the Charter's influences due to the availability of relevant data. Zaum (2013) notes that legitimation is active when legitimacy deficits need to be reduced. Stephen (2018) elaborates on legitimacy deficits, noting that they occur when an institution faces altered standards by which it is assessed (shifting standards) or sees changes in an organization's relevant public (audience shift). Accordingly, the adoption of the Charter leads to legitimacy deficits by (1) shifting the standards through the new Charter norms, and (2) changing the relevant public by introducing a regional and global audience. This would lead to active legitimation discourses, providing ample data for the study of the Charter's influences.

Further, empirical analysis on legitimation discourses within ASEAN following the adoption of the Charter would enhance our understanding of the influence of the Charter and advance our knowledge of legitimation processes in regional organizations. Contemporary ASEAN legitimation patterns are of particular interest for updating the literature since the 2010s and allowing us to assess the question: What were the propositions and predictions about the Charter's impacts then, and what, if any, impacts have continued into contemporary legitimation behavior, nearly two decades after the Charter's adoption? By addressing this question, this thesis contributes to the study of norm diffusion among ASEAN member states introduced by the Charter. Ultimately, it reveals the extent to which Charter narratives have become an authoritative governance principle within ASEAN.

This thesis focuses on the contemporary period of 2023 for three reasons. First, the Charter's drafting process involved intentional ambivalence, known as constructive

ambiguities, to mask disagreements on challenging issues (Woon 2017). Two decades after the Charter's adoption, with its implementation tested and challenged over the years, it is now timely to evaluate the effect of constructive ambiguities contained in the Charter on the legitimation discourse, i.e., whether ambiguous articles continue to be interpreted diversely by different actors, or if actors experience "rhetorical entrapment" and have now universally accepted Charter norms as the prevailing norms.

Second, the Charter has always faced criticisms for its limited potential (Leviter 2010) and failure to achieve its ambitious goals (Tay 2008). Analyzing it from a legitimation perspective offers a fresh understanding of its impacts beyond traditional criticisms.

Third, 2025 is a critical year for ASEAN with several of its official documents setting 2025 as a target year for achieving certain goals. For example, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 has acknowledged several areas on which ASEAN should exert greater efforts, including the promotion and protection of human rights, development of a people-centered leaning in member states' policy priorities, the adoption of a democratic, transparent, rules-based approach, etc. in 2025 (ASEAN Secretariat 2016), many of which aligning with the Charter's narratives. The ASEAN Community Vision 2025 has also set 2025 as the target year for achieving aspirations and commitments in the Charter (ASEAN Secretariat 2015). Therefore, now that time has come to the target year, an analysis of the legitimation discourses about ASEAN in 2023 could provide empirical evidence of whether these Charter objectives have been met in the contemporary period.

3.1 Methodology

Tallberg and Zürn (2019, 584) identified case studies and content analysis of political communication as viable research designs to analyze legitimacy and legitimation. In this thesis, I adopt their suggested approaches as detailed below.

Qualitative discourse analysis for identifying patterns in legitimation discourse surrounding ASEAN is the main methodology in this thesis, with actors (i.e. two selected member states) being the subject of observation. Such analysis integrates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. It involves a qualitative step where categories are assigned to text (Mayring 2015), followed by a quantitative step that analyzes the frequency of these categories. This systematic process of coding and identifying themes or patterns enables researchers to subjectively interpret the content of text data, facilitating a detailed understanding of the data (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, 1278). Details concerning the coding process in this thesis are provided below in the Data section.

In this thesis, a case study approach is used as they are sensitive to the context and content of the legitimation discourses. Case studies of the legitimation discourse adopted by two member states of ASEAN, namely Indonesia and Myanmar during 2023, will be conducted. There is one caveat on the period chosen: A coup occurred in Myanmar in 2021, which involved the military's rejection of election results, leading to the arrest and detention of the President, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, other government officials, and members of parliament. Widespread protests against the coup were violently suppressed, affecting civilians and pro-democracy activists. The coup's impacts on ASEAN may have influenced discussions about ASEAN's legitimacy in the post-coup period, potentially affecting the data collected for the qualitative discourse analysis.

However, by focusing on the year 2023, i.e. approximately two years after the coup, it is expected that any bias resulting from the initial shock of the coup will have diminished as regional reactions stabilized.

In the context of case selection, this thesis is particularly interested in examining the official statements issued by the governments of Indonesia and Myanmar regarding ASEAN's legitimacy, with a specific focus on how the norms promulgated in the Charter have influenced these discourses. By focusing on Indonesia which is a norm entrepreneur and Myanmar which is a norm recipient, this research aims to evaluate the extent to which the Charter has prompted discursive and further, normative transformations within ASEAN member states. Indonesia and Myanmar present a compelling contrast due to their opposing attitudes toward the Charter norms. I expect that Indonesia will incorporate the Charter norms into its legitimation of ASEAN, for instance, by invoking the Charter to substantiate ASEAN policies or actions. Conversely, it is expected that Myanmar will critique the Charter's values while defending its own actions that are inconsistent with those values.

Indonesia is selected for case study as it has been acting as a norm entrepreneur of the said norms in the Charter since its transition into a vibrant democracy in the late 1990s (Davies 2012). "Norm entrepreneur" refers to "agents having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behaviour in their community" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 896). In this context, it refers to Indonesia's leading role in institutional building within ASEAN, including pushing an agenda for the Charter norms within ASEAN (Nanda and and Permata 2023) and attempting to introduce them as components of the regional identity into ASEAN (Radtke 2014). Indonesia has a "raucous but functioning democracy", "an active civil society", and assumed "the role of disseminator and aggregator of ideas"

(Quayle 2018, 131). As such, Indonesia is described to have “conceptualized a possible regional diplomatic initiative” (Haacke 2008, 351), i.e. being the country in the region that actively promoted dialogue and cooperation between member states. For example, it had undertaken substantial efforts to initiate a political reconciliation and democratization in Myanmar (Haacke 2008). It is also one major driver of human rights in ASEAN (Davies 2012). If the theoretical argument of this thesis holds true, it should be observed that in Indonesia’s contemporary legitimation discourses about ASEAN, the Charter and its norms constitute a significant narrative. This would involve mentioning these norms with evaluative connotations, replacing pre-existing norms with them, demonstrating their congruence with Indonesia’s domestic values, etc. As such, Indonesia serves as the “most likely” or “hoop” case for testing the theoretical argument.

