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Exposing the limits of ASEAN Centrality: power shifts and the changing security architecture of East Asia

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Abstract

Security cooperation in Southeast Asia, arguably even within the broader East Asian region, has largely revolved around the viability of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the driving force behind Southeast Asian (and East Asian) regionalism. Since 1994, multilateral institutional arrangements were established with the ASEAN states as their core component, and the "ASEAN way" of conducting foreign affairs as their normative guide. These arrangements, like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), were seen as being a critical aspect of maintaining peaceful relations in the region even in the face of long-standing disputes and historical suspicions. This state of affairs, based as they are on the ASEAN's ability to provide the only viable arrangement for managing regional relations, have begun to unravel with the intensification of great power dynamics. The increasingly competitive strategic relationship between the United States and China pose a challenge to cooperative security relations that have ASEAN as their cornerstone. Powered by the tremendous economic growth of the past twenty years, China has emerged as a regional power with aspirations to a greater position in the East Asian regional relations. The United States, reeling in the wake of a financial crisis of global proportion, has adopted a policy directed at making its presence in the Asia Pacific region more clearly felt. The emerging dynamic between the two great powers has increasingly become the central factor in East Asian relations to the detriment of ASEAN and the ASEAN-centered security arrangements that have buttressed regional security and regional security cooperation in Southeast Asia for the past two decades.

Introduction

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Developments in the Asia Pacific region have raised the prospect of a return to balance of power politics. The rise of China and the rebalancing strategy of the United States have revitalized realist projections about a regional order that will be dominated by the rivalry and competition between these two major powers. More importantly, the increasing significance of this competitive relationship in the way the governments of both these countries frame it and, subsequently, their relations with other countries around the region. This is a vast change from a few years back when discussions about a cooperative security framework revolving around "ASEAN centrality" seemed to be the cornerstone of regional security dynamics. At the same time, however, the prospect of an ASEAN Community being established in 2015 continues to sustain expectations about more cooperative arrangements.

These two trends, one admittedly gaining more attention than the other, are also indicative of a divide in the way security is seen around the region. The emerging dynamic between China and the United States more clearly emphasizes traditional international relations and security with its emphasis on inter-state relations and competition. The revitalization of alliance politics, the increasing emphasis on maritime territorial issues, and the re-militarization of political dynamics in the Korean peninsula only contribute to this framing of regional relations. On the other hand, the multilateral mechanisms that have had ASEAN at the center emphasizes cooperation, at least normatively if not always materially. In this context, non-traditional security concerns have been the principal area of discussion and debate.

This paper looks into these two trends and the way that they color regional dynamics and relations. The working argument is that the great power dynamic between China and the US, without the moderating influence of multilateral platforms, will increasingly push regional dynamics into a competitive context reminiscent of balance of power politics. Unfortunately, the same dynamic is undermining the influence and impact of existing multilateral institutions designed precisely to mitigate the effect of great power politics and competition. This is particularly evident in the case of ASEAN. Unless the regional order moves away from this trend, the prospect of cooperative security with its less conflict-oriented framing of security would be difficult to sustain.

Security Cooperation in the East Asian region: Building on the foundation of ASEAN Centrality

Since 1994, a regional security "architecture" designed around a framework of multilateral security cooperation has been in place in East Asia (or even the wider Asia Pacific as some policy makers have argued). That year saw the inception of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which became the precursor to more than a decade of extensive discussions on regional security arrangements, the development of "soft" institutions concerned primarily with informal normative structures, and the increasing emphasis on non-traditional security concerns. At the center of these developments was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which pushed a security perspective that was seen as being comprehensive and inclusive in its scope. Working with a security model built around a comprehensive and cooperative framework, (Dewitt, 1994; and Vetschera, 2007) ASEAN and ASEAN-driven regional institutions tended to de-emphasize balance of power politics and its "us vs them" formulation of security in favor of an inclusive approach to security. The ARF in fact showed that there could be such a thing as being too inclusive as the forum had to adjust with some difficulty to having its membership expand to 27 by 2007.

The key to the approach taken by ASEAN on regional security is in trying to "manage" balance of power politics in Southeast Asia – which is tantamount to managing great power dynamics in the region. The very establishment of ASEAN itself was the partly influenced by the desire to keep the ASEAN sub-region and, by extension, Southeast Asia free from the potentially dangerous effects of superpower rivalry and politics at the height of the Cold War. The inclusion of the principle of non-interference as a key ASEAN principle is not only in keeping with principles and norms accepted in the United Nations (UN) but was also intended at keeping the region secure "by preventing its getting entangled in great power rivalries as it did with preventing the latter from being involved in the internal affairs of countries in the region." (Kraft, 2012, p. 63)

The inception of the ARF, however, showed that ASEAN had made its mark beyond the region as an association of developing states that had unusual (for such an association) success in managing intra-ASEAN relations and ensuring that differences would not lead to conflict among its member-states. Among its dialogue partners, this was more than enough to establish a confidence in the Association's capacity to replicate its "success" in a wider territorial scope and, consequently, for ASEAN to be asked

to become the agenda setter for an Asia Pacific-wide forum on regional security. This was formalized with the establishment of the ARF and the role of ASEAN therein as agenda-setter for regional security dialogue.

Taking on this role also meant shifting the political strategy of ASEAN in its approach towards the security of Southeast Asia and that of the Asia Pacific region. Where it used to emphasize the need to insulate the Southeast Asian region from balance of power politics and great power rivalries, the increasing shift to "ASEAN centrality" in a wider East Asian and Asia Pacific regionalism imposed an imperative to accept the involvement of and engagement with the major powers *in the region*. Jürgen Haacke (2006) noted the break that this represented with the 1971 aspiration of ASEAN to establish a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in the region, and the shift it symbolized from the Association's previous thrust on regional security. On the other hand, Alice Ba (2007) and Michael Leifer(1994) noted that such a role for ASEAN in a wider Asia Pacific context not only made sense but was also necessary in the post-Cold War context. The latter was very explicit in emphasizing that the fact of the establishment of the ARF showed how important it was for the ASEAN states to change their narrow Southeast Asia focus and "expand their strategic horizons in the interest of addressing the problem of common security." (Leifer, 1994, p. 7)

ASEAN took the opportunity to use the formula that had worked so well for managing intra-ASEAN relations in the ARF. At the heart of this formula were norms that ASEAN had emphasized became the basis for a nascent form of extra-ASEAN regionalism. Of particularly importance is the adherence to informal consultations and consensus-seeking, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for sovereignty and non-interference. There was an initial willingness to work within the parameters of what became known as the "ASEAN Way" as ASEAN's dialogue partners understood and generally internalized how it worked. (Katsumata, 2006; and Morada, 2002)It was this acceptance of the ASEAN Way as the normative foundation of regional inter-state relations that Brian Job (2010) pointed to as the real accomplishment of ASEAN in the context of the nascent process of extra-ASEAN regionalism.

Hand in hand with the paramountcy of ASEAN centrality (and arguably directly an effect of it) was the increasing importance of the need to emphasize non-traditional security. Non-traditional security (NTS) is defined as those security issues that involve

> "**challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise from non-military sources,** such as climate change, resource scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational crime.
>
> These dangers are transnational in scope, defying unilateral remedies and requiring comprehensive – political, economic and social – responses, as well as the humanitarian use of military force."

Adopted from the Centre for Non-traditional Security (NTS) Studies of the S. Rajaratnam School for International and Strategic Studies (RSIS), this definition emphasizes two points. It attempts to make a distinction between the issues covered under the NTS framework from what is considered to be *traditional security*, i.e. issues that involve the protection of territory and the people that reside within that territory from external aggression and internal subversion, as well as the defense of sovereignty. That is to say from those issues that generally involve a military response. The latter is the realm of balance of power politics and great power dynamics. By emphasizing NTS, ASEAN effectively de-emphasizes those issues that concern great power dynamics, and thus de-emphasizes great power dynamics itself as the defining security framework for the region. Secondly, the emphasis on the transnational nature of the scope of and remedies to these issues as well as the comprehensive response they require point to the need for cooperative mechanisms rather than the self-help nature of traditional security.

