

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Politics and Society in Southeast Asia

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RITUAL AND REGION

The Invention of ASEAN

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The Invention of ASEAN

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Abstract: Why has ASEAN endured and why do members, many of whom remain comparatively weak and poor, continue to invest in the regional project? Existing answers, either that ASEAN is meaningless or that it has transformed regional affairs through the creation of shared values, are both misplaced. Neither argument is empirically plausible. Instead, this work argues that ASEAN has and continues to serve state interest through the creation of a shared ritual and symbolic framework. This framework has mitigated regional tension through the performance of regionalism, but has not fundamentally addressed the sources of that tension.

Keywords: ASEAN, Regionalism, Southeast Asia, International Organisation

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Contents

1 Introduction	2
2 Inventing ASEAN: 1945–1997	16
3 Saving Regionalism: 1997–2017	36
4 Choosing Regionalism	59
Abbreviations	66
References	67