Myanmar is selected as another member state of ASEAN for this case study due to its notorious human rights record. Myanmar only joined ASEAN in 1997 after long debates about its human rights concerns and internal political issues (Radtke 2014). It is often cited as an example of heavy reliance on ASEAN’s non-interference principle to shield its own illiberal domestic rule (Kuhonta 2006). For example, Myanmar had been denied the chair of ASEAN in 2015 because of its poor human rights situation (Davies 2012). In contrast to Indonesia, being the “most extreme recalcitrant within the organization”, Myanmar has always maintained low profiles in the discussions about democratic governance given that its own domestic political situation diverges substantially from liberal democratic standards (Davies 2012). Therefore, given Myanmar’s track record, any discussions of the Charter, even in a negative light, may draw attention to its own political situation and attract

criticisms of its recalcitrance. It is therefore the “least likely” case for the theoretical argument.

Empirical measurement adopted in this thesis is detailed as follows.

3.1.1 Content

First, regarding contents of the legitimation discourses concerning ASEAN, if the theoretical argument holds true, I expect to observe statements that correspond to the Charter norms at different levels. Adopting the categorization of Dingwerth et al. (2020), I classify different democratic Charter norms to be of varying “thickness” (i.e. magnitudes) as shown in Table 1.

Level of “thickness” of norms	Category of legitimation	Description and example(s) of norms
High	Substantive democratic legitimation	All types of democratic norms (Nesadurai 2009; Radtke 2014): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Democratization / democracy ● Human rights ● Rule of law ● Good governance ● Social justice
Medium	Procedural democratic legitimation	More demanding procedural democratic norms (Rüland 2014): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inclusiveness ● Fair representation ● Sincere deliberation ● Equality ● Rule-based
Low	Procedural democratic legitimation	Less demanding procedural democratic norms relating to the decision-making process, as IOs may also value these norms for technical reasons unrelated to democratic governance (Dingwerth et al. 2020):

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transparency ● Openness ● Responsiveness ● Accountability
--	--	--

Table 1 Levels of “thickness” of democratic Charter norms.

3.1.2 Format

Regarding the format of expression of the Charter norms in the legitimization discourses, I also expect to observe varying extents which reflect different levels of influences of the Charter. At the lowest level, the legitimization agent merely mentions or describes the Charter norms without any evaluative connotations (“mention”). At the medium level, the legitimization agent gives evaluative comments of the Charter norms such as its impacts, without mentioning actual actions taken or will be taken by ASEAN to promote such Charter norms (“evaluation”). At the highest level, apart from mentioning the Charter norms, the legitimization agent discusses actual actions that ASEAN had taken or intends to take in relation to these norms (“action”).

3.2 Data

As mentioned above, the texts selected for content analysis in this thesis are official legitimization discourses of ASEAN made by Indonesia and Myanmar during 2023. To trace legitimization discourses, this thesis utilizes official public statements from the governments of Indonesia and Myanmar regarding ASEAN.

For Indonesia, ASEAN-related press releases published by the Indonesian government between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023 were extracted from Factiva news archive database using the keyword “ASEAN”. To ensure relevance, articles not

published by the Indonesian official news outlet “Indonesia Government News” were excluded, resulting in an initial set of 303 articles (including duplicates). Considering the constraints of this thesis, only press releases relevant to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs were selected, based on the expectation that it would provide the most commentaries on ASEAN and its related regional affairs. This selection process yielded 84 articles after removing duplicates. Subsequently, the remaining articles underwent manual review to filter out those focused on bilateral or international issues unrelated to ASEAN, as well as logistical reports concerning ASEAN events lacking substantial commentaries on ASEAN. This process resulted in a final sample of 15 press releases for analysis.

For Myanmar, due to the unavailability of its official press releases on Factiva, official ASEAN-related statements published during the same period were collected from two key government websites, namely, the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Using keywords “ASEAN” and “2023”, a search was conducted followed by manual filtering to exclude irrelevant articles. This process resulted in a total of 12 articles selected for analysis.

It is observed that the initial search results yielded a significantly higher number of articles for Indonesia compared to Myanmar. This disparity is largely due to Indonesia’s prominent regional role, which often involves bilateral meetings with other countries, which is lacking in Myanmar’s case. However, following a manual review and filtering process, the number of relevant articles for both countries was found to be relatively similar, i.e. 15 for Indonesia and 12 for Myanmar. Given the comparable volume of data for the two cases, a direct comparison of the references to coded Charter norms in both datasets will also be conducted.

One caveat of such data collected is that the discourses in media outlets may have been mediated when reported, resulting in biases and distortions. However, since these mediations represent the discourses delivered to the target audience, and thus the Charter norms perceived by them (if any), this caveat should not affect the analysis of the legitimation discourses.

For the data collected, the NVivo 14 software is used for conducting content analysis. NVivo is a software commonly used for structuring and systemizing data in ways that reveal patterns and relationships. It is particularly useful for processing non-quantitative data and output the results in quantitative form. It has been used for legitimation analysis of other IOs (for example, Bradley and Erdilmen 2022).

