

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background

The Association of Southeast Asia Nations or well known as ASEAN is Regional Intergovernmental Organization in Southeast Asia consists of ten countries; there are Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar. This regional organization firstly established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand with ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) as its legal constitute which was signed by five countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Philippines) as its founding father.<sup>1</sup> Thus, their main purpose is promoting “prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations”.<sup>2</sup> This organization has been integrating with other Intergovernmental Organization such as United Nations, European Union, and other Intergovernmental Organization in another part of the world as its commitment in giving prosperity for its member countries.

In order to promote prosperous and peaceful community in Southeast Asia, ASEAN has purposes and principles should be adhered by ASEAN Members States, especially for principles of democracy, it is stated on ASEAN Charter, chapter I, article 1, point 7; “To strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the role of law, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedom, with due regard to the rights and responsibilities of the

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<sup>1</sup> ASEAN Overview. (n.d.). Retrieved August, 2014, from <http://www.asean.org/asean/about-asean/overview>

<sup>2</sup> Kim, M. (2011). Theorizing ASEAN integration. *Asian Perspective*, 35(3), 407-435. Retrieved August, 2014, from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/928757491?accountid=38628>.

Member States of ASEAN”.<sup>3</sup> And the principles of democracy also stated on ASEAN Charter, chapter I, articles 2 point 2(h); “adherence to the role of law, good governance, the principles of democracy and constitutional government”.<sup>4</sup> Thus, both points show ASEAN desires to strengthen and adhere the principles of democracy, and how important democracy in the region of Southeast Asia is. In addition, ASEAN has different democracy model with liberal democracy which has been developed in the West. It happened because of the existence of Asian value which will be explained more in Chapter II.

According to Robert A. Dahl (1976), the democratic governments have to satisfy the principles of consent and political equality. Political stability means the people under the government have to be treated equally in all important matters for their life. On the other hand, the principle of consent as fit up the principle of political equality which the governments have to give consent of people subject to political equality.<sup>5</sup> Hence, to improve the political equality and consent, there are three requirements which citizens of a country have to get opportunities:<sup>6</sup>

(1) To figure out, discover, and formulate their goals: to find out what they really want. (2) By acting individually or in concert, to indicate their preferences to their fellow citizens and to the government. (3) To have their preferences weighted equally in the conduct of the government- that is, weighted with no discrimination because of what they want or who they happen to be.

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<sup>3</sup> ASEAN Charter. (n.d.). Retrieved August, 2014, from <http://www.asean.org/asean/asean-charter/translations-of-the-asean-charter>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Dahl, R. A. (1976). *Democracy in the United States: Promise and Performance* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Chicago: Rand Mc Nally, College Publishing Company.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, page 17.

In addition, according to Robert A. Dahl (1976, 43-45), there are also eight requirements in order to fulfill the three opportunities in actualizing the government institutions must grant them; those are

- (1) Alternative sources of information, (2) freedom of expression, (3) the right to vote, (4) free and fair elections, (5) competition among political leaders for votes and other support, (6) the right to run for public office, (7) freedom to form and join organizations including political parties, (8) and the last is institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.<sup>7</sup>

However, in strengthening and adhering the principles of democracy is not easy like turning back the hand. It is difficult for ASEAN and also its Member States especially ~~for Myanmar~~ ASEAN has ~~problem~~ in resolving the issue for its member countries and strengthening Myanmar democratization, it is because the principle of non interference. Non-interference means there is no interference for other member countries' internal affairs and no state permit to monopolize of ASEAN.<sup>8</sup> This principle was adopted from Peace of Westphalia in 1648 that found the notion of the sovereignty of the nation state.

