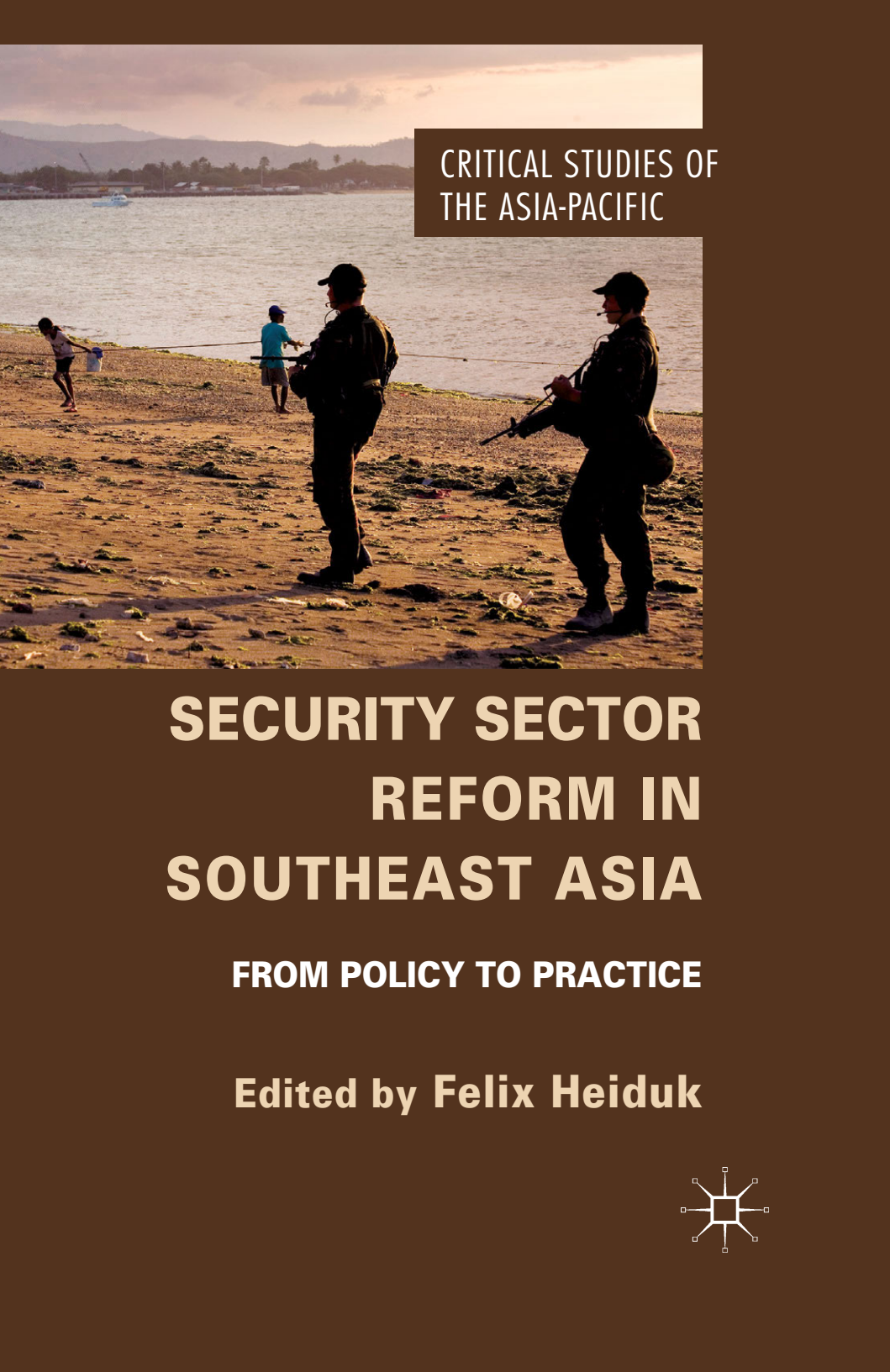


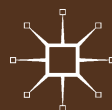


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FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