Data collected are manually coded according to the presence of key words related to the Charter norms as identified above. In coding, text segments are assigned to nodes representing different themes based on content alignment. This coding process is deductive, i.e. pre-determined codes developed with reference to the literature are applied to the data. In addition to Charter norms, I also examine references to traditional ASEAN Way norms in the legitimation discourses about ASEAN. To facilitate comparison with the Charter norms, I include a node for these traditional norms, such as non-interference between member states, sovereignty, etc. Following the coding process, results are generated by a quantitative step, i.e., counting the occurrences of different themes in the texts (Gray et al. 2007). The coding results across different datasets, in this thesis Indonesia and Myanmar, are then compared.

Table 2 presents examples of data segments coded into various categories in this thesis. The primary criterion for coding is whether a segment contains references to concepts

related to the Charter norms. In cases where a segment refers to multiple Charter norms simultaneously, it will be coded under two or more categories.

Example 1: “ASEAN must keep abreast of existing challenges in order to better protect human rights, including through inclusive dialogue. “This is the reason why Indonesia is pursuing the ASEAN Leaders’ Declaration on ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue,” said Foreign Minister Retno. Indonesia will also host the 5th ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue this year.”	
Level of content (category)	Format
High (human rights)	Action
Example 2: “Going forward, ASEAN must be more consistent in applying international law and regional agreements as the core of efforts to establish a regional architecture. It is hoped that this mechanism can change the competition paradigm into a collaboration paradigm.”	
Medium (rule-based)	Evaluation
Example 3: “First, maintaining ASEAN’s credibility. This means that ASEAN Charter must be consistently implemented, including in the decision-making process during emergency situations. “We must prove that united we can address existing challenges, while also ready to anticipate and respond to future challenges. That is why long-term ASEAN Vision is so crucial,” she said.”	
Low (accountability)	Mention
Example 4: “The Ministry reiterates its call on the ASEAN Member States to strictly adhere to the provisions and fundamental principles of the ASEAN Charter, especially non-interference in the internal affairs of the member states.”	
Traditional ASEAN Way	/

Table 2 Coding examples.

Section 4: Empirical Analysis

4.1 Basic Data Structure: Word Frequencies

To analyze the textual structure of data collected for each case, a word frequency analysis was conducted using NVivo 14. The query parameters were configured to display the 100 most frequent words for each case, with a minimum word length of three characters to exclude uninformative words (e.g., “to”, “as”, etc.). Common stop words including articles and prepositions were also excluded from the analysis using both predefined and custom stop-word lists. The results were visualized through word clouds (Figures 1 and 2), where font size corresponds to word frequency.

For Indonesia, as observed from Figure 1, apart from the expected salience of “ASEAN” and “Indonesia”, action verbs such as “strengthening”, “implementing”, “maintaining” and “building” are also prevalent. These verbs may be reflecting Indonesia’s role within ASEAN as a leading country in promoting regional cooperation. Additionally, Figure 1 includes terms expressing positive sentiment towards ASEAN, such as “achieve”, “encourage”, “respect” and “trust”. Notably, the term “charter” itself does not appear among the frequently used words, although related norms such as “inclusive”, “human rights” and “effectiveness” are present in the word cloud.

Regarding Myanmar, it is observed that its word cloud includes action verbs similar to those of Indonesia, such as “maintaining” and “implementing”. This suggests that actions taken or proposed by ASEAN are shared themes across both member states, although their frequency is lower in Myanmar compared to that of Indonesia. Additionally, Myanmar’s word cloud also features positive adjectives like “success” and “cooperation”. However, there is a notably higher frequency of words associated with the ASEAN Way,

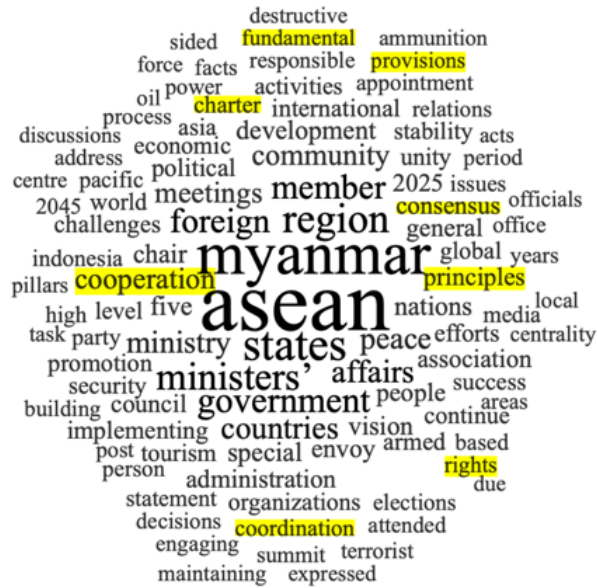


Figure 2 Word cloud of high-frequency words (Myanmar) (Charter-related words highlighted in yellow).

4.2 Coding Analysis

4.2.1 Content

Figures 3 and 4 provide a general overview of the frequency of references to various norms in Indonesia’s and Myanmar’s legitimation discourses about ASEAN respectively.

Table 3 shows the breakdown of number of references within each level of Charter norms in Indonesia’s and Myanmar’s legitimation discourses of ASEAN respectively.

	Myanmar	Indonesia
High	1	17
Democratization	0	0
Good governance	1	6
Human rights	0	11
Rule of law	0	0
Social justice	0	0
Medium	12	17
Equality	2	0
Fair representation	5	0
Inclusiveness	5	13
Rule-based	4	4
Sincere deliberation	0	0
Low	2	5
Accountability	0	1
Openness	0	4
Responsiveness	0	0
Transparency	2	0
Traditional ASEAN Way	8	0

Table 3 Comparison of coding results of the two cases (content).