It is ironic that the ARF was originally conceived to address the problems that could come out of balance of power politics in the immediate post-Cold War era because so much of the focus of discussions and even the first instances of operational cooperation within its ambit have been on non-traditional security concerns. In 2007, the Philippines and the United States collaborated on a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise, the first ever operational exercise conducted under the aegis of the ARF. This eventually extended beyond the ARF as other ASEAN-driven mechanisms, i.e. the ASEAN Plus Three (AP3) process and the East Asia Summit (EAS), were established around these same norms and pursued an agenda that gave a premium to non-traditional security. Even the institutional arrangements that involve traditional defense agencies, particularly the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) process and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (involving the ASEAN defense ministers and the defense ministers of its dialogue partners), has given equal value to a non-

traditional security agenda. Under the ADMM and ADMM-Plus, six Experts Working Groups were set up to look into humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR); maritime security; military medicine; counterterrorism; peacekeeping operations; and humanitarian mine action. In the 10th ADMM-Plus meeting held in Vientiane on 25 May 2016, a proposal to set up a EWG on cybersecurity was approved. This working group is designed to provide "a formal platform for countries to both exchange expertise and knowledge as well to promote practical cooperation in the area of cyber security." (Parawesmaran 2016)

There is, however, reason to believe that ASEAN leadership of a broader East Asia or Asia Pacific regional process is unsustainable. Brian Job has argued that ASEAN possesses neither the material capacity nor the ideational force to push action on emerging and future issues in the various fields that extra-ASEAN regionalism is seeking to address. (Job, 2010) In another article, he and Erin Williams pointed out that weaknesses in institutionalization (especially in mediation and preventive diplomatic mechanisms), and the continued insistence on the "comfortable to all" pacing of the process reinforced tendencies towards "multilateral institutional stasis and issue avoidance." (Job and Williams, 2011, p. 9) See Seng Tan (2013, p. 29) similarly points to institutional weaknesses within ASEAN itself and the inability of the Association's members to provide "good actionable policy ideas" as threats to a wider Asia Pacific or even East Asian regionalism become more prevalent.

These arguments about the institutional limitations of ASEAN ironically complement another aspect of the ASEAN-centric security architecture that has provided the framework for security cooperation in East Asia and the broader Asia Pacific region. By and large, this regional security architecture, fragmented as it is, has operated under the context of some form of benign tolerance by the great powers, especially in the absence of bloc politics, a regional concert of powers, or an imposed or accepted hegemonic structure. Mutual suspicions have led the region's most powerful states to accept and (to a fairly significant extent) defer to what Morada (2002) has referred to as the "middle power" leadership role played by ASEAN. This compromise has allowed ASEAN to broker a form of institutionalized security cooperation built around a sustained dialogue among these great powers. This narrative of successful norm socialization, however, is challenged by the argument posed by Evelyn Goh that ASEAN as the driving force behind East Asian (AP3) and Asia Pacific (ARF, EAS and the EADMM) security regionalism is a by-product of a "minimalist bargain among the great powers" based on the "minimalist normative position" derived from the "ASEAN Way" and the consultative form of leadership exercised by ASEAN through "ASEAN Centrality." The latter in fact provides a source of

legitimacy for great power resistance to negotiating the foundations for a sustainable order based on mutually understood institutionalized "rules of the game." (Goh, 2012, p. 106) ASEAN leadership is effectively a "brokerage" role exercised at the sufferance of this minimalist great power bargain and is largely a temporary arrangement. William Tow's assessment follows the same line and argues that the great powers did not really intend for the ASEAN-driven security multilateralism in the Asia Pacific region to "manage their core national security interests" and would abandon the former when the latter is directly at stake. (Tow, 2012, pp. 160-161)

The arguments presented about weakly institutionalized norms (even in the face of successful norm socialization) as opposed to great power sufferance of ASEAN leadership in fact constitute complementary rather than mutually exclusive positions on the debate about the sustainability of ASEAN centrality in East Asian, much less an Asia Pacific-wide, regionalism. What is clear is the conclusion that they reach about the unsustainability of ASEAN centrality in the face of pressures emerging from great power dynamics. In a regional context increasingly characterized and even dominated by the intensifying rivalry between China and the United States, this becomes a key consideration. In the face of escalating great power dynamics and the increasing need to further institutionalize cooperation in order to address non-traditional security concerns, these weaknesses make it unlikely that the regional security architecture based on an ASEAN-centric framework can long be upheld.

In the face of great power dynamics: China and the United States

The relationship between China and the United States has been the basis for discussion on the future of regional order in the Asia Pacific more so as this geographic area has been and is projected to continue to be the hub of global economic production and trade. A significant part of this discussion has revolved around, not surprisingly, the question of the security of the region. Realist arguments have always emphasized the danger of systemic change. (See for example Gilpin, 1981; Levy, 1985; and Doran and Parsons, 1980) The emergence of China as a regional power with hegemonic characteristics has opened up a significant discussion on the issue of regional security in East Asia and the broader Asia Pacific.

In 2012, Hugh White proposed that the inevitable conflict between an emerging and a status quo power can only be mitigated if not completely avoided if the United States learned how to share power with China. This proposition has generated a bit of a discussion on the nature of the emerging regional order

and the role of both the United States and China in it. In no small way is this due to the phenomenal rise of China since the end of the Cold War as first an economic power and increasingly a political-military one as well. There is little doubt that the era of American unipolarity that Krauthammer had blithely declared in 1990 is at an end. If one were to follow the logic of White's argument, the best case for a continuing prosperity in a peaceful strategic environment for Asia would be the emergence of a concert of powers between the United States and China, an Asia Pacific co-dominion. What are the prospects, however, of such a concert emerging?

China's increasing assertiveness and its impact on the regional strategic environment. China's rise and emergence as a regional power has been a core aspect of security calculations around the region. China's participation in the ARF was considered to be a major factor in its establishment. Even in non-state networks involved in regional security affairs, China's involvement was considered to be a prerequisite. This was exemplified by the case of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) which had to wait for China's participation (and acknowledgement of CSCAP's acceptance of its key requirement that Taiwanese participation would only be with the explicit permission of China) before it could institutionally engage with the ARF. Once engaged, however, China has been a willing participant in security multilateralism in the region, more so with an exclusively East Asian grouping. It coordinated very closely with ASEAN on the AP3 process taking a very active role in promoting security coordination especially on non-traditional security issues. China hosted a number of meetings that discussed issues and policies concerning climate change and disaster relief under the AP3 process. From 1998-2008, China engaged in a diplomatic offensive intended to promote a more benign picture of China to its Southeast Asian neighbors. This "charm offensive" was particularly effective when contrasted with perceptions (rightly or wrongly) of an increasingly unilateralist United States at the time of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. According to Evelyn Goh (2005, pp. 10-12), there was a noticeable shift towards a more positive sense in Southeast Asian perceptions of China.

In 2009, however, a number of events in the South China Sea became the cause for concern about a change in China's approach to its neighbors regarding questions of sovereignty and territorial disputes. Where China had been willing to set aside these issues before (even as it made its protests known through diplomatic channels), the Chinese government now chose to be more confrontational leading to high levels of tension between claimant countries. This was particularly seen in China's actions in relation to the South China Sea and the East China Sea. A Chinese scholar, Jia Qingguo, posits that the current tensions began in May 2009 when the deadline set by the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas for

states to register their territorial claims (including the 200-nautical mile EEZ) approached. He very cogently pointed out that while these submissions clarified each country's claims, it "also broke the previously ambiguous peace over conflicting claims." (Jia, 2013, p. 17) It was at this point that China increased the number of its patrol vessels in the disputed areas and confronted the presence and activities of boats and ships from other claimant states in the area. As Jia also noted, China began to "more actively [challenge] the right of U.S. reconnaissance aircrafts and ships to collect information near its coastal areas."

Other factors, however, were also identified by Jia as influencing developments in the disputed areas. Four, in particular, are key considerations over the long term. (Jia, 2013, p. 18) The first of these is the perception of huge amounts of resources, including gas and oil, available at the seabed and the surrounding waters of the area in dispute. Jia notes that this creates an extra incentive to push ones claim. The second factor contributing to the heightening of tensions is the emergence of different media where popular opinion could be shaped, harnessed, and even mobilized. Ironically, the authoritarian Chinese Communist Party has reason to be concerned about and respond to the demands made by its own people on nationally-sensitive issues. The third factor identified by Jia is the absence of "strong and imaginative leadership in the region." This is effectively an indictment of ASEAN as this is supposed to be its role as the "driving force" and agenda setter of East Asian regionalism. The fourth point involves perceptions about the diminished stature of the United States because of its fiscal and economic woes.