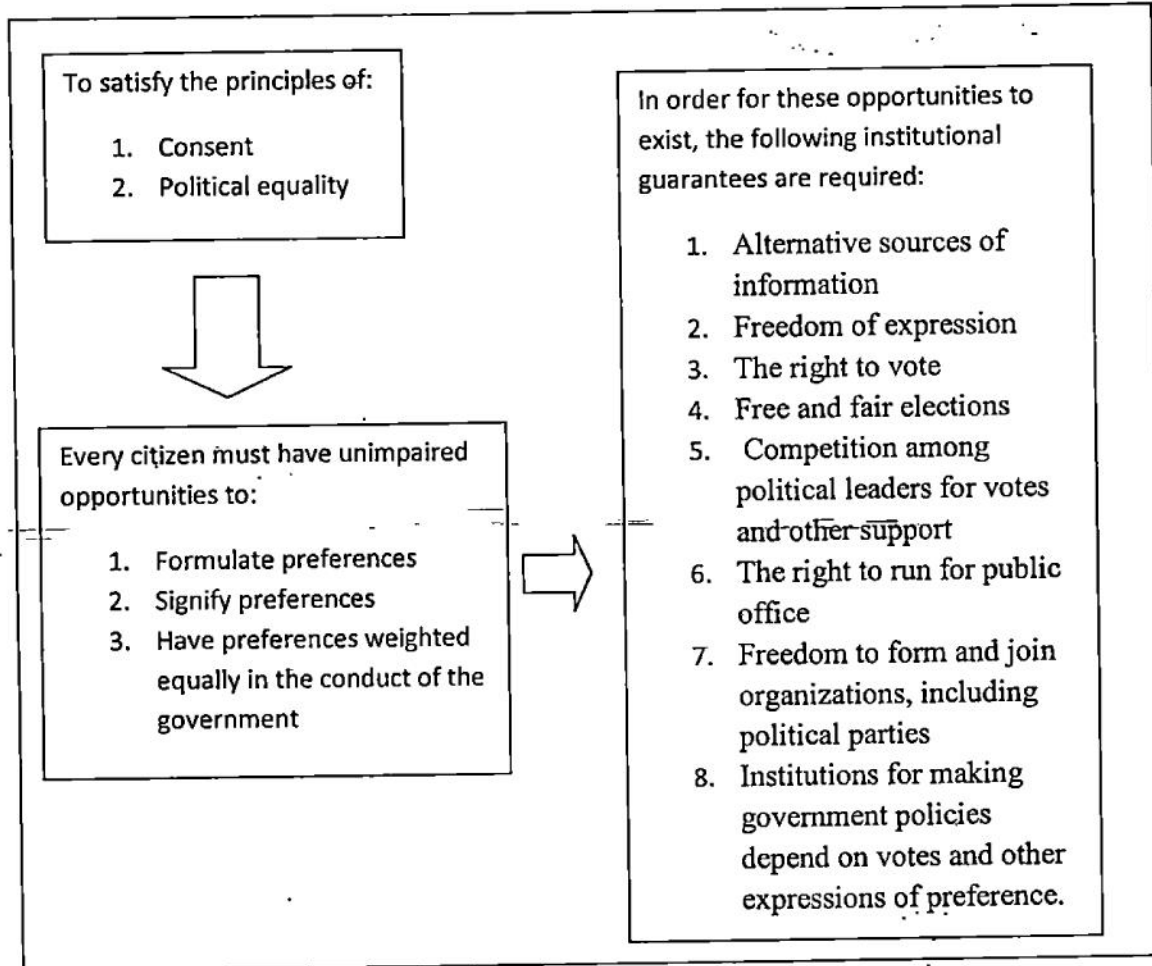
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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, page 43-45.

<sup>8</sup> Institute of South East Asia Studies. (2010). Know Your ASEAN (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Singapore: ISEAS Publishing: Author.