Indonesia

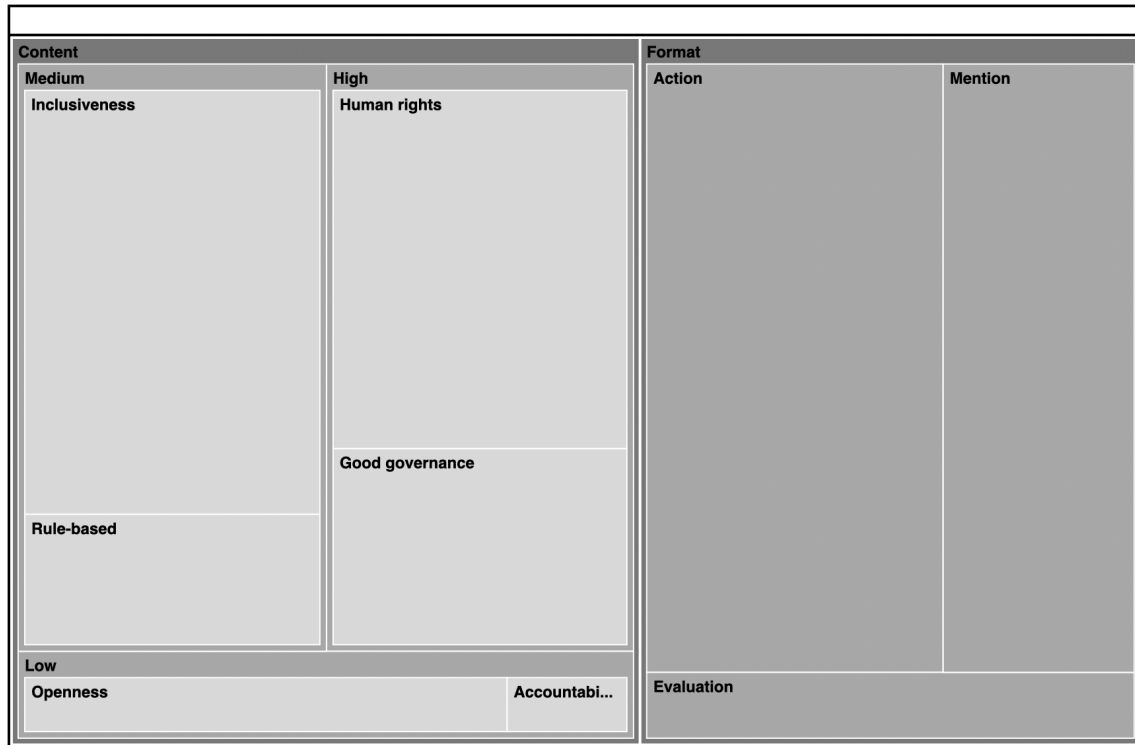


Figure 3 Code point hierarchy chart of Indonesia (size represents frequency).

It is observed that Indonesia actively invokes the Charter norms when endorsing ASEAN's legitimacy. Figure 3 shows that when endorsing ASEAN's legitimacy, Indonesia actively invokes high- and medium-level norms, though the range of norms invoked is limited and narrow, with certain norms never invoked at all. Table 3 shows that the most frequently invoked norm is "inclusiveness", followed by "human rights". This suggests that Indonesia views these high-level norms as crucial to ASEAN's legitimacy, thus emphasizing them in its legitimation discourses about ASEAN. This strategic focus is consistent with Indonesia's role as a norm entrepreneur within ASEAN, reinforcing its adherence to democratic norms and regional cooperation.

The above observations demonstrate the Charter's dual role as a legitimating instrument and a vehicle for selective norm diffusion. Indonesia focuses on norms like

“human rights” but omitted others like “rule of law”, “democratization”, etc. in its legitimation discourses of ASEAN. Such selective engagement reflects the Charter’s inherent flexibility attributable to its constructive ambiguities, allowing member states to craft their legitimation discourses about ASEAN without triggering disagreement over highly sensitive norms. It shows that the Charter’s impact on legitimation discourses and the normative context within ASEAN is not fully transformative.