Edited by Felix Heiduk



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Security Sector Reform in Southeast Asia

From Policy to Practice

Edited by

Felix Heiduk

Lecturer, University of Birmingham, UK

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Abbreviations

9/11	The attacks of 11 September 2001
ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)
ACG SSR	Asian Consultative Group for SSR
ACWC	ASEAN Commission on Women and Children
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AFPCIG	Armed Forces of the Philippines Counter Intelligence Group
AGM	Advisory Group Meeting
AI	Amnesty International
AICOHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
AJI	Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (Alliance of Independent Journalists)
APSC	ASEAN Political and Security Community
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Abu Sayaf Group
ASI	Asian Security Initiative
ASSET	Association of Security Sector Reform Education and Training
ATC	Anti-Terrorism Council
AU	African Union
Bakorkamla	Badan Koordinasi Keamanan Laut Republik (Indonesian Maritime Security Coordinating Board)
BIN	Badan Intelijen Negara (State Intelligence Agency of Indonesia)
BINUB	United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi
BNUB	UN Office in Burundi
BSPP	Burma Socialist Program Party
BWS	Burmese Way to Socialism
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CMPC	Central Military Party Committee
CMR	Civil–military Relations
CNRT	Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorese (National Council of Timorese Resistance)

CPDC	Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation
CSI	Container Security Initiative
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTI	Counter Terrorism International
DAV	Development Academy of Vietnam
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DDR	Demilitarization, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFID	Department of Foreign and International Development
DND	Department of National Defense
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (People's Representative Council of Indonesia)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDSA	Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
Elsam	Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat (The Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy)
EU	European Union
F-FDTL	Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Defence Forces)
Falintil	Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor)
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FPU	Formed Police Units
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)
G4S	Group 4 Securicor
GCPP	Global Conflict Prevention Pool
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFN SSR	Global Facilitation Network for SSR
GMA	Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
GNR	Guarda Nacional Republicana (National Republican Guard)
HSA	Human Security Act
ICEL	Indonesian Center for Environmental Law
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons

IDRC	International Development Research and Cooperation
IDSPS	Institute for Defense, Security and Peace Studies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFID	International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development
<i>INTERFET</i>	International Force in East Timor
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPW	Indonesia Police Watch
ISA	Internal Security Act
ISDS	Institute for Strategic and Development Studies
ISF	International Stabilisation Force
ISIS	Malaysia Institute of Strategic and International Studies
ISIS	Thailand Institute of Security and International Studies
ISOC	Internal Security Operation Command
ISPS	International Ship and Port Security Code
ISSAT	International Security Sector Assistance and Training
IWG-SIR	Indonesian Working Group for State Intelligence Reform
IWG-SSR	Indonesian Working Group on Security Sector Reform
KAUUN	Koalisi Advokasi Undang Undang Intelijen Negara (Advocacy Coalition on the Law on State Intelligence)
KemHan	Kementerian Pertahanan (Indonesian Defense Ministry)
KKMS	Koalisi untuk Keselamatan Masyarakat Sipil (Coalition to Preserve Civil Liberties)
Kontras	Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan (Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence)
KIP	Koalisi Informasi Publi (Coalition of the Freedom of Public Information)
KMT	Koumintang
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
Lesperssi	Lembaga Studi Pertahanan dan Studi Strategis Indonesia (Institute for Defense and Strategic Studies Indonesia)
LIPI	Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (Indonesian Institute of Sciences)
MACTHAI	Military Assistance Command Thailand
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MINUSTAH	The United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia)
NAP	National Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCMC	National Crisis Management Committee
NLD	National League of Democracy
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPOC	National Peace and Order Council
NSC	National Security Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODFD	Office for Defence Force Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
ONUB	Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi
ONUC	United Nations Operation in the Congo
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
Pacivis	Pusat Kajian Global Civil Society (Center for Global Civil Society Studies)
PCC	Police-contributing Countries
PCHR	Philippine Commission on Human Rights
PKF	Peacekeeping Forces
PM	Prime Minister
PNP	Philippine National Police
PNTL	Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste National Police Force)
POLRI	Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia (Indonesian National Police)
PPP	People's Power Party
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
PSMC	Private Security and Military Companies
RAM	Reform the Armed Forces Movement
RRR	Rebuilding, Reconstruction and Reform
RSIS	Rajaratnam School of International Studies
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SANDI	Simpul Aliansi Nasional untuk Demokratisasi Intelije (National Alliance Center for Intelligence Democratization)
Satpam	Satuan Pengamanan (Private Security Guards)
SCR	UN Security Council Resolution
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization

SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
SLAT	Special Logistics Action for Thailand
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SOLAS	Safety of Life at Sea Convention
SPC	Standing Police Capacity
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN
SSG	Security Sector Governance
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSRI	Security Sector Reform Index
TMB	Thai Military Bank
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Armed Forces)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	United Nations Mission to East Timor
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIK	UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNMISSET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission to Timor-Leste
UNOCI	UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNOTIL	UN Office in Timor-Leste
UNPOL	United Nations Police
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
US	United States of America
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VAB	Visi Anak Bangsa (Vision of the Children of the Nation Foundation)
VAP	Vientiane Action Programme
VCP	Vietnam Communist Party
VPA	Vietnam People's Army
VPU	Vulnerable Person's Units
YLBHI	Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation)

1

Introduction: Security Sector Reform in Southeast Asia

Felix Heiduk

As a region, Southeast Asia has been somewhat of a latecomer with regard to what Huntington termed the “third wave of democratization” (Huntington 1991). This striking rush of political change started in Southern Europe in the 1970s, reached the military dictatorships of the Latin Americas in the 1980s and, most notably, fostered the democratization processes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989/90. The so-called third wave did not topple authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia until the second half of the 1980s (the Philippines), the early 1990s (Thailand) and the late 1990s (Indonesia, Timor-Leste). Despite the fact that various Southeast Asian countries, most notably Indonesia, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Cambodia and the Philippines, have undergone significant transformation processes throughout the last two to three decades, the results of the transformation processes have nonetheless proven not to be irreversible. The potential fragility of the democratic transitions in the region has most clearly been exemplified by the coup d’état launched by the Thai military in 2006, which removed the government of Thaksin Shinawatra from power. What’s more, the so-called third wave did not reach the shores of Myanmar’s military dictatorship. So far it has also, arguably, had few transformative effects on Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei, and has had even less of an impact on Vietnam and Laos.

Hence, at first glance there seems to be little that binds Southeast Asia together as a region. To be sure, even with regard to the “third wave of democratization”, each state’s transition processes take place within their own unique social, political and economic settings, and at their own pace. Consequently, the region as such has for the most part been characterized in terms of its diversity and heterogeneity rather than its similarities. This diversity notwithstanding, all countries of Southeast

Asia share certain historical experiences relevant to SSR (Security Sector Reform), such as highly politicized militaries, military intervention in politics, authoritarianism, and often weak patterns of civilian control over the state's security apparatus, to name just a few. However, while the concept of SSR as such has so far only found its way into Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste, and to a lesser extent into Thailand, all Southeast Asian states have been confronted with at least some of the more general problems SSR aims to resolve. These include: a lack of democratic, civilian oversight of the security sector forces; direct military interventions in politics; excessive military spending; poor management of resources; ineffective security provision; oversized security forces; weak civil society; presence of militias and other non-state armed actors; and legacies of religious militancy, ethnic strife, piracy, armed separatism and other insurgencies. Furthermore, yet again risking overgeneralization, it seems safe to say that for the most part the security forces in Southeast Asia were sources of insecurity, rather than providers of security, to large parts of the populace of Southeast Asian states. In line with this, Bellamy and Hughes (2007, 42) noted that

rather than protecting their citizens, in practice the region's militaries have expended more effort controlling, killing, torturing and arbitrarily imprisoning them in order to maintain a particular order or regime. The primary purpose of armed forces in the region has been to protect states and regimes from internal opponents rather than external aggressors.

