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**Southeast Asia: Integrating Disciplines**

“We value things according to what we relate to” (McDaniel).

“Awareness leads to seeing self” (Neubauer).

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| History | * World’s earliest known printing emerged with   Buddhism   * Concept of time (minutes, hours, days, weeks)   established in Buddhist roots (Hershock)   * SEA was colonized by Europe, U.S., China, Japan * Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan for SE Asia’s resources (rubber, oil, tin, iron) and to deny U.S. access to it * In 2010, U.S. and Thailand celebrated 175 years of contact * U.S. has had long history with Philippines * Spanish-American War 1898 * Colonization 1900 * Sugar * *Time Magazine’s* Woman of Year 1986: Corazon Aquino, first female president |
| Economic | * Trade with China (labor, commodity prices, rising exports, demand) * U.S. trade with Thailand (trucks, disc drives) is not as “easy” with formation of NGOs (Unger) * Indonesia has largest economy in SEA; while Japan is currently #1 trading partner, U.S. is predicted to be within 5 years * GDP per capita has risen from 10,000 baht/person in 1965 to 60,000 in 2005 (increased 6-fold) (Kerkvliet) * Singapore’s GDP growth 2010 = 14.5% (Unger) * Financial crisis of 1997 began in SEA with collapse of Thai *baht*, affected U.S. economy; Dow Jones industrial fell >7 % * Lessons learned: ensure health of banks,   increase investment in foreign exchange   * “Hamburger Crisis”/Financial Crisis 2008: “Pain, while bad, was relatively brief” in comparison with U.S. (Unger) |
| Anthropology/  Cultural Anthropology | * Like U.S., SEA was influenced by Europe (see Diamond, J.) * While most of world’s birthrates are falling, some SE Asian countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines) are rising (Neubauer) * SEA is most linguistically diverse region on earth (McDaniel) with 1,000 different languages (Andaya, L.) * 60% of world’s Muslims live in SEA (1.6 billion in 2009); 88% of Indonesia is Muslim (Ali) * Early animists sustained the practice to “explain the inexplicable” (Andaya, B.) * SEA is an example of the origin and adaptation of religions (Andaya, B.), including Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and “new religions” * Buddhism in SEA is an example of non-violence: 8-8-88 Demonstration, Saffron Rev. * SEA’s diverse but peaceful existence is model for sustainability and inter/independence * Region has integrated diasporas: Black Dutchmen in Indonesia 1800s (Vaughn) |
| Geography | * “Lands Below the Winds” are divided by wind currents, Ring of Fire (Andaya, L.) * SEA has the most border disputes in world (Lavy) * Rich rainforest * Natural Resources (oil, rubber, rice, sugar, timber) |
| Political Science | * SEA demonstrates/provides examples for all human issues * Region is blend of authority and democracy * Indonesia is 4th largest country in world (Andaya, L.) * U.S. has/has had strong interest/allies in SEA * SEA countries have same issues that U.S. does   (relationship with China, terrorism, trade, environment)   * U.S. has large military bases in Thailand * While government is important to the existence of a civil environment, SEA Nations (Burma, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam) have organized authorized/unauthorized groups, protests, unions, publications: civil/political/NGOs (labor, land, religion, education, environment, peasant, arts, gender, AIDS support) to voice their concerns (Kerkvliet) * Gender inequity is an inhibitor of progression * Integration of church and state: * Civil law is becoming Shari ‘ah-tized with Indonesia’s Blasphemy Law and Marriage Law (van Doorn-Harder) * Indonesian ID card: list one of 6 approved religions (Andaya, B.?) * Buddhism organized institution (Hershock) * Government manages almsgiving (Ali) |
| Environmental Science | * 35 million animals were smuggled out of SEA over one decade * SEA NGOs protect waters, wetlands, forest |
| Humanities | * Literature, art, film provide plural perspective; preserves history, influence, culture, sociology, authority * Art bridges cultures * Opens window to culture, provides sense of struggle for U.S. to understand (Dissanayake) * Angkor Wat (Cambodia) is the world’s largest religious monument (Lavy) |
| Education | * In reshaping higher education, SEA competes with U.S. for World Class Institutions, affects innovation; if system is not a forerunner, it is an outlier (Neubauer) * Singapore’s international village lures top 1% academics, contributing to Brain Drain (Neubauer) * Philippines exports human resource: nurses * **Although SEA is most rapidly expanding region in world, it is severely under-studied** (Dissanayake) |
| Technology | * Rise of terrorism parallels evolution of Internet (Ali) * Indonesia is a leader in social networking and media, with popular culture, appeal, and slang (van Doorn-Harder) * Media is used as both propaganda and dissonance |

What conclusions can be drawn?

* SEA is a dynamic and increasingly globally competitive region, yet is under-examined, due, in part, to the challenges of understanding/

preserving/unifying its diversity

* SEA represents global future (plurality and diversity)
* Per HDI, some SEA economies are increasing rapidly, 6 rank in top “half” (0.572/1)
* Indonesia, in particular, is rising economically (poverty rate = 14%), technologically, educationally, politically(?)
* Is a “salad” (Ben Joned via Webster) versus a “medley of peoples who mix but do not combine” (Furnivall, J. via Kimura) versus “paella,” a combination with distinct “flavors” (Aung-Thwin)
* Is represented/preserved through visual arts, written history, and “talk” stories
* Has been colonized and has adapted to this colonization
* Has been influenced religiously through trade
* Is moving from agricultural to industrial nations; is moving from diversity to unity (Andaya, L.)
* Can and has organized to oppose repression, achieve democracy, and maintain autonomy
* While SE Asian nations have been divided by:
* geography
* the influence of outside authority, including that of South and East Asia, Europe, and the U.S.
* the degree and method of preservation of indigenous authority
* religion, including Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity
* culture/social/political/linguistic structures
* They are united by:
* “Kinship, relatively high positioned women, sense of ‘present mindedness’” (Wolters, O.W. via Andaya, L.)
* Austro-Asiatic or Austronesian language origins
* ASEAN, under 7 Aims and Purposes (<http://www.asean.org/64.htm>)
* How are SE Asia and the U.S. connected?
* The U.S. shares long histories with regions such as Philippines and Thailand
* US/Thailand: both nations value strong judicial systems and human rights, and work to overcome environmental challenges (McDaniel)
* Although the region is geographically distant from the U.S., we do share commonalities, including the desire for and establishment of democracy; human, labor, and women’s rights; and environmental concerns
* As SEA nations continue to rise economically, politically, and socially, the U.S. will increase trade with region
* As SEA nations rise, the U.S. will see increased enrollment and greater competition (fueling innovation?) at higher education institutions

Works Cited (all 2011):

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vanDoorn-Harder, Nelly

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Work Consulted

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