Myanmar

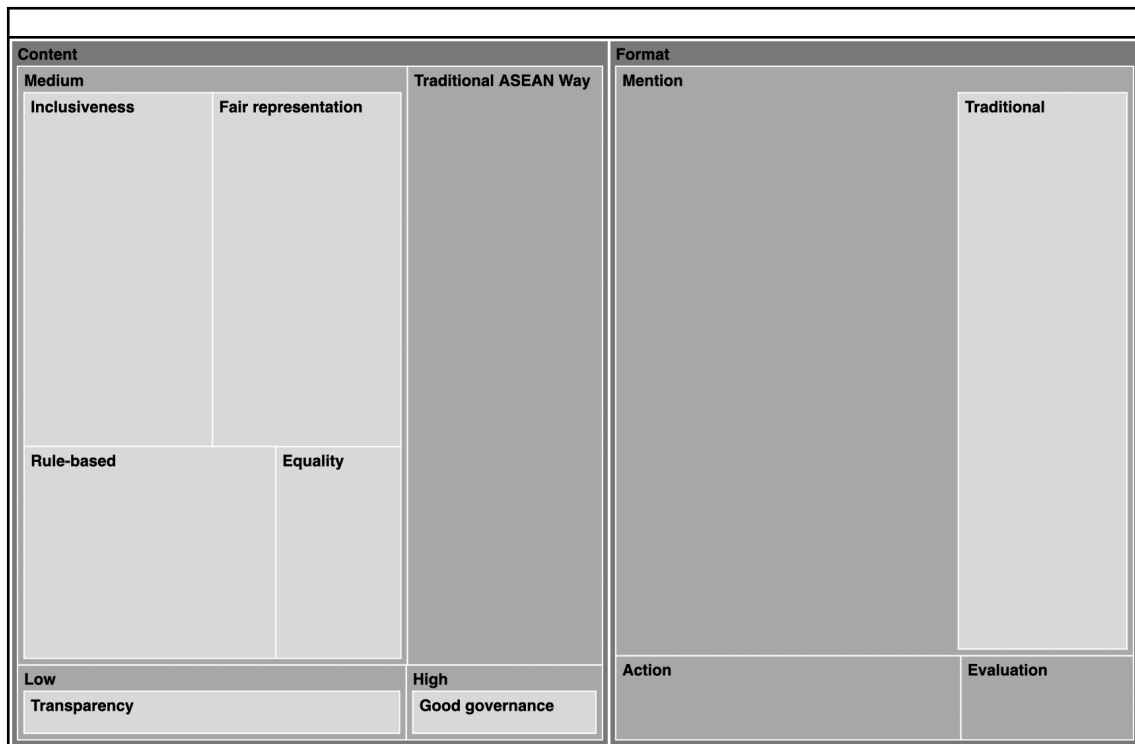


Figure 4 Code point hierarchy chart of Myanmar (size represents frequency).

Myanmar’s case highlights that, despite being the least compliant member state with Charter norms, these norms still serve as a significant source of legitimacy for ASEAN as a regional body in Myanmar’s perspective. Figure 4 indicates that most of the Charter

norms referenced by Myanmar are of medium level, specifically procedural democratic norms. According to Table 3, only one category of high-level norm is referenced. Table 3 further reveals that the most frequently referenced Charter norms are “fair representation” and “inclusiveness”, followed by “rule-based institution”. These are all procedural norms relating to ASEAN’s decision-making process, particularly the participation of member states. One possible explanation is that following ASEAN’s criticisms and penalties of Myanmar’s coup-related actions, Myanmar invokes these procedural norms to argue that ASEAN’s treatment of Myanmar, such as banning its political representatives from attending meetings, was unjustified, thereby rendering ASEAN’s actions illegitimate. This also explains why there are no references to “human rights”, as Myanmar may wish to avoid drawing attention to its own domestic situation regarding this sensitive issue. These observations demonstrate that the Charter has provided a framework for bolstering or undermining ASEAN’s legitimacy, thereby influencing legitimization discourses concerning the regional organization, even among member states that are less supportive of the Charter norms.

Furthermore, when discussing ASEAN’s legitimacy, Myanmar frequently cites the Charter to invoke traditional ASEAN Way norms, including non-interference in member states’ internal affairs and the importance of consultation and consensus in ASEAN’s decision-making process. These references are more frequent than those of the Charter norms. Myanmar cites these ASEAN Way norms within the context of the Charter and frames them as norms promoted by the Charter. This reveals that while Myanmar refers to the Charter in its legitimization discourses about ASEAN, its interpretation of Charter norms sometimes diverges from that of ASEAN’s, particularly regarding norms related to

democratic governance. Instead, Myanmar uses the Charter to urge ASEAN to adhere to the traditional ASEAN Way. References to the conventional ASEAN Way can be seen as Myanmar's attempt to resist the transformation of ASEAN into a more cooperative and democratically governed body, which the Charter seeks to establish. This again suggests that the Charter has not fully transformed the normative context in ASEAN, as they need to compete with pre-existing ASEAN Way norms for influence. Myanmar appears to be reluctantly embedded in this normative framework developed by the Charter and has been referencing the Charter without fully accepting its democratic norms as the most authoritative standards within ASEAN.

Overall, Myanmar's engagement with the ASEAN Charter in its legitimation discourses reflects a cautious and strategic approach, leveraging the Charter's inherent ambiguities to resist democratic norms while appearing to use other norms to (de-)legitimate ASEAN. Despite initial expectations that the Charter would promote deeper integration and democratic values, observations in Myanmar's case demonstrate the Charter's limited transformative potential.

Results from the two cases above reflect how the Charter can be interpreted diversely by different member states in legitimating ASEAN, sometimes reinforcing pre-existing governance norms rather than challenging them. This has constrained the Charter's influence on legitimation discourses about ASEAN and, more broadly, the normative environment within the organization, although it continues to serve as a framework that exerts certain influence on legitimation discourses.

Comparison of Indonesia and Myanmar's results

I further examine the data by comparing Indonesia's and Myanmar's results. Indonesia and Myanmar contrasted drastically in their references to high-level Charter norms, with Indonesia having 17 such references compared to Myanmar's single mention. The two countries show similar patterns in referencing medium- and low-level norms, though Indonesia has slightly more references. References to traditional ASEAN Way norms in the (de-)legitimation discourses are unique to Myanmar. This observation confirms that the Charter's influence on legitimation discourses varies significantly across member states. Indonesia's emphasis on high-level norms reflects its role as a normative leader, while Myanmar's references to traditional ASEAN Way norms demonstrate that pre-Charter governance norms still hold a certain degree of influence within ASEAN, particularly among member states resistant to democratic reforms. This reveals that the Charter norms have some impacts on ASEAN's legitimation discourses, but the degree to which they shape these discourses depends on member states' political priorities and strategic interpretations of the Charter. This created a mixed normative space, where member states can tactically blend old and new norms in their legitimation discourses about ASEAN.

Neither country makes significant references to "democratization", "rule of law", or "social justice". The absence of these more contentious democratic norms in the discourses of both member states demonstrates that the Charter's impact on legitimation discourses about ASEAN remains limited, particularly with regard to norms that are sensitive or highly debated. This serves as further evidence of the Charter's limited influence on legitimation discourses.

4.2.2 Format

	Myanmar	Indonesia
Action	2	17
Evaluation	1	3
Mention	14	11
Traditional	7	0

Table 4 Comparison of coding results of the two cases (format).

