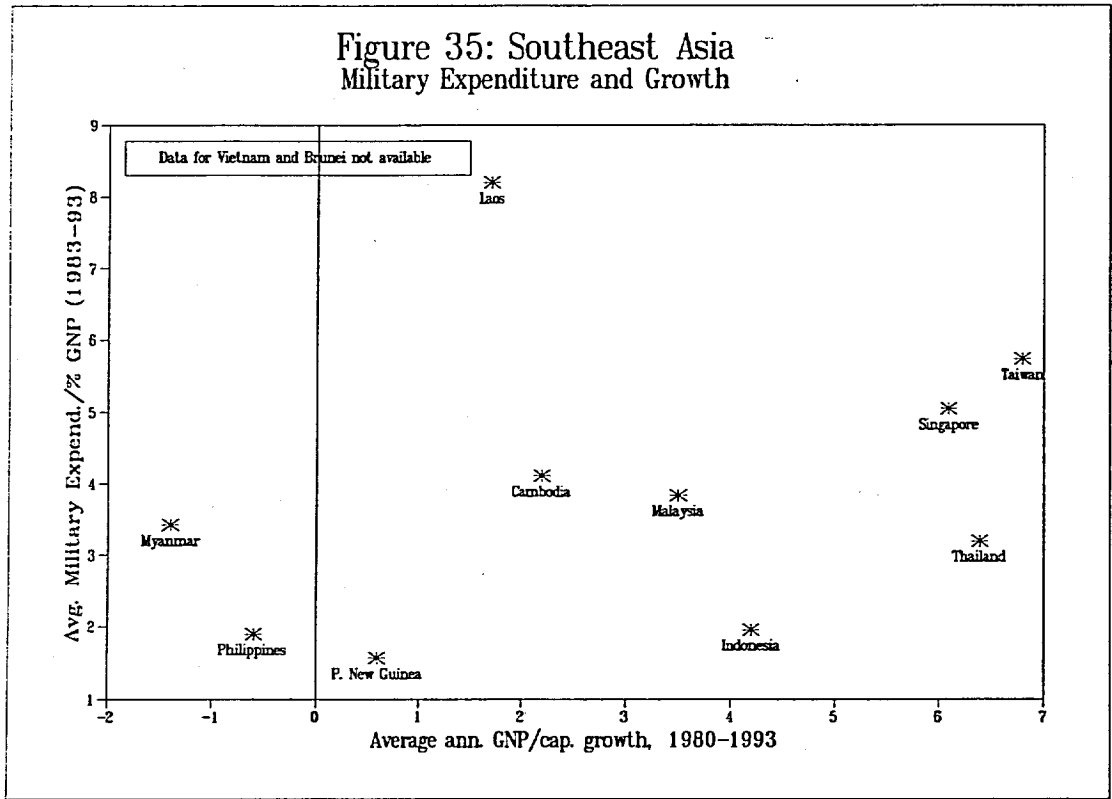


relatively evenly across the table. Again, this is not surprising, since the level of economic development and resource endowments of the region's states vary so widely. The only plausible exception, noted above, is Myanmar, in which the tight grip of the armed forces on the economy and society has (at least until recently) retarded international investment and throttled most economic initiative. This may not, however, be directly linked to military spending, but rather to the economic consequences of authoritarian politics.



Finally, Figure 36 illustrates the possible relationship between the military presence in society and civil and political freedoms. Although there does not appear to be any relationship between the two variables, when examined by themselves, each presents some interesting information. On the side of the number of soldiers, the three highest-scoring states are Taiwan, Singapore and Brunei. All three have small populations relative to potential threatening neighbours (China and Malaysia), and hence their relatively large percentage of soldiers is unlikely by itself to be translated into a potential destabilizing force in the region. The next three states, however, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, are all significantly above the levels of their neighbours (Malaysia and Thailand), but they have a deeply scarred recent history of war and cross-border violence that has doubtless shaped the level of their armed forces. As part of broader security