However, many of the aforementioned problems that are nowadays associated with the need to reform a country's security sector were not at the top of the list of policy concerns of the major powers during the Cold War period (Smith 2001).

Before SSR: the politics of military aid and assistance

Throughout the Cold War period, the primary threat to the Western world was seen as stemming from the Soviet Union and the spread of Communism. Consequently, the provision of assistance and aid to countries under threat of falling under Communist influence was thought of as a tool to bolster economic prosperity and therefore reduce the appeal of Communism while buttressing the prospects for democratic rule. However, by the end of the 1960s it had already become clear that many recipients of Western assistance and aid, despite having

experienced high levels of economic growth and modernization, did not develop democratic institutions. In fact, many of them had witnessed the installment of authoritarian governments, which were often headed by military men or at least backed by the military. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia's experiment with democracy ended in 1965 when General Suharto came to power. Timor-Leste was invaded by Indonesia after being released from Portuguese colonial rule in 1976 and therefore did not manage to experiment with democratic rule until its independence in 2002. The Philippines witnessed more than two decades of authoritarian rule under General Marcos, while Thailand experienced various military coups d'état succeeded by periods of military rule. And in Burma the military under General Ne Win established an authoritarian regime through a coup d'état in 1962.

Given the fact that the major policy concern did lie with the containment of Communism, a consensus emerged among Western powers, especially the US, which perceived the role of military apparatuses in the newly independent, so-called developing, countries as positive. For Huntington in his study on *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Huntington 2006), political interventions by the military were often seen as a direct effect of weak civilian institutions unable to cope with social and economic transformations. Other scholars emphasized different socio-political factors, such as political culture or the cohesiveness of societies (or, rather, the lack thereof), as explanatory factors for military involvement in politics (Janowitz 1988). In short, disappointment with the weakness of civilian elites to guide the political and economic modernization of many Third World countries in turn led to a new outlook on Third World militaries. The latter were increasingly regarded as potential drivers, instead of opponents, of modernization processes. Representative of this new outlook is the argument, prominent at the time, that, because of its discipline and expertise, the military as an institution would serve as a vehicle for modernization (Shils and Johnson 1962).

Accordingly, scholars working on Southeast Asia argued that, due to the weakness of civilian institutions and their inability to establish functioning governance, achieve political legitimacy against large ideological, religious or ethnic divides and foster nation-building as well, the military took up a wider role in the political, economic and social sectors. Militaries in the region have led ministries and sometimes even governments, served as parliamentarians and bureaucrats and in the diplomatic service, built roads and schools, policed villages, run hotels, and owned TV stations, rice mills or airlines (Alagappa 2001; Croissant,

Kuehn, and Lorenz 2012; Mani 2007; May and Selochan 2004). Linked with the vast array of socio-political and economic functions came corresponding doctrines, which legitimized military involvement in politics – sometimes even against constitutional processes. What is more, the doctrinal inclinations were reflected in the constitutions and in the organizational structures of the military. In turn, these have facilitated, and sometimes even engrained, participation in government and business (Crouch 1988; Sundhausen 1985).