Table 1.1

Some Conditions of Democratic Government<sup>9</sup>



Myanmar is a state located in Southeast Asia. This state was previously known as Burma. Myanmar has population approximately 55,167,330 which 68 percent of them belongs to Burmese ethnic group, 22 percent belongs to the Shan, Kayin, and Rakhine, and 10 percent belongs to the other small ethnic community groups such as Chinese and Indian immigrants.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

In colonial era, this country was colonized by British. There were three wars between Burmese people and British people (1824, 1852, and 1885) which were won by British people and put this country as their colony as same as India in 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1937, it was successfully separated from British because of Japanese invasion. It put this country as a Japanese colony for five years until the end of World War II in 1945. And finally on 4 January 1948, Burmese got their independent when British agreed to give the independence for their colony's demands for independence.<sup>11</sup>

Myanmar had been governed by Junta Military that was internationally called the ~~military led State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)~~. The military role had been governing Myanmar since 1962 after the military general Ne Win did the military coup and established the different policies which were known as "Burmese Ways to Socialism."<sup>12</sup> Usually, military governance tended to be authoritarian, but, even Myanmar had been governing by Junta Military. Its economy tended to be a capitalist system like the other Southeast Asia countries such as Indonesia, Singapore and so on.<sup>13</sup>

Even SLORC had big role in Myanmar. It also had an opposition from the society especially from pro-democracy movement group such as National League for Democracy (NLD) under Aung San Suu Kyi leadership which was against its

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Hoffmann, S. A. (1998). The international politics of Southern Asia. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 33(1), 43+. Retrieved August, 2014, from <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA20572362&v=2.1&u=kpt05007&it=r&p=GPS&w=w&asid=7c657dcdcf25a3fb260c96b679f55c96>.

authoritarian style.<sup>14</sup> These political groups such as NLD is interested in promoting democracy in Myanmar because they believe that democracy is the best way for a state to respect society rights because during military's role, Myanmar has many human rights violation especially for minority group of Rohingya and political group of pro-democracy people.

NLD was firstly found in 1989 with Aung San Suu Kyi as its campaigner. At the same time, SLORC agreed to hold the elections to elect the people who could sit in parliament even in political activities such as campaign being restricted by Junta Military and Suu Kyi and her colleague being arrested.<sup>15</sup> When the election was held in 1990, NLD won the election approximately 82 percent of parliament seat. The SLORC prohibited NLD cadres to get their rights and put them into house arrest included Suu Kyi.<sup>16</sup> But, even when Suu Kyi was still under house arrest, she could still win the Noble Peace Prize as aspiration for her in leading the campaign for democratic change in 1991. The winning of NLD in the 1990 election has shown the people of Myanmar the democracy desires.

Myanmar became ASEAN member's country in 1997 and directly, it became a poorer country compared with the other ASEAN member countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore.<sup>17</sup> At that time, Myanmar and ASEAN received resistance and critics especially from Western countries such as

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Op cit, *Republic of the union of myanmar (burma)* (2014).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Furuoka, F., Mahmud, R., Lim, B., & Pazim, K. H. (2012). Making Of The ASEAN Community: Economic Integration And Its Impact On Workers In Southeast Asia. *Researchers World*, 3(2), 1-7. Retrieved August, 2014, from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1016743224?accountid=38628>

European Union (EU) members. Because EU argued Myanmar had bad government, authoritarian leadership and many human rights violations.

Since Myanmar had been joining ASEAN in 1997, Myanmar had hosted several ASEAN meeting. These opportunities were used by Junta Military and Myanmar government to improve their legitimacy and regional image. Beside that, on May 2000, Myanmar foreign minister took a place to criticize EU because Myanmar was never recognized as the signatory of ASEAN and EU economy cooperation since it is joining in 1997. In fact, EU had been the largest aid donors to ASEAN since 1977.<sup>18</sup> In other hand, it showed Myanmar behaviors it desired to improve its cooperation with European Union in term of economy.