The U.S. pivot to Asia. In 2010, the Obama Administration declared what was then referred to as the "US pivot to Asia," a multi-faceted strategy geared towards bolstering US presence and influence in the Asia Pacific region. At the time of its announcement, though, the strategy was perceived to have two clear elements. The first was that it referred to an increase in the naval and military deployment of US forces in the region. In particular, this meant the shifting of 60% of the United States naval assets to the Pacific theater thereby reversing a policy that had given priority or equal attention to Europe since the Second World War. In November 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama announced the rotational stationing in the Australian city of Darwin of 2,000 Marines. Yet, the strategy was supposed to go beyond the military although it took some time before the Obama Administration began to define its non-military aspects. These included an emphasis on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a club of high-performing economies in the region intended to push an economic agenda beyond the pace set by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Nonetheless, most of the moves taking place are of a naval or military nature.

The second aspect to the pivot, since 2011 renamed the rebalancing strategy to Asia, is its perceived targeting of China. The United States has been at pains to deny that this strategy specifically responds to the emergence of China as a dominant power in the Asia Pacific. Nonetheless, in January 2012, the Department of Defense released a document which presented the priorities of the US defense posture. It cited the rationale for the "necessity [to] rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region." Key to this is the paragraph that notes that

> "[o]ver the long term, China's emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect the U.S. economy and our security in a variety of ways. Our two countries have a strong stake in peace and stability in East Asia and an interest in building a cooperative bilateral relationship. However, the growth of China's military power must be accompanied by greater clarity of its strategic intentions in order to avoid causing friction in the region. The United States will continue to make the necessary investments to ensure that we maintain regional access and the ability to operate freely in keeping with our treaty obligations and with international law." (US Department of Defense, 2012, p. 2)

Even as U.S. officials maintain that the pivot is not directed against an emergent China, China is clearly a key part of the agenda. (Suryodiningrat, 2013, p. 21) What is perhaps more important as far as this paper is concerned is that the Chinese do see the pivot as a strategy to "contain" China. An argument has been made in Chinese policy and academic circles about how the U.S. feels compelled to increase its participation in regional affairs because of its weakened global stature – and thus has become more strident in its involvement in territorial disputes in the region. (Suryodiningrat, 2013, pp. 24-25; and Jia, 2013, p. 18)

Medidyatama Suryodiningrat (2013, p. 21), the editor of the *Jakarta Post* and long an observer of geopolitics in the region, has pointed out that China is concerned about how U.S. actions and rhetoric in support of its allies in the region have contributed to the sharpened level of tension in the region. It has been argued by Chinese scholars that increased US involvement in the region embolden some of those allies into taking what might be perceivable as reckless and provocative steps. A particularly significant episode here was when then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton referred in a speech in November 2011 to the South China Sea by its newly-minted Filipino nomenclature 'West Philippine Sea.' (See also Jia,

2013, p. 19) In this context, the Obama Administration's policies associated with the rebalancing strategy has intensified the nascent rivalry between China and the United States, and sharpened potential and actual divisions between China and some of its neighbors who happen to be treaty allies and political partners of the United States.

Certainly there have been attempts to shift the relationship between China and the United States from its more competitive aspect to more cooperative arrangements through summit meetings (in 2013 and 2015) and other bilateral discussions (like the bilateral program between Presidents Barrack Obama and Xi Jinping at the 2014 APEC summit in Beijing). A variety of issues were discussed and, if not resolved, positions laid out for mutual understanding. These include cybersecurity, climate change, and territorial disputes in East Asia. In fact a historic agreement was signed between the two powers to control carbon emissions with China promising to ensure that there will be no increase in emissions by 2030. (Landler, 2014) It is, however, in the last area that the competitive aspect of the relationship has been played out in potentially dangerous terms. In this regard, ASEAN's immediate concern on this front is the territorial dispute over the land features and waters around the Spratly islands.

The South China Sea as an arena of great power contention and ASEAN division

A two-month stand-off started on 10 April 2012 between units of the Chinese Coast Guard and the Philippine Navy and Coast Guard highlighted the danger to regional peace and security of rival territorial claims over the waters and land features in the area of the South China Sea.[2] For decades this area had been identified as one of the potential "hotspots" that could trigger conflict in the region. These territorial disputes have at times led to episodes and events that raised tensions among claimants, although these have largely been managed and prevented from reaching crisis proportions. By and large the issues were never allowed to get in the way of good (even friendly) bilateral relations among the claimants, and the maintenance of stable peaceful regional conditions. The Scarborough Shoal stand-off served as a reminder that these conditions should not be taken for granted and that countries in the region need to continue working towards sustaining peaceful relations.

[2] The Philippines has officially renamed parts of the South China Sea that are adjacent to areas it claims to have sovereignty over as the West Philippine Sea. For purposes of this paper, however, the more traditional reference will continue to be utilized. (See Ubac, 2012)

The stand-off also showed the complexity of the situation, involving not just the relationship between the Philippines and China, but also relations with (and among) other claimants, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the dynamics between China and the United States. All of these are usually framed in the context of the emergence of China as not only an economic power in the region (which has been a welcome development), but also as a political and military power (which is at the core of concerns about China as a regional hegemon). The latter in particular has been raised in terms of language that describes China's "bullying tactics," "increased assertiveness," and China's demands (as presented by a number of officials and academics) that regional states should be "sensitive" to its interests. Reports about these incidents and developments emerging from these incidents tend to emphasize China's growing confidence as the underlying, if not direct, cause. More recently, China's stronger assertion of its claim to sovereignty over almost the entire expanse of the South China Sea has been a key factor in the escalating tension in the area. Since then there has been a more constant and assertive Coast Guard presence around the contested rocks, reefs, shoals, and what until recently were acknowledged as islands constituting the Spratly archipelago. Since the faceoff in 2012, for example, Filipino fishermen have been largely prevented from fishing in what had been their traditional fishing areas around Scarborough Shoal. Following these developments, the Philippine government took the unprecedented step of asking the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) to clarify maritime entitlements in the area in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

As the case went through its paces, China refused to participate in it but at strategic points during the process made public their position regarding the case. At the same time, China more aggressively sought to secure their presence (and presumably their claim) in the disputed area. In 2015, China engaged in extensive island-construction with airstrips that give it the potential to expand its military and naval presence in the area. While not challenging China's claim to sovereignty, the United States has criticized China's activities in the area (especially the island construction taking place) and insisted that this dispute could best be resolved by resorting to mechanisms embedded in international law rather than unilateral action. In January 2016, China sent the Haiyang Shiyou 981, a drilling platform, into disputed waters off the Vietnamese coastline. (Ives, 2016)

Two consequences of these developments have had an important impact on the question of ASEAN centrality in regional affairs. First is the adoption of an American policy that directly challenges China's claim to the disputed waters. This was largely in the form of what the Americans have referred to as

freedom of navigation patrols (FONP) or freedom of navigation operations (FONOP). In October 2015, American destroyer USS Kidd sailed within the 12 nautical mile zone off Subi Reef (where the Chinese have one of their artificial islands). American surveillance planes have also frequented the area.[3] A dangerous aspect of these developments have been the radio challenge raised by Chinese outposts in the disputed area against American planes and those of the Philippines (one of the other claimant states) overflying the area. The United States claims that these challenges effectively signal the establishment of a Chinese Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) around the disputed area and is a threat to long-term US concerns about freedom of navigation. (Glaser, 2012) China on the other hand has rebuffed these criticisms arguing that this is an issue that concerns only those involved in the dispute and the United States has no cause to be involved. Clearly, however, tensions in the South China Sea are feeding off the intensifying rivalry between the United States and China.

This leads to the second issue: the diminishing significance of ASEAN in the emerging geopolitical condition. This is exemplified by the inability of ASEAN to come out with a joint statement at the end of the ASEAN Ministers Meeting in Phnom Penh in 2012 that included an expression of ASEAN's concern over the Scarborough Shoal faceoff and its consequences. This was precipitated by the unwillingness of Cambodia (who was the Chair of the ASEAN Coordinating Committee for 2012) to include such a language in the statement that was being drafted. It was argued that the South China Sea in general and Scarborough Shoal in particular were issues that involved only *some* members of ASEAN and not the entire association and therefore had no place in an ASEAN joint statement. This was the first time that the AMM was unable to come out with a consensus on a joint statement at the end of a meeting. It had strong reverberations because of the damage it caused to the already fragile impression of ASEAN unity. Cambodia's actions were seen as a sop to China, with other countries in ASEAN also being seen as similarly beholden to China. On the other hand, other members of ASEAN (with the Philippines foremost amongst these) were close strategically to the United States. In this context, the competition between China and United States has ASEAN caught in the middle, and with diminished capacity to influence the course of that competition.