This new understanding of the military as a pillar for modernization, in turn, informed the foreign policy agendas of Western states, first and foremost those of the US. Based on the assumption that military agencies would serve as a catalyst for economic and social modernization, Western governments supported many Third World military establishments by delivering military aid and providing training programs. The impact on policymaking of the literature about Third World militaries was felt in Southeast Asia, where Washington, after Suharto took power, extended generous amounts of military aid and became the principal supplier of equipment to the Indonesian armed forces. After Indonesia's invasion of Timor-Leste, Washington doubled military aid to Jakarta. In the years that followed, the US was Indonesia's largest weapons source, transferring over a billion dollars' worth of weapons. It was not until the 1980s that US–Indonesia military ties became subject to closer, more critical scrutiny due to the public outrage in the US over massacres committed by the Indonesian armed forces in Timor-Leste. A similar picture evolved for the Philippines and Thailand, where substantial sums of US aid were in the form of grants under the Military Assistance Program (MAP), or in the form of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) credits, to strengthen the military's capabilities through the modernization of its equipment, the improvement of its operational tactics, and increased training for its personnel. As both countries faced Communist-supported insurgencies, the overall strategic goal of US assistance was to support the security forces in their counterinsurgency actions. Hence, Valenzuela rightly holds that “ironically, the most lasting contribution of the ‘scientific’ literature on the military in the Third World was its impact on policymaking [...]” (Valenzuela 1985, 136).

This is not to say that there were no critical research agendas on the role of the military in the so-called Third World. Especially scholars in the field of development studies from the 1960s onwards understood the role of the army in state and society differently, critically illustrating the negative impact of skyrocketing military expenditures, the burgeoning arms trade and armed conflict on development. Furthermore, by the late

1970s the assumptions over a positive role of the armed forces in the modernization processes in Southeast Asia and other parts of the “Third World” were heavily questioned by new studies, which illustrated that the military had not managed to live up to these expectations. In fact, in a study by Nordlinger it was argued that many military regimes were actually less prone to contribute to socio-political modernization processes and economic growth than their civilian counterparts (Nordlinger 1977). Furthermore, the gross human rights violations committed by military forces in Southeast Asia, most notably by the US-backed South Vietnamese Army during the Vietnam War and the Indonesian armed forces in the 1980s in Timor-Leste, led to public outrage in the West. These events caused changes in the policies of the Western states vis-à-vis Southeast Asia, as military aid programs came under closer scrutiny by parliaments and the general public. However, it seems safe to state that throughout the Cold War security assistance was generally understood as a tool “to foster strategic relationships with key allies, many of whom were ruled by military governments or had civilian-led governments with extremely close ties to the military and other security services” (Ball 2010, 29).

The emergence of the international SSR paradigm

The end of the Cold War and the perceived failure of military regimes to live up to the aforementioned expectations brought about a more critical understanding of the roles of military agencies. This more critical view of the military went hand-in-hand with changes in donor policies which eventually gave rise to the concept of SSR. Hence the concept of SSR in many ways is the result of a new, people-centered concept of (human) security, which regards security not as a commodity but as a public good, and assumes that society as a whole, as well as its individual members, will benefit from an increase in security. That said, the concept ideally adds to, but in reality finds itself often at odds with, traditional notions of security with their emphasis on state security or, even more narrowly, the security of particular regimes. In line with the focus on human security, this broader approach, which aims at reforming the whole security environment and not just the security agents of the state, is built on the normative assumption that democratic oversight and accountability of the security forces serves as a precondition to security and stability. Accordingly, the UN regards a “professional, effective and accountable security sector” as pivotal for the consolidation of peace and security (UN 2008, 3). Thus, SSR decisively aims to step away

from traditional forms of military aid with their narrow focus on strategic goals and military effectiveness by adding a governance dimension, with the goal of SSR being to support countries to “meet the range of security and justice challenges they face, in a manner consistent with democratic norms, and sound principles of governance and the rule of law” (OECD DAC 2007, 21).

The term “security sector” is hereby used to describe “the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country” (UN 2008, 3). Similarly, the security sector as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) includes “all those institutions, groups, organizations and individuals – both state and non-state – that have a stake in security and justice provision” (OECD DAC 2007, 22). Hence, the security sector consists of all institutions/bodies responsible for the protection of the state and its citizens. This naturally comprises first and foremost the state’s security forces: the armed forces, police and intelligence agencies. Other possible sub-sectors for reform in which core security sector actors operate are police, gendarmeries, paramilitary forces and militias, private security and military companies (PSMCs) and intelligence services. Furthermore, the security sector comprises the institutions that formulate, implement and oversee security policy: the legislative, executive and judiciary. This includes oversight bodies like parliament and legislative committees, the executive, financial management, but also non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media. Hence, SSR does not exclusively address the immediate actors of the security sector, such as the military. Instead, a so-called whole of government approach is favored.