Indonesia and Myanmar exhibit distinct patterns in their format of references to Charter norms in legitimation discourses about ASEAN. Indonesia predominantly employs the “action” format with 17 references, significantly exceeding Myanmar’s two. This indicates that Indonesia frequently emphasizes concrete actions taken by ASEAN to enhance ASEAN’s legitimacy by demonstrating tangible progress in ASEAN’s implementation of the Charter norms. This shows that Indonesia sees the Charter norms as a significant source of legitimacy for ASEAN, emphasizing ASEAN’s actual contribution to their development.

In contrast, Myanmar primarily uses the “mention” format, with 14 references compared to Indonesia’s 11. This suggests that Myanmar refers to the Charter norms in a less robust manner, likely due to its reluctance to associate itself with these norms, which may draw attention to its domestic political situation. This observation reveals that the Charter’s influence on Myanmar’s legitimation discourses about ASEAN is superficial, as it does not effectively demonstrate ASEAN’s progress in implementing these norms.

Both countries have a similar number of evaluations, which are relatively few. This may suggest that the Charter norms have become a baseline principle in legitimation discourses, whose outcomes are generally accepted as non-debatable or non-controversial, thus requiring minimal justification for the purpose of enhancing ASEAN’s legitimacy.

Consequently, it can be inferred that certain Charter norms are now embedded in these legitimation discourses even though they do not appear in the form of “evaluation”.

4.2.3 Summary of Key Findings

References to Charter norms are found in both countries’ (de-)legitimation discourses about ASEAN, thereby satisfying both the “most likely” and “least likely” cases of the theoretical argument. These results show that two decades after its adoption, the Charter has significantly redefined legitimation discourses about ASEAN, yet it has not fully supplanted ASEAN’s pre-existing norms, i.e. the consensus-driven, non-interference foundation.

While the empirical analysis provides evidence that the Charter narratives have gained at least partial authority as governance norms within ASEAN, it also reveals limits to the Charter’s influence. On one hand, Indonesia’s repeated invocations of Charter norms signal these norms’ institutionalization into ASEAN’s legitimacy framework. On the other hand, Myanmar’s adherence to traditional norms when (de-)legitimizing ASEAN highlights the enduring persistence of pre-Charter norms. Ultimately, the Charter’s broader normative influence depends on member states’ willingness to engage with it. Currently, the Charter norms coexist and compete for predominance with other existing normative frameworks within ASEAN, especially the traditional ASEAN Way. This competition underlines the Charter’s role as one among several legitimacy frameworks that member states draw from to legitimate ASEAN, yet it does not attain the status of the sole normative standard.

Section 5: Conclusion

This thesis has examined Indonesia's and Myanmar's legitimation of ASEAN in the contemporary period. Drawing on the two member states' official legitimation discourses concerning ASEAN in 2023, it is revealed that two decades after its adoption, the Charter continues to influence the contemporary legitimation behavior of ASEAN member states as they (de-)legitimate ASEAN. This provides evidence of at least partial norm diffusion of the Charter norms within ASEAN, although the effects are limited and not fully transformative.

This thesis is subject to certain limitations. First, due to resources and time constraints, I am the only person responsible for interpreting the texts and coding them accordingly. Unlike other content analysis studies with two or more coders and an inter-coder reliability test conducted, the coding process of the data collected depended solely on my judgment. To address this limitation, multiple coders could be engaged in future studies to enhance the reliability and consistency of the coding process.

Further, the volume of data collected for content analysis, as mentioned above, is limited due to the resources and time constraints, as well as the time frame selected for this thesis. In qualitative content analysis of this kind, especially for analysis using a computer software like NVivo, a larger data set would be more beneficial for achieving more accurate and comprehensive results. Future studies may benefit from expansion of the research scope and duration for data collection to enhance robustness of the results.

This thesis offers several potential avenues for further studies. First, a different period could be selected for conducting a similar analysis to observe whether the 2021 Myanmar coup has caused significant bias on the results of this thesis. Extending this approach, a

longitudinal examination of the legitimation discourses of ASEAN member states throughout different periods may provide further insights into the how the Charter norms' influences evolve over time, if any.

Second, in this thesis, the two main areas for observation, i.e. content and format, are investigated separately. Further analysis could be conducted on the overlap between different content and format coding categories, which may provide further information on how the legitimation pattern differs by the type of Charter norms.

Another potential research avenue would be to extend this research approach to other legitimation agents, such as other member states of ASEAN, the ASEAN Secretariat, civil society organizations, etc., and compare them with the results of this thesis. This may allow us to observe if there are significant differences; and, if any, the reasons of such differences, which may possibly be traced by process tracing.

Lastly, content analysis of legitimation discourses targeted at other audiences, such as external actors including the United Nations, non-ASEAN countries, etc., could also be conducted and compared with the results in this thesis. This may reveal whether the Charter norms are perceived as useful legitimation references beyond the regional context, or if their influence remains confined to ASEAN member states. This could also provide observations on ASEAN's extent of engagement with global actors and its promotion of the Charter as part of its identity.

Overall, despite the limitations of this thesis, it has demonstrated that the Charter has contributed to a shift in the legitimation discourses concerning ASEAN, highlighting its persisting influence on regional norms while facing challenges from pre-existing ASEAN Way norms.