The effect on ASEAN centrality and multilateral security cooperation in the region

[3] Interestingly, while these FONOPs in the South China Sea directed against China have been well publicized, the United States has also conducted FONOPs against 12 other countries in 2015. That includes operations against Indonesia and the Philippines. (The Japan Times, 2016)

While the leaders of the two largest economies in the world and militarily the two most powerful states in the Asia Pacific have met and discussed these and other issues that concern both their countries, it simply amplifies the importance of the fact that the United States and China are increasingly becoming rivals for leadership in the Asia Pacific region. China has made it clear that it feels that it has to take action on issues that involve its sovereign claims to disputed territory in view of the behavior of its neighbors that have claims to the same territory. These actions in turn have led to increased tensions in its relations with the United States even as Chinese officials claim that China does not want a direct confrontation with the U.S. that could lead to conflict between them. Hugh White's argument about the need for the U.S. to share power with China may be the most obvious way by which the U.S.-dominated regional order transitions towards a new arrangement without having to go through the devastating consequences of a systemic or hegemonic conflict. It does not seem, however, that the United States is prepared to go that route, even as China is unwilling to concede ground it has gained as an emerging power. The two powers will have to negotiate what the new regional order will look like, but there is a lack of clarity on the terms that would guide how such a negotiation would proceed.

This paper has started out with the premise that it is precisely this great power dynamic between China and the US, without the moderating influence of multilateral platforms, will increasingly push regional dynamics into a competitive context reminiscent of balance of power politics. Unfortunately, the same dynamic is undermining the influence and impact of multilateral institutions, particularly ASEAN. What is evident here is that the relationship between China and the United States is increasingly becoming the dominant dynamic in the region. How the two powers manage their relationship will frame the new regional order. As noted before, the U.S. pivot into Asia is seen by China as an attempt to contain its growing power. The Chinese leadership, while not prepared to challenge the U.S. militarily, is likewise not prepared to concede its political gains of the past decade in terms of the influence it has built in the region.

Regardless of how this dynamic proceeds, it has made the ASEAN-driven processes that had powered security cooperation in the East Asia and the Asia Pacific since 1994 largely irrelevant. This does not mean that there is no longer any place for these processes in a regional order that is being shaped by the relationship between China and the U.S. It does mean, however, that ASEAN, the ASEAN Way and the ASEAN-driven processes in the region will no longer be the driving force behind East Asian regionalism or the broader context of Asia Pacific regionalism. Regional security will once again be based the nature

of the China-U.S. dynamic, whether it tend towards cooperation or competition. If it is the former, there will be no need for ASEAN and its processes to broker relations between China and the U.S. If it will tend towards a more competitive relationship, then ASEAN has neither the material nor the ideational resources to manage the relationship. ASEAN had its chance to put together a regional order based on an inclusive and cooperative regionalism. Its refusal to take a more active role in directing the region and the inability of its members to act more in concert has made it miss that opportunity. At present, it has been overtaken by a relationship which it cannot hope to play a role in managing or directing and whose main players have no intention of letting it do so. Even as ASEAN worked towards the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, its role in the region will only increasingly be diminished by the China-U.S. dynamic.

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[Session 2]

[2-1]

Centrality or Centralities?
Understanding ASEAN as 'Compartmentalized Regionalism'

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"Today, power in the world is distributed in a pattern that resembles a complex three-dimensional game."

Joseph S. Nye Jr.[2]

Introduction: Rethinking ASEAN Centrality

Let us start with a simple question: "When discussing about ASEAN Centrality, do we have a common understanding of what it means and how it is manifested as a practice in ASEAN external relations?" To be more specific: "When economists are talking about ASEAN Centrality, are they referring to something that is similar to defense officials' understanding of the concept?"

Formally, the concept of 'ASEAN Centrality' is mentioned in the ASEAN Charter as one of the principles that must be adhered by ASEAN and its Member States, as described in the Article 2 Paragraph 2 (m) of the Charter: "*the centrality of ASEAN in external political, economic, social and*

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[2] Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *The Future of Power.* (Public Affairs: New York, 2011), Part I (e-book version).

cultural relations while remaining actively engaged, outward-looking, inclusive and non-discriminatory."[3] The Charter does not elaborate specifically what centrality means and how it should be manifested in ASEAN's external relations and thus providing the opportunities for various interpretations of the concept. However, the explanation in the Charter implies 'multidimensionality.'

Taking the assumption that power (and thus international relations) is contextual, this paper argues that the concept of ASEAN Centrality might means and manifests differently in different aspects (or 'dimensions') of international relations in the region and beyond. To understand this, we need to understand the context, which is by understanding that ASEAN is a 'compartmentalized regionalism.' By compartmentalized regionalism, I refer to a "political project to reorganize a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines, which actually consists of multiple and separated/compartmentalized kinds of arrangements of the regional space(s) but identified as a single project."[4] In simple words, compartmentalized regionalism is "multiple regionalisms in one particular regional space under one name."

This paper aims to introduce and elaborate the concept of 'compartmentalized regionalism' to understand the context in which ASEAN Centrality must be understood. Understanding ASEAN as compartmentalized regionalism will help us to understand the context that shape the different meaning and manifestation of ASEAN Centrality in political-security and economic relations in the region. ASEAN regionalism is often understood as a multidimensional but unified regionalism project. For example, ASEAN Political and Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community are referred to as the "three pillars of ASEAN Community," that are "closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing for the purpose of ensuring durable peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region." ASEAN and its member countries' officials frequently mentioned that the three pillars are considered as three equal elements of ASEAN regional integration. However, it might be misleading. Despite the official rhetoric, it is better to understand the three pillars, or at least the first two (ASEAN Political and Security and the ASEAN Economic Community), as distinct projects of regionalism. They are distinct because they have ***distinct arrangements, constructed by distinct proponents, and operating on distinct logics.***

In order to do so, this paper is organized into the following structure. First, the paper explores existing literatures on regionalism to show the limits of both 'old' and 'new regionalism' literatures

[3] http://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/11.-October-2015-The-ASEAN-Charter-18th-Reprint-Amended-updated-on-05_-April-2016-IJP.pdf
[4] The definition is built upon Anthony Payne and Andrew Gamble's definition of regionalism.

in understanding ASEAN regionalism. Second, the paper elaborates the concept of 'compartmentalized regionalism' and why it could help us to understand ASEAN regionalism and ASEAN centrality (or centralities) better. This article attempts to explain how this 'compartments' (or 'a regionalism within regionalism') are having different arrangements, driven by distinguishable proponents, with distinct logics, but remains to be identified under a single name (i.e. ASEAN). Lastly, this paper reflects the contemporary development that threatens the delicate balance between 'compartments' in ASEAN's 'compartmentalized regionalism' and thus threatening the ASEAN centrality.

Understanding Regionalism: Old, New, and What?

Before further discussion, it is important to clarify what this paper means by regionalism and how it is related to other commonly used concepts such as 'regionalization' and 'regional cooperation.' However, it must be acknowledged that these concepts could be understood differently by different scholars. Thus, this clarification of the concepts served more as an attempt to explain the position of this paper rather than an intellectual exercise to determine which definition is correct and which is not (or to elaborate the details of the conceptual debates[5]), which is beyond the scope of this paper.

This paper understands regionalism as "political project to reorganize a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines." This definition is based upon Anthony Payne and Andrew Gamble's definition of regionalism (i.e. "state-led or states-led project designed to reorganize a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines"[6]) but with acknowledging that states are not the only actor involved as the drivers in such process.