In line with this, the UN and other donors by and large subscribed to the general framework for effective and accountable security sectors laid out by the OECD, which is comprised of the following features: a legal framework for the legitimate use of force in line with human rights standards; an institutional set-up that allows the governance and management of the security sector; sufficient institutional capabilities in terms of personnel, equipment and resources to provide security; mechanisms to facilitate interaction and exchange among security actors; and a professional culture of service among all stakeholders. SSR is hereby defined as a process of “assessment, review, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation”, which is to be led by national authorities. In a similar manner, the framework establishes four overarching reform objectives: effective oversight and accountability of the security sector; improved delivery of security and justice services; local ownership of

the reform processes; and sustainability of the delivery of security and justice services (OECD DAC 2007, 21).

When trying to extract ideal conditions for a successful and sustainable implementation of SSR from the general literature, one finds oneself confronted with an array of quasi-ideal type characteristics defined as preconditions for a successful SSR: a secure environment, in which all former warring parties are committed to processes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; all stakeholders, civilian and military, have agreed to a set of SSR terms, objectives and proceedings in order to ensure comprehensive local ownership; all security agents regard a stronger professionalization as being in line with their vested interests; all oversight bodies (executive, legislative, judicative and civil society) are able, competent and committed to control the security agents; and, last but not least, external support for SSR is sufficiently large and long-term, as well as in line with the terms and objectives set by the respective national government, to last over the course of reforms.

While the construction of benchmarks for a holistic, comprehensive reform of the security sector makes sense theoretically in order to ensure the prevalence of general objectives and the establishment of best practices, various studies have illustrated the fact that the aforementioned characteristics are rarely found on the ground. As Schnabel argues, experiences from SSR practitioners show that:

More often than not SSR takes place against many odds, in difficult, barely enabling, less-than-ideal political, security, economic and social contexts. [...] Such environments may be characterized by transitional, often unstable, political arrangements, endemic corruption, ongoing violence, attempts to implement imprecise, open-ended or non-inclusive peace agreements and post-conflict architectures, lack of resources and “stolen” or impending elections or referenda – all characteristics of a difficult, harsh environment that stand in the way of full-range, holistic, and sustainable SSR efforts.

(Schnabel 2010, 3)

In line with this, current studies (Bryden and Olonisakin 2010b; Sedra 2010a) have found that SSR has yet to produce any success stories in terms of countries actualizing “the fundamental principles and prescriptions of the SSR model” (Sedra 2010b, 102). It has been pointed out that a gap exists between the “gospel” and the “reality” of SSR (Schnabel 2010, 30). Contrary to the conceptualization of SSR by the UN, the

OECD and others as a holistic, comprehensive, whole of government approach, analysis of SSR reforms on the ground first and foremost illustrate the partial nature of SSR reforms in reality. In reality, SSR policies are “a mixed bag of ad-hoc, small scale projects and activities” (Egnell and Haldén 2009, 32), with little regard for implementing a more comprehensive reform agenda, or the establishment of monitoring or evaluation mechanisms. SSR programs thus often narrowly focus on delivery of certain security functions at the expense of governance issues such as democratic control of the armed forces and increased responsiveness of the state to the rights and security demands of the population (Bryden and Olonisakin 2010a). Some programs, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan, are nothing more than “train-and-equip missions”, thus having drifted “so substantially from the SSR conceptual model that it is difficult to label what is happening there SSR” (Sedra 2010b, 114). Moreover, SSR activities are often badly sequenced or not sequenced at all. For example, while military reform may have progressed fairly quickly in many countries, reforms of the police or the judiciary were often implemented at a much slower pace or not implemented at all. The inter-dependency between a functioning military and police apparatus in order to improve the overall security situation has, due to failures to sync the two reform programs, in turn rendered the reform of the military at least partially ineffective.