Bibliography

- Abbott, Kenneth W., Philipp Genschel, Duncan Snidal, and Bernhard Zangl, eds. 2015. *International Organizations as Orchestrators*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139979696>.
- Acharya, Amitav. 1998. *Democratising Southeast Asia : Economic Crisis and Political Change*. Working Paper / Murdoch University, Asia Research Centre. Murdoch, WA.
- Acharya, Amitav. 2009. *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203939239>.
- Ahmad, Zakaria Haji, and Baladas Ghoshal. 1999. 'The Political Future of ASEAN after the Asian Crisis'. *International Affairs* 75 (4): 759–78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00107>.
- ASEAN Secretariat. 2007. "The ASEAN Charter". ASEAN. December 2007. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/archive/publications/ASEAN-Charter.pdf>.
- ASEAN Secretariat. 2015. "ASEAN Community Vision 2025". ASEAN. November 2015. <https://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ASEAN-2025-Forging-Ahead-Together-final.pdf>.
- ASEAN Secretariat. 2016. "ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025". ASEAN. March 2016. <https://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ASEAN-APSC-Blueprint-2025.pdf>.

- Barker, Rodney. 2001. *Legitimizing Identities: The Self-Presentations of Rulers and Subjects*. Cambridge University Press.
- Billerbeck, Sarah von. 2020. ““Mirror, Mirror On the Wall:” Self-Legitimation by International Organizations’. *International Studies Quarterly* 64 (1): 207–19. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz089>.
- Binder, Martin, and Monika Heupel. 2021. ‘The Politics of Legitimation in International Organizations’. *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6(3): ogaa033. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa033>.
- Bradley, Megan, and Merve Erdilmen. 2023. ‘Is the International Organization for Migration Legitimate? Rights-Talk, Protection Commitments and the Legitimation of IOM’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, May. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2147489>.
- Chang, Jun Yan. 2016. ‘Essence of Security Communities: Explaining ASEAN’. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 16 (3): 335–69. <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcv026>.
- Collins, Alan. 2007. ‘Forming a Security Community: Lessons from ASEAN’. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7 (2): 203–25. <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcl007>.
- Copelovitch, Mark, and Jon C. W. Pevehouse. 2019. ‘International Organizations in a New Era of Populist Nationalism’. *The Review of International Organizations* 14 (2): 169–86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-019-09353-1>.

- Davies, Mathew. 2012. 'The Perils of Incoherence: ASEAN, Myanmar and the Avoidable Failures of Human Rights Socialization'. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 34 (1): 1–22.
- De Wilde, Pieter, Anna Leupold, and Henning Schmidtke, eds. 2018. *The Differentiated Politicisation of European Governance*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315526898>.
- Dingwerth, Klaus, Henning Schmidtke, and Tobias Weise. 2020. 'The Rise of Democratic Legitimation: Why International Organizations Speak the Language of Democracy'. *European Journal of International Relations* 26 (3): 714–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066119882488>.
- Ecker-Ehrhardt, Matthias. 2018. 'Self-Legitimation in the Face of Politicization: Why International Organizations Centralized Public Communication'. *The Review of International Organizations* 13 (4): 519–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-017-9287-y>.
- Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change'. *International Organization* 52 (4): 887–917.
- Goddard, Stacie E. 2006. 'Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy'. *International Organization* 60 (1): 35–68.
- Gray, Paul S., John B. Williamson, David A. Karp, and John R. Dalphin. 2007. *The Research Imagination: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511819391>.

- Haacke, Jürgen. 2008. 'ASEAN and Political Change in Myanmar: Towards a Regional Initiative?' *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30 (3): 351–78.
- He, Kai, and Huiyun Feng. 2022. 'Role Status and Status-Saving Behaviour in World Politics: The ASEAN Case'. *International Affairs* 98 (2): 363–81. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab232>.
- Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang, and Sarah E. Shannon. 2005. 'Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis'. *Qualitative Health Research* 15 (9): 1277–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>.
- Hurd, Ian. 1999. 'Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics'. *International Organization* 53 (2): 379–408. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899550913>.
- Hurd, Ian. 2008. *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/267/monograph/book/29816>.
- Hurd, Ian. 2019. 'Legitimacy and Contestation in Global Governance: Revisiting the Folk Theory of International Institutions'. *The Review of International Organizations* 14 (4): 717–29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-018-9338-z>.
- Hutter, Swen, Edgar Grande, and Hanspeter Kriesi, eds. 2016. *Politicising Europe: Integration and Mass Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316422991>.
- Ishikawa, Koichi. 2021. 'The ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Economic Integration'. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 10 (1): 24–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24761028.2021.1891702>.

- Jones, Catherine. 2015. 'Great Powers, ASEAN, and Security: Reason for Optimism?' *The Pacific Review* 28 (2): 259–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2014.995125>.
- Kuhonta, Erik Martinez. 2006. 'Walking a Tightrope: Democracy versus Sovereignty in ASEAN's Illiberal Peace'. *The Pacific Review* 19 (3): 337–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512740600875119>.
- Leifer, Michael. 1989. *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*. Routledge.
- Leviter, Lee. 2010. 'The ASEAN Charter: ASEAN Failure or Member Failure Note'. *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 43 (1): 159–210.
- Mayring, Philipp. 2015. 'Qualitative Content Analysis: Theoretical Background and Procedures'. In *Approaches to Qualitative Research in Mathematics Education: Examples of Methodology and Methods*, edited by Angelika Bikner-Ahsbabs, Christine Knipping, and Norma Presmeg, 365–80. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9181-6_13.
- Nanda, Bima Jon, and Inda Mustika and Permata. 2023. 'Persistent Norm Entrepreneur: Indonesia Strategy as "Homegrown" Democracy Promoter in Southeast Asia Region'. *Asian Journal of Political Science* 31 (3): 329–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185377.2024.2302164>.
- Nesadurai, Helen E. S. 2009. 'ASEAN and Regional Governance after the Cold War: From Regional Order to Regional Community?' *The Pacific Review* 22 (1): 91–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512740802651169>.
- O'Brien, Robert, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte, and Marc Williams. 2000. *Contesting Global Governance: Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global*