Some scholars use the concept of regionalism interchangeably with regionalization[7], while some others differentiate the two. Those who see the two concepts as different concept also differ in explaining why the two concepts are different. Some scholars put the difference on the understanding that 'regionalism' denotes a top down process (mainly driven by political authority, i.e. state) and 'regionalization' denotes a more bottom up process (sprang from the need for transnational relations

[5] For more discussion on conceptual debates, see Bjorn Hettne, "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism" in *New Political Economy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 2005, pp. 543-570.
[6] Anthony Payne and Andrew Gamble, "Introduction: The Political Economy of Regionalism and World Order," in Andrew Gamble and Anthony Payne (eds.), *Regionalism and World Order*, (McMillan, 1996), p. 2, as quoted from Bjorn Hettne, "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism."
[7] For notable example, see Richard Baldwin, "Managing the Noodle Bowl: The Fragility of East Asian Regionalism," *CEPR Discussion Paper Series* No. 5561.

due to economic interdependency), while some others see the relationship between 'regionalism' and 'regionalization' as similar to the relationship between 'nationalism' and 'nation building.'[8] This paper sees that the two are distinct concepts, with regionalism refers to "a ***political project*** to reorganize a particular regional space" while regionalization refers to "***process of forming regions*** that can emerge both by being planned (means: a political project) or by spontaneous development."[9] With these definition, both are distinct but also could be used interchangeably in some particular contexts. All regionalism are regionalization, while not all regionalization could be understood as regionalism (because not all regionalization process are planned consciously as a political project).

Regional cooperation, on the other hand, is a wider and more general concept that can be understood as the term to call any kinds of joint efforts by states to solve a specific problems. In Ernst Haas' classical definition, regional cooperation is "a vague term covering any interstate activity with less than universal participation designed to meet commonly experienced need."[10]

With abovementioned conceptual understanding, this paper is deliberately using the term 'regionalism,' since ASEAN is clearly a political project.

The Limits of Regionalism Literatures in Understanding ASEAN

Based on the previous conceptual discussion, how to best understand ASEAN? What is exactly ASEAN according to regionalism literatures? Some scholars classify ASEAN as 'network regionalization,' which means "regional identity-driven response to globalization. May acquire significant or more limited range of powers, but relies primarily on non-institutionalised or intergovernmental working methods."[11] However, this definition of network-regionalization is too general to understand what ASEAN is conceptually since it is only pointing out that ASEAN is characterized by "non-institutionalised or intergovernmental working methods." Some other scholars use the term 'open regionalism,' implying that the regional project is based on the faith that trade

[8] David Camroux, "Asia, Whose Asia? Evolving Conceptions of an ASEAN Community from the 1920s Till Today," in Heribert Dieter (ed.), *The Evolution of Regionalism in Asia*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 11.
[9] This is a reformulation of Hettne's explanation of regionalization in Bjorn Hettne, "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism," p. 545.
[10] Ernst B. Haas, "The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing," in *International Organization*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1970, p. 610.
[11] Alex Warleigh-Lack, "Studying Regionalisation Comparatively" in Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W. Hughes, and Philippe De Lombaerde (eds.), *Regionalisation and Global Governance: The Taming of Globalisation*? (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 52.

liberalization and more effective participation in the global economy will benefit its members.[12] Open regionalism is marked by the reduction in barriers on imports from non-member countries that is undertaken when member countries liberalize the trade among themselves, although the degree of liberalization on imports from non-members need not be as high as that for member countries.[13] While these features are present in ASEAN regionalism, especially in the ASEAN Economic Community 'pillar', the concept of 'open regionalism' could not explain the regional arrangement established on the security dimension through the ASEAN Political Security Community. Thus, this concept could also be considered as unable to understand ASEAN, or at least only understand it partially. In search for better understanding of ASEAN regionalism, it is important to trace the development in the regionalism studies and comprehend how this development is relevant to the question.

Studies in regionalism started in 1950s, responding to the development in post-World War II Europe. This early studies on regionalism, first to understand and to prescribe a strategy for the European regional integration but then spread to study other regional project elsewhere, is often considered as 'Old Regionalism.' This first wave of regionalism studies was halted with the so-called 'Eurosclerosis' and the stagnation of attempts for regional integration in other regions in 1970s. A new wave of regionalism studies started in 1980s related to the phenomena of globalization. This new wave of regionalism studies often identified as the studies of 'New Regionalism.' However, some scholars advocated for transcending this division of old and new regionalisms.[14]

Old regionalism approaches are often also considered as 'political programme,' since it also serve as prescriptions for regional integration. Federalism, an early approach to study regionalism and very influential among the pioneers of European integration, was advocating for the retreat of nation-state and the formation of a new form of political structure that integrate the existing nation-states. The impetus for this argument was the European experience of devastating world wars and the drive to ensure peace in the region. This argument then criticized by functionalism approach, often associated with David Mitrany, which argues that rather than the form (as advocated by the federalists), function is more important. 'Form' (i.e. the international/supranational organization)

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[12] Nicola Phillips, "The Rise and Fall of Open Regionalism? Comparative Reflections on Regional Governance in the Southern Cone of Latin America," in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2003, p. 218.
[13] Shang-Jin Wei and Jeffrey A. Frankel, "Open Regionalism in a World of Continental Trade Blocs," *IMF Staff Papers*, Vol. 45, No. 3, September 1998, p. 441.
[14] See Bjorn Hettne, "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism." See aksi Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum, "The Future of Regionalism: Old Divides, New Frontiers," in Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W. Hughes, and Philippe De Lombaerde (eds.), *Regionalisation and Global Governance: The Taming of Globalisation*? Pp. 61-67.

must be established based on 'function' (i.e. cooperation and activities around functional needs such as trade, production, welfare, and transportation).[15] Later, functionalists are criticized by Neo-functionalists, such as Ernst Haas, who disputed functionalists' neglect of politics and argued that those 'functions' are not merely technical but also political ("technical realm was in fact made technical by a prior political decision"[16]). Integration is not driven by 'functional automaticity', but by process and the existence of purposeful actors. According to Neo-functionalists, increasing level of interdependence would start a process that will lead to political integration. One important mechanism related to this argument is 'spillover,' which is "the way in which the creation and deepening of integration in one economic sector would create pressures for further economic integration within and beyond that sector and greater authoritative capacity at the European level."[17] Based on this idea, Bela Balassa developed an influential concept that regional integration shall take place in five stages: Free trade area will lead to customs union, customs union will lead to common market, common market will lead to economic and monetary union, and finally economic and monetary union will lead to political union.[18] It must be noted that despite being published in 1960s, and thus could be classified in the label of 'Old Regionalism,' Balassa's concept remains influential in shaping our understanding (and strategy of the policy makers) until today.[19]

Despite the internal debates within the 'Old Regionalism,' its approaches generally consider regionalism as a linear and relatively mono-dimensional process. Linear means that the process follow a particular trajectory. This does not mean that the process necessarily run in a single direction of progress since the process can be stagnated or even regressing, but the stages (can be explicitly mentioned as in Balassa's concept or implicitly assumed) are connected as a series of milestones. Mono-dimensional refers to the tendency to see regionalism as something that is happening in one or at least 'unified' dimension (e.g. security or economy).

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[15] Bjorn Hettne, "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism," p. 546.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.* The use of 'European' here is understandable because Old Regionalism mostly focusing on Europe, which is also empirically the first project of regional integration. Later, 'European level' in this definition also often applied to other regional project.
[18] See Bela Balassa, *The Theory of Economic Integration,* (Illinois: Richard Irwin, 1961). See also Bela Balassa, "Economic Integration" in John Eatwell, Murray Milgate, and Peter Newman (eds.), *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics. Vol. 2 (E to J),* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 43-47.
[19] Heribert Dieter, "Monetary Regionalism: Regional Integration without Financial Crises," *CSGR Working Paper* No. 52/00, May 2000, pp. 7-8.