What is more, critics have argued that SSR in reality often overemphasizes security and stability, thereby focussing primarily on improving the effectiveness of the security agents, while leaving aside other focal points, such as enhancing their democratic accountability and strengthening civilian oversight (Born 2009; Denney 2011; Zyck 2011). Others have taken issue with the ambitious targets set for reform agendas informed by very normative conceptualizations of SSR linking it directly to a broader (liberal) democratization agenda, stressing that SSR should instead primarily focus on the provision of security through capacity-building and professionalization of security actors (Brzoska 2006). Another critique has been directed at the Eurocentric/Western-centric bias inherent in SSR concepts, arguing that local processes of state formation and state–society relations need to be considered (Egnell and Haldén 2009), and that SSR programs need to take these particularities into account more strongly in order to be able to achieve successful policy outcomes through local ownership of SSR (Bendix and Stanley 2008).

Further to this, we put forward another point of criticism here: the cases of SSR selected by most scholars almost exclusively focus on countries that were subject to externally driven peace- or state-building

missions. A notable exception to this might be post-Apartheid South Africa (Cawthra 2003), and, more recently, at least until the 2013 coup, Egypt (Brumberg and Sallam 2012). While the focus on cases where SSR has been part and parcel of wider external interventions seems logical, as these cases rest prominently with the donors involved and their respective epistemic communities, it has prompted many scholars to treat the nature and scope of donor involvement as the main explanatory factor for the success (or the lack thereof) of SSR (Jackson 2011; Peake 2008; Ryan 2009; Sedra 2006; Sherman 2010; Woodward 2003). This has been, we argue, often at the expense of examining the transfer of “Western” policy concepts to local arenas of reform as well as the factors that locally drive the development (or the stifling) of SSR.

SSR in Southeast Asia

Most of the literature on SSR in Southeast Asia tends to agree with the aforementioned general findings and points of criticism. In fact, it is argued that, by international comparison, Southeast Asia as a region has so far taken a back seat with regard to SSR. Besides the lack of “ideal” preconditions for SSR, there are various other reasons for the shortage of SSR policies to be found in the literature. First, Southeast Asian states met little outside support for reform. Throughout the Cold War military assistance mainly focussed on the effectiveness of Southeast Asia’s security agents, with little regard for democratic accountability or the protection of human rights. And, while the 1990s were marked by increased international pressure for democratic reforms of some of the region’s most powerful militaries (especially towards Indonesia’s TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia – Indonesian National Armed Forces) in the aftermath of the massacres committed in Timor-Leste in 1991 and 1999), 9/11 and the Bali bombings in 2002 again changed the strategic priorities of Western governments (Sherman 2010). Especially the Bali bombings, which led to the opening of a “second front” in the war on terror in Southeast Asia, minimized reform pressures in exchange for closer strategic cooperation between various Southeast Asian states and the US and Australia (Beeson and Bellamy 2007; Mustapha 2011).¹ Additionally, other scholars have pointed out a general lack of attention to Southeast Asia: “No other region is so distant from both North America and Europe, where global institutions are primarily housed and global images are primarily shaped” (Kuhonta et al. 2008, 2).

Furthermore, when faced with international support or pressure to reform their security sectors, some Southeast Asian governments have

experienced what Caroline Hughes (2009, 6) termed the “aid dependence” problematique; that is, “the pressing and continuous orientation of local political practices towards a monitoring, evaluating, and decision-making international audience”, which in turn served “to hollow out practices of democracy themselves”. The agenda-setting and “string pulling” by external actors, set against a background of an overwhelming power imbalance between donors and receivers of aid and assistance, has often facilitated democratic reforms which did not emerge as a result of demands from the electorate, but solely as a consequence of pressure upon “elite aid recipients to conform to donor demands” (ibid.: 8).