In Manila 1998, Philippine foreign minister, Domingo Siazon, urged Myanmar Junta Military to have an unconditional dialogue with National League for Democracy to achieve reconciliation in Myanmar democratization. This urging by chance happened in ASEAN foreign minister conference after Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest. In the same meeting, Thailand foreign minister, DR Surin Pitsuwan criticized the constructive engagement in which ASEAN concerned to non interference has damage his state ability because of Rohingya refugees in Thailand and Myanmar border had been bothered his country. He argued that it happened as the impact of Myanmar domestic policy. He also argued this condition as a Myanmar interference, so he had the right to criticize Myanmar Government.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Zaw, A. (n.d.). ASEAN-Burma Relations. *Burma and ASEAN: A trouble marriage*, 43. Retrieved August, 2014, from [http://www.idea.int/asia\\_pacific/burma/upload/chap1.pdf](http://www.idea.int/asia_pacific/burma/upload/chap1.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Op cit, Aung Zaw.

Beside the principles of non-interference, ASEAN has the other obstacles in strengthening Myanmar democratization; it is because of the other outside ASEAN members' state interventions, for instance, Japan is one of the countries which have been supporting aids for Myanmar during Junta Military regime. And following the massive protest in Myanmar (1998) and Myanmar elections, Japan's government recognized military regime as the legitimate government in Myanmar.<sup>20</sup> It affected the difficulty of changing the military regime into democracy.

ASEAN has many roles in influencing the Myanmar government behavior in constructing democracy within the country. Even though Myanmar is still far away from democracy, ASEAN approaches tends to have constructive way without intervening directly to the country will construct political stability and democratization in Myanmar. For instance, through some agenda which are implemented by ASEAN in term of politics, economy, education, security and aids.

## **B. Research Question**

How does ASEAN contribute in Myanmar democratization?

## **C. Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Constructivism**

Constructivism is a theory which emphasizes the social world including international relations as a form of human construction. According to

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<sup>20</sup> Reilly, J. (2013). China and japan in myanmar: Aid, natural resources and influence. *Asian Studies Review*, 37(2), 141-VI. Retrieved August, 2014, from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1398764492?accountid=38628>



constructivism, the social world is not given, but it constitutes inter-subjective area that it is created by the society in certain time and places.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the role of society becomes worthy in constructing the social phenomena and it has characteristic binding each other between social phenomena and society in general.

As a social theory, constructivism challenges materialism by hypothesizing the structures of human association as “primarily cultural rather than material phenomena,” and rationalism by arguing for their function as not only behavior-regulating but also identity- and interest- constructing, though “material forces,” it admits, “still matter,” and “people,” it acknowledges, “are still international actors.”<sup>22</sup>

## **2- Ideational Structures**

Identity as the key point for every policies and actions which a state makes because identity is the reflection of interest from the actors of international relation such as states, NGOs, and individual. Moreover, actions as the continuation of actor's interest have linear understanding with Alexander Wendt's argument that “Anarchy is what states make on it”.<sup>23</sup> In term of Myanmar, the main actors are Prime Minister, scientist, political parties, military leader, NGOs, and society community.

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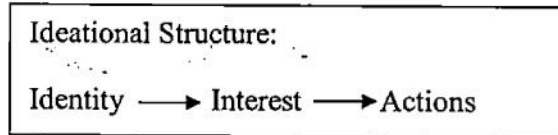
<sup>21</sup> Jackson, R. & Sorensen, G. (2009). *Pengantar Studi Hubungan Internasional*, Constructivism. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

<sup>22</sup> Behraves, M. (2011). *The Thrust of Wendtian Constructivism*, Retrieved August, 2014, from <http://www.e-ir.info/2011/03/09/the-thrust-of-wendtian-constructivism/>

<sup>23</sup> Copeland, D.C. (2000). The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism: A Review Essay. *International Security*, 25 (2). 187-212. Retrieved October, 2014, from <http://www3.nccu.edu.tw/~lorenzo/Copeland.pdf>

**Table 1.2**

**Ideational Structures**



In changing a state identity will be possible if there are shared ideas, beliefs, and values which solely bring them into a powerful influence on social and political action.<sup>24</sup> The writer argues, this approach will be a long term process rather than use term of interference directly. On the other hand, it will give permanent process in changing a state's democratization because it focuses on identity as the basic principle of political actions of state based on the ideational structure.