'New Regionalism' approaches are different from its 'Old' counterpart by acknowledging the diversity of regionalisms. According to Andrew Hurrel, there are five distinguishing factors that differentiate 'New Regionalism' from 'Old Regionalism': (1) New Regionalism in very diverse. It comprised of a range of models/structures/processes of region-building rather than a single norm; (2) New Regionalism can involve partnerships between developed and developing countries; (3) New Regionalism varies in the level of institutionalization, in contrast to the very formal understanding of region building of the Old Regionalism; (4) New Regionalism is multi-dimensional and is blurring the distinction between the economic and the political; and (5) New Regionalism reflects, shapes and requires the development of regional sense of identity.[20] According to Hettne and Soderbaum, 'New Regionalism' considered new aspects related to the phenomena of globalization. They also argued that New Regionalism focused on the concept of 'regionalism' and 'regionalization' (in contrast of the concept of 'regional integration' and 'regional cooperation' that were preferred by earlier studies of regionalism), because those concepts are considered more appropriate for capture the multidimensional features of contemporary regionalism.[21]

Related to the discussion on ASEAN Centrality, this paper will focus on the multidimensionality of both Old and New Regionalism approaches. As discussed above, Hurrel, Hettne and Soderbaum agreed that New Regionalism is marked by multidimensionality, as it attempts to understand the multidimensional features of current regionalism. Old Regionalism, on the contrary, tend to be mono-dimensional in the sense that regional integration is seen to be happening at a specific sector. It must be noted that all scholars agree to this division between the Old and the New. Warleigh-Lack argued that the view that Old Regionalism is not multi-dimensional and separated economic and politics is incorrect, as illustrated in the EU Case where a range of tasks was anticipated in the very idea of 'Community Method' of integration and that politics was never missing from the discussion of Old Regionalism (EU began as a matter of high politics: peace preservation) and the importance of political process in shaping EU's economic integration.[22] If we accept the idea that Old Regionalism is not multidimensional, of course it could not capture ASEAN comprehensively. But, even if we accept that both Old and New Regionalism are multidimensional, is the word 'multidimensional' sufficient to understand ASEAN?

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[20] Andrew Hurrel, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 21, pp. 331-358. As quoted in Alex Warleigh-Lack, "Studying Regionalisation Comparatively," p. 45.
[21] Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum, "The Future of Regionalism," pp.65-66.
[22] Alex Warleigh-Lack, "Studying Regionalisation Comparatively," pp. 45-46.

To answer this question, it is also important that this distinction of old and new does not only apply in theoretical sense, but also in empirical sense, since the term do not only refer to the approach to study regionalism but also to the regionalism projects themselves. Some regional organizations are considered as 'old regionalism' (mostly those established during the Cold War, especially in 1650s-1970s) and some others, especially those which established effectively after 1980s, are considered as 'new regionalism.' According to Hettne, 'old regionalism' was a "Cold War phenomenon" and having specific objectives (some are security-motivated while others are more economically oriented) while 'new regionalism' is a result of "more comprehensive, multidimensional societal process."[23] In this sense, it is interesting to note that ASEAN was established in 1967 with a strong Cold War context but then established new elements of the regional project in 1990s. This situation often creates confusion for the observers, because then ASEAN could be considered both as 'old' and 'new' regionalism. If we look at political and security issues, ASEAN fits with the description of old regionalism due to its Cold War origin and the continuing importance of the states. But, this could not capture the development of many features of ASEAN regionalism after 1990s which transcends a single specific dimension. Some others would argue that ASEAN is closer to the 'new regionalism' because it is considered as 'comprehensive and multidimensional' (referring to the existence of three equal pillars of ASEAN Community). However, 'comprehensive and multidimensional' assumed integrality of the dimensions, indicated by the existence of a unified pattern/rules of arrangement, similar proponents and a single particular logic on which the regional project is operating. This might not sufficient to explain the frequent disconnection between the economic, security, and socio-cultural 'pillars' of ASEAN and the focal point agencies of each pillar in each country.

The limitations of the 'Old' and 'New' regionalisms to capture the abovementioned complexity of ASEAN regionalism demand a more creative approach. To fill this demand, the aim of this paper is to explore the idea of 'compartmentalized regionalism.' This concept argues that ASEAN is a 'political project' which is composed by at least two different 'political projects' with distinct arrangements, proponents and logics that are separated but identified politically as a single integrated project. It is in this context that we need to understand ASEAN Centrality.

[23] See Bjorn Hettne, "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism," p. 549.

Combined but Separated: 'Compartmentalized Regionalism'

Joseph Nye's analogy of multidimensional chessboards is also relevant in the case of ASEAN regionalism. Furthermore, I even believe that actors are not only playing on multiple chessboards simultaneously, they are playing different board-games with different rules on each layers.

EU is multidimensional. EU regionalism project creates authorities for the EU in economic, politics, security, agriculture, environment, as well as some other sectors, in an integrated process based on a coherent arrangement and operating on a particular logic. In the context of EU, this particular logic is "*liberal prescription for the conduct of international politics.*"[24] ASEAN is not only multi-dimensional, because some of the dimensions are having distinguishable arrangements, proponents and logics from each other. The dimensions in EU regionalism are similarly chessboards, but the dimensions in ASEAN regionalisms are different board-games.

In this paper, I would like to propose the idea that ASEAN regionalism is driven by separated regional projects. ASEAN is a 'political project' that is composed by at least two different 'political projects.' One is in the political security dimension (in the recent development manifested as ASEAN Political Security Community pillar in ASEAN Community) and the other one is in the economic dimension (manifested in the ASEAN Economic Community pillar). The two are having distinguishable arrangements, proponents and logics that are separated but identified politically as a single integrated project. Thus, I would like to propose the use of the term 'compartmentalized regionalism.'

One symptom of this 'compartmentalized regionalism' is the partial and limited leadership in ASEAN. For example, Emmers observed that Indonesia's leadership "has so far also been limited to the political and security spheres, leaving other sectors, like the economy, to others." [25] If we use the framework of compartmentalized regionalism, this is not merely a problem of partial, sectorial, incomplete or limited leadership of a particular state in ASEAN. It is related to the fact that economic and political-security are not merely 'sectors' of ASEAN regionalism, but two distinct regionalisms despite being identified under one flag of ASEAN.

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[24] Stephen M. Walt, "Back to the Future: World Politics Edition," *Foreign Policy*, July 2015, accessed from http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/08/back-to-the-future-world-politics-edition-russia-isis-europe-china/

[25] Ralf Emmers, "Indonesia's Role in ASEAN: A Case of Incomplete and Sectorial Leadership," *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 27 Issue 4, 2014.

Below, this paper would elaborate the distinct arrangement, proponents, and logics that can be used to distinguish the two regionalism projects under the name of ASEAN regionalism.

Distinct Arrangements

One visible distinction between the two 'compartments' are that they have different arrangements in organizing the regional space. On the political-security compartment, sovereignty and non-interference remains to be sacred and act as the basic principle to shape the regional arrangement. "Respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all ASEAN Member States" is included in the Charter as the first principle of ASEAN. This is apparently not enough, since another principle to guarantee Member States' sovereignty still appear in point (k) "Abstention from participation in any policy or activity, including the use of its territory, pursued by any ASEAN Member State or non-ASEAN State or any non-State actor, which threatens the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political and economic stability of ASEAN Member States." The principle of non-interference mentioned in point (e) "non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN Member States" and (f) "respect for the right of every Member State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion and coercion."

It is interesting to note that while the ASEAN Political and Security Community Blueprint emphasized the importance of the principles contained in the ASEAN Charter ("The APSC Blueprint is guided by the ASEAN Charter and the principles and purposes contained therein"[26]), the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint directly mentioned that "the Leaders agreed to hasten the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015 and to transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital."[27] The AEC Blueprint does not refer specifically to the principles in the ASEAN Charter, but mentioning that "ASEAN shall act in accordance to the principles of an open, outward-looking, inclusive, and market-driven economy consistent with multilateral rules as well as adherence to rules-based systems for effective compliance and implementation of economic commitments."[28] This is of course in line with the Article 2 Paragraph 2 point (n) of the ASEAN Charter, but with additional words (not only market driven as in the Charter, it additional characteristics are explicitly added: open, outward-

[26] APSC Blueprint, Article 5.
[27] AEC Blueprint, Article 4.
[28] AEC Blueprint, Article 5.

looking, and inclusive). Of course, one can argue that this is only a trivial matter about document structure. However, this is showing that the two compartments are actually having different principles in organizing the regional space.

In the 'political-security compartment,' sovereignty and non-interference are generally considered as non-negotiable. Thus, ASEAN observers are pessimistic about the possibility of functioning human rights institutions under ASEAN or about the prospect of ASEAN's democratization agenda.[29] However, in the economic compartment, it seems that sovereignty can, and even must, be compromised. Rather than stressing the importance of sovereignty, the AEC Blueprint emphasizes that ASEAN Member Countries shall adhere to "rules-based systems for effective compliance and implementation of economic commitments." To comply and implement economic commitment, one must compromise at least parts of its sovereignty.