- Social Movements*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491603>.
- Quayle, Linda. 2018. 'Indonesia, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, and the Contingent Profile of Regional "Great-Power Management"'. *The Pacific Review* 31 (2): 131–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2017.1327450>.
- Radtke, Kerstin. 2014. 'ASEAN Enlargement and Norm Change -A Window of Opportunity for Democracy and Human Rights Entrepreneurs?' *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 33 (3): 79–105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341403300304>.
- Risse, Thomas. 2014. 'No Demos? Identities and Public Spheres in the Euro Crisis'. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 52 (6): 1207–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12189>.
- Roberts, Christopher. 2010. *ASEAN's Myanmar Crisis: Challenges to the Pursuit of a Security Community*. Institute of Southeast Asian.
- Rüland, Jürgen. 2000. 'ASEAN and the Asian Crisis: Theoretical Implications and Practical Consequences for Southeast Asian Regionalism'. *The Pacific Review*, January. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512740050147942>.
- Rüland, Jürgen. 2014. 'Constructing Regionalism Domestically: Local Actors and Foreign Policymaking in Newly Democratized Indonesia'. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10 (2): 181–201.
- Spandler, Kilian. 2019. *Regional Organizations in International Society: ASEAN, the EU and the Politics of Normative Arguing*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96896-4>.

- Steffek, Jens. 2015. 'The Output Legitimacy of International Organizations and the Global Public Interest'. *International Theory* 7 (2): 263–93.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971915000044>.
- Steffek, Jens. 2023. 'Triangulating the Legitimacy of International Organizations: Beliefs, Discourses, and Actions'. *International Studies Review* 25 (4): viad054.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viad054>.
- Stephen, Matthew D. 2018. 'Legitimacy Deficits of International Organizations: Design, Drift, and Decoupling at the UN Security Council'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 31 (1): 96–121.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2018.1476463>.
- Tallberg, Jonas, and Michael Zürn. 2019. 'The Legitimacy and Legitimation of International Organizations: Introduction and Framework'. SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network.
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3060204>.
- Tay, Simon S. C. 2008. 'The ASEAN Charter: Between National Sovereignty and the Region's Constitutional Moment ASEAN Feature'. *Singapore Year Book of International Law* 12:151–70.
- Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. University of California Press.
- Woon, Walter. 2017. 'The ASEAN Charter Ten Years On'. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 39 (2): 245–51.

- Yukawa, Taku. 2018. 'The ASEAN Way as a Symbol: An Analysis of Discourses on the ASEAN Norms'. *The Pacific Review* 31 (3): 298–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2017.1371211>.
- Zaum, Dominik. 2013. *Legitimizing International Organizations*. OUP Oxford.
- Zürn, Michael. 2018. *A Theory of Global Governance: Authority, Legitimacy, and Contestation*. Oxford University Press.

Appendix A: List of Articles (Indonesia)

	Title of article	Publication date
1.	Myanmar Position on the Annual Press Statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Indonesia	11 January 2023
2.	Interview with a representative from the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on Myanmar's stance and cooperation with ASEAN in the implementation of the ASEAN five-point consensus	22 February 2023
3.	Press Release	22 June 2023
4.	MIFER Deputy Minister joins 8th Meeting of High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision	30 June 2023
5.	Myanmar categorically rejects the unfair and one-sided facts about Myanmar in the Joint Communiqué of the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, as they contradict the Principles of the ASEAN Charter	14 July 2023
6.	Message on 56th Anniversary of the Association of the South East Asian Nations by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing	8 August 2023
7.	Polish ASEAN's image for the emergence of a better community	8 August 2023
8.	Chairman of State Administration Council Commander-in Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung sends video message	17 August 2023
9.	Initiative for narrowing down development gap should be continued as a priority in building ASEAN Community	29 August 2023
10.	Myanmar rejects the ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the five-point consensus	6 September 2023
11.	Coordination Meeting on ASEAN Community Vision 2045 among relevant ministries of three ASEAN Community Pillars held	6 October 2023
12.	Explosion of an arsenal in Mong Lai Khet, Laiza mischaracterized as a bombing in the "ASEAN Statement"	19 October 2023

Appendix B: List of Articles (Myanmar)

	Title of article	Publication date
1.	Indonesia Holds Series of Meetings of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat	2 February 2023
2.	Indonesia: Don't Let ASEAN Become 'Proxy', President Jokowi Says	3 February 2023
3.	Indonesia Encourages Strengthening ASEAN Institutional Capacity and Effectiveness	29 April 2023
4.	First Quarter 2023 ASEAN Indonesia Chairmanship Achievements	1 May 2023
5.	Indonesia: FM Marsudi - ASEAN Unity and Centrality Key to Regional Stability	11 July 2023
6.	Indonesia: ASEAN Must Not Ignore Human Rights Issues in the Region	11 July 2023
7.	Foreign Minister Retno: ASEAN and EU Must Cooperate for Mutual Benefit	13 July 2023
8.	Indonesia: RI Foreign Minister - Preventive Diplomacy Vital for Averting Regional Conflict	14 July 2023
9.	Indonesian Foreign Minister: Indo-Pacific is not a Battle Ground	14 July 2023
10.	The Handover of Indonesia's Chairmanship of the ASEAN Committee in Seoul	17 July 2023
11.	ASEAN Strengthens Cooperation with IORA and PIC	4 September 2023
12.	ASEAN Political and Security Pillar Meeting - Implementation of APSC Blueprint 2016-2025 Reaches 99%	4 September 2023
13.	Indonesian Foreign Minister Conveys Regional Commitment to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals	19 September 2023
14.	At the United Nations, Foreign Minister Brings the Spirit of Bandung, Raises Global Trust and Solidarity	24 September 2023
15.	The 5th ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue Emphasizes the Importance of Open, Constructive and Inclusive Discussion of Human Rights Issues in the Region	8 November 2023