Another requirement in changing the process of identity is there should be an interaction between two or more actors which have different identities. Hence, identity sharing would be possible. In the case of Myanmar, the writer puts the roles of ASEAN as an Intergovernmental Organization instead of putting the another actors because ASEAN became the basic actor which can influence Myanmar and construct Myanmar behaviors towards another actors in international relations such as state. Without ASEAN interaction between Myanmar and other states, it will be impossible because in the previous era, Myanmar felt threatened in having interaction. In another hand, the big powers such as United States of America and European Union, used term of sanction to

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

influence Myanmar to stop human rights violation toward minority groups compared with ASEAN approaches which tend to be a good partner for Myanmar.

ASEAN's principles of good partner successfully influenced Myanmar to be more open in its international politics matters. It could be seen that Myanmar desires in participating in several ASEAN's forums such as ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Economic Community 2015, and Bali Democracy Forum. Even BDF is not kind of ASEAN's forum, Myanmar participation is also seen as the ASEAN contribution to push Myanmar in achieving reconciliation and its democratization because Indonesia is part of ASEAN's members country as caretaker of BDF.

In another part, many of ASEAN students celebrate the conference where Myanmar's students also participate in. it can be conferences, discussions and seminars. The programs are ASEAN scholarship, ASEAN student exchanges, ASEAN cultural sharing and so on. Considering ideas, beliefs and value sharing are not only to the government but also to the society. These programs will encourage the students who participate in those agenda become Myanmar's leaders in the future with their new identity of democracy that they get from those agendas.

### **3. Political Development**

In Southeast Asia, ASEAN as Intergovernmental Organization in the region has fundamental desires to strengthen and adhere the principles of democracy. It can be seen on ASEAN charter as its legal binding rules for its Member State. On the other hand, one of its Member States which is still

struggling for democracy is Myanmar. In Myanmar, many of pro-democratic groups have been appeared. One of them is National League for Democracy which has Aung San Suu Kyi as its campaigner. Hence, in order to fulfill the society expectation for democracy, the government of Myanmar which was led by the Junta Military organized the election for parliamentary seats in 1990. But, this election was undemocratic because the Junta Military prohibited Suu Kyi and her colleagues to do some campaigns. Even though NLD was prohibited to have some of agendas for its campaign, NLD won the election with 83 % of parliamentary seat. However, The Junta Military prevented NLD to sit in parliament by arresting Suu-Kyi and her colleagues into-house-arrest. Therefore, Myanmar election was considered undemocratic because there was still many points of democratization or political development cannot be filled.

