

authority tends to reside somewhat more in the person than in the position, and an organization chart does little to tell the outsider just what leverage — *palanca* — the incumbent has...an image of being a forceful personal decision-maker is part of the cultural basis for holding authority.¹⁸

This kind of orientation makes the achievement of multilateral agreements in which everyone must share the responsibility (and the "glory") much less likely, and makes jockeying for position omnipresent. (Parenthetically, similar patterns are also manifest in the Middle East.)

A second manifestation in decision-making styles is the recourse of weaker parties to formal/legalistic formulas that appear to outsiders as designed to obstruct progress. In fact, such orientations are often effective weapons of the weak, since rhetoric and formalism can also serve to obscure a relatively weak or low status in an international negotiation. No agreement is better than one in which weakness has been openly conceded. Chinese negotiators, for example, tend to begin discussions and negotiations with an attempt to secure agreement on a statement of broad and high-sounding principles rather than on practical or small concrete measures. These principles create a form of "protection" for the negotiator, since the subsequent degree of rigidity or flexibility on specific issues is determined by the degree of factionalism or consensus that lies behind the broad principles.¹⁹ Such an approach can, however, generate difficulties when confronted with a more "problem solving" or pragmatic orientation to negotiation, in which the overarching principles are seen as one of the *products* of the negotiation, rather than as a pre-negotiated (or first negotiated) item.

A completely different style of decision-making is generated in the Southeast Asian context, in which the most oft-cited example is the role of consensus, which is usually traced to the decision making style of traditional Javanese village society. Consensus of course does not equate with *unanimity*, and in the Javanese village is actually quite elitist, hegemonic, and even authoritarian. This might make its projection onto the international level seem problematic, until one notes that the consensual *modus operandi* of ASEAN is based on some sort of hegemonic legitimacy that conceded Indonesia's predominant role, in return for its commitment to exercise restraint in its regional behaviour).²⁰ Similarly, in Southeast Asia informal methods and procedures most often carry the day. However, this decision-making style might prove to be less functional in the broader context of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

The third cluster of issues can be located in socio-cultural attitudes towards territorial, cultural and political identity, including specific issues related to the societal role of violence, conflict, and conflict resolution mechanisms. This issue received considerably less attention in the various case studies, perhaps in part because it is closely entangled with the second and fourth issues. Nevertheless, Latham's study of India, for example, notes that "ideas of tolerance, pluralism and syncretism define Indian society," and

¹⁸ Fisher, *International Negotiation*, 29.

¹⁹ This "protection" of general principles is not unique to China, as American negotiator Paul Nitze discovered after his infamous "walk in the woods" discussions with his Russian counterpart. This story is well told in Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits* (London: Pan Books, 1985).

²⁰ Amitav Acharya, "Culture and Security: Achieving Regional Security in the 'ASEAN Way'," 57.