Second, while regional organizations have played decisive roles in the promotion, the development and the implementation of SSR policies (e.g. the EU in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 (Law 2007)), SSR has not found its way onto ASEAN’s (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) agenda. Furthermore, while the acceptance and deepening of liberal values has become a cornerstone of many regional integration processes, especially the European integration process,² the so-called ASEAN way has so far rendered a value-driven integration process impossible. This is because a range of ASEAN core principles dubbed the “ASEAN way” – namely non-interference, informality, minimal institutionalization, consultation and consensus, non-use of force and non-confrontation – have widely constrained possibilities of a spread of liberal values due to an overall emphasis on non-interference in the affairs of other ASEAN member states (Acharya 2000; Stubbs 2008). Despite the fact that the ratification of the ASEAN charter in 2008 explicitly added “new” norms like democracy and human rights to the organization’s “old” principles, the nature, depth and scope of these values have been subject to fairly broad interpretations by its member states. What is more, ASEAN lacks any mechanisms to sanction member states that fail to abide by the aforementioned “new” principles. This has been exemplified by ASEAN’s indifferent response to human rights violations and hindrance of democracy in Myanmar, which has led to the organization being dubbed a “toothless tiger”.³

And, third, SSR in Southeast Asia has so far not been implemented in any Southeast Asian country in terms of a “whole of government approach”. In fact, many reforms carrying the label “SSR” have been almost exclusively directed at the military apparatus. Given the prominent position of the military in most Southeast Asian states, it comes as no surprise that most of the scholarly literature related to SSR has dealt with questions of civil–military relations and military reform.

Scholars have grappled with questions of the role of the military in the state (Chambers 2011; Mietzner 2006, 2011; Sebastian 2006), the challenges faced by civilian governments willing to implement military reform (Beeson 2008; Bunbongkarn 2004; Connors and Hewison 2007; Croissant 2013; Cruz de Castro 2005; Lee 2008; May and Selochan 2004; Mietzner 2011), and the continuing political influence of the military even in countries in which the military has undergone reforms as part of wider democratization processes (Croissant et al. 2010; Croissant, Kuehn, and Lorenz 2012; Heiduk 2009; Hernandez 2007; Law 2007).

Furthermore, the centrality of the military is underscored by recent events. Thailand witnessed strong political turmoil in the aftermath of the 2006 coup. Amid heightened political conflict between “yellow shirts” and “red shirts” and the decay of democratic institutions, the only surety with regard to post-Thaksin Thailand seems to be the enhanced influence of the military after the coup (Chambers 2010; Connors 2008). Timor-Leste witnessed violent unrest in April 2006 following the dismissal of 600 soldiers. Renewed outbreaks of violence happened during the build-up to the April 2007 presidential elections. An attack by renegade soldiers left President Ramos-Horta critically injured on 11 February 2008. On the same day Prime Minister Gusmão also faced a separate assassination attempt but escaped unharmed (Simonsen 2009). The Philippines, in turn, have witnessed various coup attempts by mostly mid-ranking officers – all of which failed to remove civilian governments from power. The military has nonetheless retained indirect ways to intervene in politics (Hernandez 2007). In Indonesia the TNI, once notorious for being a *de facto* state within the state, has by and large remained politically neutral since the fall of Suharto and has not interfered in national politics. The lack of direct political interventions notwithstanding, Indonesia’s military establishment has managed to retain a variety of authoritarian prerogatives (Heiduk 2011).

The aim of this book

While Southeast Asian states have so far been the subject of detailed case studies covering various aspects of civil–military relations, little research has been dedicated to other fields of SSR. The only book-length project on SSR in Southeast Asia (Beeson and Bellamy 2007) exclusively focusses on the military by investigating the future trajectories of civil–military relations in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia – despite the fact that it carries SSR in the title. The narrow scholarly focus on military reform has, in turn, marginalized various other ongoing reforms,