Distinct Proponents

As already mentioned, one symptom of 'compartmentalized regionalism' is the partial and limited leadership in ASEAN. This is also an indicator that the 'compartments' are driven by different champions with different motivations.

The political-security regionalism/compartment was formed and initiated by ASEAN Member States during the Cold War. It is in this context that the principle of non-interference was outlined as the ASEAN principle, as mentioned in the Bangkok Declaration. From 1960s-1980s, ASEAN successfully managed to prevent large conflict and provide stability in the region. This is an important achievement if we compare with other regions that were devastated by conflicts spurred by the interference of the competing blocs. Thus, states played a very important role in the shaping of regional cooperation in security. This continues after the end of the Cold War and the rise of China that set a new geopolitical complexity in the region. However, states remains to act similarly, with their own national interest act as their guiding lights. In this compartment, countries with large size and huge strategic interests such as Indonesia is acting as sectorial leader. It must be noted that despite

[29] For example see Gisle Kvanvig, "ASEAN, Sovereignty and Human Rights," http://www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/about/programmes/vietnam/docs/asean-sovereignty-and-human-rights---gisle-kvanvig.pdf. See also Jorn Dosch, "ASEAN's Reluctant Liberal Turn and the Thorny Road to Democracy Promotion," in *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 21 No. 4, 2008, pp.527-545.

the existence of non-interference principle, external powers such as US, Japan, and China are also competing for influence in shaping the regional security architecture.

The economic regionalism/compartment was initiated by different proponents. Some scholars argued that ASEAN regionalism (in the context of this paper, the 'economic regionalism' part), has been largely driven by private sector, especially by the activities of Japanese Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and overseas Chinese business, while states only played secondary and reactive roles.[30] This is changed after the Asian Crisis 1997/1998, which spurred the emergence of a more active role of the state in shaping the regional project.[31] In this compartment, Singapore played a significant role. External economic powers such as Japan and China also act as important proponents. For example, Japan helped to establish and sustain ERIA (Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia), a think tank that is very influential in providing recommendations for ASEAN economic integration.[32]

Domestically, the separation between two compartments are also visible. Different focal points (especially Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense vs. Ministry of Trade) are often having different ideas of ASEAN and how ASEAN should interact with external powers. However, this differences do not becoming a problem because they have their own 'compartments,' that are institutionalized through ASEAN mechanisms.

Distinct Logics

Lastly, the two compartments are different because they are operating based on different logics. The difference in the regional arrangement and in its proponents are strongly correlated to the difference in the ideological perspective that is becoming the basis of the regional project. The political-security compartment operates on Westphalian logic that stressed the importance of the state and territoriality, while the economic compartment relies on the insights of the technocrats that believe in economic liberalism. The former is concerned with relative gain, while the latter is concerned mostly with absolute gain.

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[30] For example, see Richard Stubbs, "Asia-Pacific Regionalization and The Global Economy: A Third Form of Capitalism?" in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 35, No. 9, 1995, pp. 785–797.
[31] Paul Bowles, "Asia's Post-Crisis Regionalism: Bringing the State Back In, Keeping the United States Out," in *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2002, pp. 244-270.
[32] See http://www.eria.org/about_eria/history.html

To sum up, the differences that can separate the two compartments can be outlined in the table below:

Table 1. Different Features of Political-Security and Economic Compartments of ASEAN Regionalism

	Political-Security 'Compartment'	**Economic 'Compartment'**
Arrangements	Sovereignty is the basis and thus not to be compromised.	Some parts of national sovereignty must be compromised.
Proponents	ASEAN Member States, Defense Ministries, Competing regional powers	Business (MNCs), Economic Ministries, Regional economic powers
Logics	Westphalian, state-centric, relative gain	Economic liberalism, Open regionalism, absolute gain

Concluding Reflection: The Broken Balance and ASEAN Centralities

It is important to note that although the two can be identified as different regionalism projects, it does not mean that the two are completely separated. They are separated but combined. Thus, we witness that there are contradictions within ASEAN. However, this separation of the compartments is important. ASEAN could go this far because of the relative balance and distance between the two compartments. APSC and AEC could go hand in hand because the two are not completely integrated.

This is changing. The rise of China provoked the conflation of the two compartments, due to the overt use of economic instruments for geopolitical gains by competing external powers (China and its rivals) in the region.[33] This conflation creates disruption in the balance between the "compartments" and thus threatening ASEAN centralities that are based on distinct arrangements and logics on each realms.Can ASEAN regionalism(s) survive? We will have to wait for the future to unravel the answer.

[33] See John Lee, "China's Economic Leverage in Southeast Asia," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2015), pp. 1-21.

[2-2]

From Identification to Construction: Nature, Understanding and Prospect of Identity making in ASEAN integration

***Pattharapong Rattanasevee*[1]**

Abstract

This paper provides understanding of collective identity in the context of ASEAN integration. It explains how Southeast Asia has evolved from a region dominated by European colonial powers to become an identifiable region that has been attempting to shape its own destiny. It also highlights the significant roles of collective identity in the integrating Southeast Asia as well as addressing factors behind its construction. Along with theoretical explanation, this paper argues that ASEAN's collective identity, to some degree, does exist among elites, diplomats and technocrats, while it only rarely exists among ASEAN citizens. Finally, this paper proposes that a transnational system that facilitates and encourages the connectivity and movements of people and information needs to be established. ASEAN should promote education as well as engaging more with the citizens.

Keyword: *Identity, ASEAN, Southeast Asia, ASEAN Way, Constructivism, Regionalism*

Introduction

In the past few decades, collective identity at the regional level has gained attentions from scholars and the public as a way to boost support for regional integration. It is widely understood that an effectively functioning polity requires some degrees of sovereignty assigned to the supranational entity as well as voluntary support of their members in order to carry out and implement authoritative decisions (Risse, 2000: 1). At the same time, collective identity has been increasingly demanding since the EU recently started to experience scepticism and various

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internal problems. In other integrating regions, it has been one of common excuses for slow pace of integration. However, the notion of collective identity has been insufficiently articulated and defined in the literature of international relations, and also it has not been specified to what extent a feeling of attachment to regional entities is required. Theoretically, psychological literature provides some preliminary explanations of how social identification is formulated at individual level, happenings of multiple royalties and the rationale behind individual's decision to cooperate with others. Constructivists argue that identity is socially and historically constructed through socializing and systemic interaction at the regional level and, in turn, identity helps to shape states' actions and interests. Moreover, in the context of the EU, identity is crucial for the development of European integration and plays a key role in the participation of citizens. However, the case of the EU demonstrates sophisticated relationships and conflicts between regional and national identities, as well as showing some sorts of ties between collective identity and economic benefits. In the context of ASEAN, the popular notion of 'elite-centred regionalism' implies that the existence of identity can be found mainly only at the state level in which such common values are somewhat shared only among elites, diplomats and technocrats. Much of the evidence demonstrates that the principles of ASEAN way as the revered norms of the association have greatly shaped the means of multilateralism and how its states have interacted with one another. However, at citizen level there seems to be a very limited sense of collective identity among ordinary citizens, which is perhaps because ASEAN does not influence their daily lives and has never been away from elitist arrangements. Therefore, people do not realize the benefits of this regional grouping and see no need to participate in its activities. This is one of the areas where ASEAN currently has great deficits and it is perhaps why it has not been able to move forward to achieve significant development of integration.

This paper begins by providing an overview of how Southeast Asia has been transformed from a competing field of colonial powers into an independent and definable region and the role of ASEAN in its construction. The next section conceptualizes a collective identity and aims to provide relevant theoretical explanations. Then, it moves on to the empirical findings that seek to examine and explain the existence of collective identity as well as the determining factors that are involved in identity formation, both at the state and citizen levels. The final section provides further discussion, a summary of important findings and suggestions for solutions to the problems. This paper uses documents and interviews with technocrats and scholars as the main research methods.