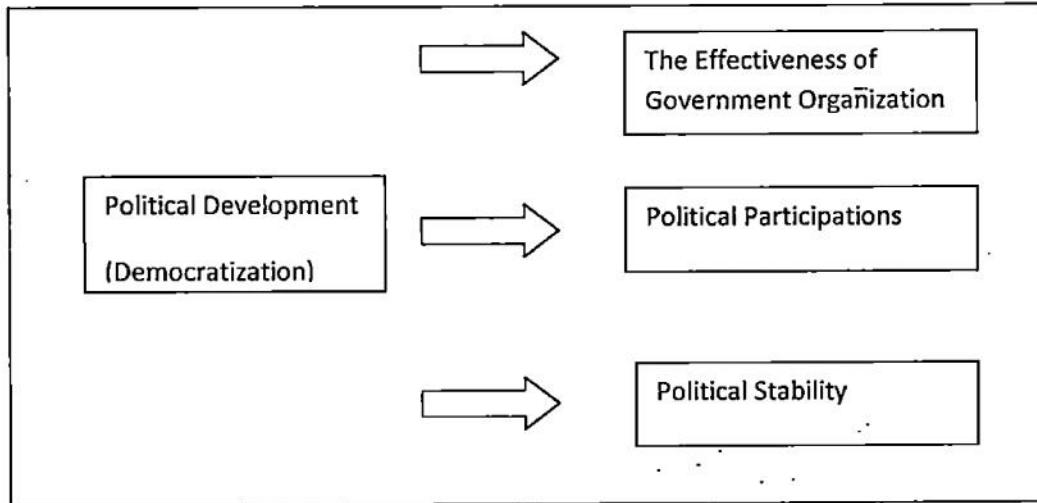
In Political Development (Democratization), there are three points that should be filled; effectiveness of government organization, political participation and political stability. Each point has its own indicator such as the percentage of the rest of development budget as the indicator for effectiveness of government organization. In other part for the democratization is political participation which two of the indicator of it are participation of the people in the election and participation of the society in the campaign. Moreover, in term of political stability, it can be seen on the index of coup and conspiracy.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Mas' oed, M. (1990). *Ilmu Hubungan International: Disiplin dan Metodologi*. Jakarta: LP3ES.

Table 1.3

Political Development (Democratization)<sup>26</sup>



**D. Hypothesis**

ASEAN has prominent roles in Myanmar democratization which the roles tend to be constructive way rather than interference to the issue directly. It is because of ASEAN principle of non interference which means a state is prohibited to interfere in other states internal affairs and monopolize the ASEAN. Beside, ASEAN has different kind of democracy model compare with the West. It is because of Asian Value which affected to the way of ASEAN in interpreting something through its own way. It is known as ASEAN Way.

In order to make Myanmar achieve democracy, ASEAN has several roles by constructing three basic of Democratization; effectiveness of government organization, political participation and political stability by sharing ideas, belief, and value, through ASEAN member states cooperation and interaction

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

There are several roles which ASEAN has implemented towards its member countries including Myanmar which effectively in constructed Myanmar democratization;

1. Promoting Democracy by forum; Bali Democracy Forum.
2. Being a nice partner for Myanmar; by helping each other when natural disaster happened.
3. Promoting cooperation and integration to "International Community"; ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN +3, and East Asia Summit.
4. Building the legal cooperation in the region; ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Political-Security Community; and ASEAN-Socio-Cultural Community.
5. Bringing ASEAN youth people together; ASEAN Youth Camps and Jamborees, ASEAN student exchange and ASEAN scholarship for ASEAN Member States students including Myanmar.

#### **E. Method of Research and Data Analysis**

This undergraduate thesis will use descriptive which describes and explains the problem based on data information. Data collecting were done by doing library research which is related to contact analyses and expertise concept published in the articles, textbook, journal, and other resources. Besides, this thesis will apply some theories and model in order to answer the research question.

## **F. The Range of Research**

In writing this thesis, the author provides restrictions in order to facilitate the analysis. This research is limited to discuss Myanmar's first membership in ASEAN until today without ignoring the significant events happened to complete this writing.

## **G. System of Writing**

Chapter 1 explains about background, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, method of research, data analysis and the range of research.

Chapter 2 explains about ASEAN's principles of Democracy and non Interference. For instance, in the ASEAN's principle of democracy, ASEAN has its own way in promoting democracy which is known as ASEAN Way that implies towards the principles of non-interference.

Chapter 3 explains about Myanmar Democratization such as the establishment of Myanmar new constitution and democratic political party, Myanmar election in 1990 and 2012, and the starting point of Myanmar integration with International Community.

Chapter 4 explains about ASEAN roles in Myanmar Democratization such as promoting democracy through some forums, being nice partner for Myanmar, Building legal cooperation in the region, promoting cooperation and integration to international community, and bringing ASEAN's youth people together.

Chapter 5 contains the conclusion from the entire chapters on ASEAN roles in Myanmar democratization in order to answer the research question.