Background: Southeast Asia as a region

Southeast Asia has a relatively short history which has been punctuated by a sustained period of conflict. After the end of colonisation period, newly-independent states that had been plagued by a long-standing grievance against colonial rule began to build up their nations and strove to manage to remain non-aligned from the influences of competing external powers. At that time the recognition of Southeast Asia as a definable region was not widespread. Regarding this, as Roberts (2011: 378) explained, 'the construction of Southeast Asia can also be considered to be a recent phenomenon because, prior to independence from colonialism, there was no concept of a region or regional identity'. The vast diversity of the region with people from a rich variety of backgrounds somehow demonstrates the absence of cultural homogeneity in Southeast Asia. This can be seen, for example, in the context of language and ethnicity. Fuller et al. (2000: 307) pointed out that while the population of Southeast Asia accounts for only 9% of the world's population, Southeast Asian people speak about 17% of its languages. For instance, Indonesia alone has about 250 languages for a population inhabiting 6000 islands (Roberts, 2011: 370). Moreover, geographically, Southeast Asia is divided into two dissimilar sub-regions, mainland and maritime, regarding which there is no homogeneity in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion in each sub-region or even in a single country. One key consequence of this diversity can be seen in the fact that most scholars identify themselves as either national or subnational specialists, which as Roberts has argued is as a result of the wide cultural span (ibid).

On the other hand, a number of scholars have contended that the origin of Southeast Asia cannot only be traced by the recognition of an independent region, but also owing to cultural similarities, patterns of interstate relations, interactions and interdependence (Acharya, 2000: 164). Despite geographical features, such as a tropical climate and some common agricultural products, such as rice, these countries also share some cultural traits, such as animism and they blend animistic beliefs and practices with their local religions. This was, for example, explained by Phillips and Gritzner (2009: 59), who pointed out that animism is strong in Southeast Asia, particularly in those countries where the beliefs in spirits influence 'the thinking that people have about nature, ancestors, illness and community'. Moreover, the political culture in Southeast Asia is also an important concern and has had a significant impact on regional identity. Blondel and Inoguchi (2006: 94-96) wrote that geography, colonisation and the emphasis on superiority of 'Asian values' are the factors affecting the socio-political characteristics of Southeast Asia.

In addition, Goh (2003: 114-115) wrote about the characteristics of Southeast Asia's

politics as being critical factors, arguing that, to a large extent, the political culture found is 'personalistic, informal and non-contractual'. Moreover, after gaining independence from decolonization, Southeast Asia's polity has been transformed into being ever more bureaucratic. Despite the existence and functioning of political institutions, the states were, by and large, ruled by small elite circles operating on the basis of patronage networks, which resulted in their political culture being highly private and informal (Busse, 1999: 48). Such cultural practices could be seen at the regional level where most of the past conflicts were resolved through means of personal contacts and lobbying between political leaders. Furthermore, political culture in Southeast Asian countries has been characterised by many entrenched problems, such as money and self-interest politics, patrimonialism, corruption as well as lack of accountability and transparency. After taking everything into account, despite some commentators' views, it is relatively clear that Southeast Asian countries do share some degrees of common values and practices. However, with no obvious region-wide identity as can be found in the Middle East, Western Europe and Latin America, the differences clearly outweigh the similarities, thus supporting the contention that Southeast Asia is considered as one of the most diverse regions on earth (Weatherbee and Emmers, 2005: 11). The author would contend that this identifies the key problem that ASEAN is currently facing in trying to establish cooperation and a regional community, for there is very little common ground in terms of collective identification amongst the nations of the region.

Then, how has ASEAN worked with the diverse populations and been involved in the creation of a regional identity? With the exception of Timor Leste, it has been admitted that the current membership of ASEAN fits with what has become generally accepted as Southeast Asia, although the nature of its evolution remains contested (Roberts, 2011: 367). Minh (2011: 27) explained that Southeast Asia has developed regional patterns and characteristics through its international relations and interactions, which have helped to forge its regional identity. In line with this, it is argued that ASEAN has played an important role in constructing and shaping region-building, thus contributing to the definition of what constitutes Southeast Asia today, in particular, in making it appear distinct to external perceptions. Furthermore, the notion of work in progress is backed by Acharya (2005: 104) who took the view that the international politics of Southeast Asia prior to 1997 showed apparent evidence of 'identity-in-the-making', rather than 'identity in being'. While there were not many differences between South Asia and Southeast Asia, he explained that the attempt to make the latter recognized as a region began when delegates from Southeast Asia rejected attaching themselves too closely with the Indian and Chinese regional frameworks at the 1947 Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi. Subsequently, according to the Bangkok Declaration, ASEAN's founding document carries a sign of identity building, as can be seen in the following:

"*Conscious that in an increasingly interdependent world, the cherished ideals of peace, freedom, social justice and economic well-being are best attained by fostering good understanding, good neighbourliness and meaningful cooperation among the countries of the region already bound together by ties of history and culture*"

Bangkok Declaration, 1967

After its foundation, although the Bangkok Declaration stated that ASEAN 'is open for participation to all States in the Southeast Asian Region subscribing to the aforementioned aims, principles and purposes'1, its members turned down a number of membership requests from countries, such as Sri Lanka, India and Australia, based on the grounds that they lacked certain features that could be attributed to Southeast Asia. Consequently, in almost every subsequent important document, identity building was always listed as one of the main purposes of ASEAN. For instance, according to Article 1 of the ASEAN Charter, one of the purposes is 'to promote an ASEAN identity through fostering of greater awareness of the diverse culture and heritage of the region'. Similarly, as stated in the ASEAN Vision 2020 presented at the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, one of the important statements is written as 'we envision the entire Southeast Asia to be, by 2020, an ASEAN community conscious of its ties of history, aware of its cultural heritage and bound by a common regional identity'. However, this seems to be an open-ended statement or an incomplete task because it does not indicate what is considered as this common regional identity and how it will be achieved.

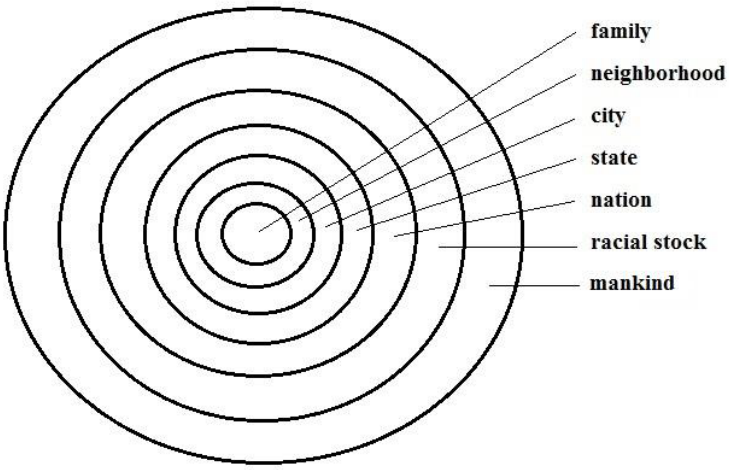
A theoretical conceptualization of collective identity

The literature on regional integration tends to focus more on political and economic aspects of interactions among member states within the process, and less on the social issues relating to the ideational force that ties citizens from diverse historical and cultural background into a wider regional entity, or the politics of identity formation. A review of the literature reveals that there is the lack of a well-established study of regional identity that explains its importance and impact, as well as providing answers to questions relating to such matters as the disharmony between national and regional identity. Regarding this, as royalties may be shifted from national to regional levels, this can raise a number of important issues, including: whether identity should also be constructed at regional levels, what consequences this would bring to the regional

community and can regional and national identity persist dually.

In a broad sense, the notion of assimilation and differentiation is clearly articulated in psychological literature. Dating back to the 1950s, Allport (1954: 31-33) wrote about the idea of an in-group explaining that in-group formation involves differentiation of social boundaries between those who acknowledge 'we-feeling' and those who are outside the boundary. This is either in the form of identification that is automatically ascribed by birth or family tradition or in the form of memberships that are achieved later in life or having to be fought for. Another interesting point made in his work is about a state of multiple in-groups. He depicted it as a picture of concentric circles whereby all circles have a common centre as appeared in Figure 1. Each circle represents the sphere of one's social identification (sample memberships included here are family, neighbourhood, city, state, nation, racial stock and mankind). In his own words, it is described that 'the potency of the membership becomes less as the distance from personal contact grows larger'. In the meantime, the outermost circle of membership is the weakest and the most difficult to be achieved. In the end, Allport (1954: 44, 46) believed that the construction of 'concentric loyalties' are possible if all loyalties are compatible with each other whereby 'narrow circles can, without conflict, be supplemented by larger circles of loyalty'. This concept does underpin an understanding of social identification and the idea of collective identity evolving on an international level.

Figure 1: Hypothetical lessening of in-group potency as membership become more inclusive



Source: Allport (1954: 43)

Indeed, the notion of in-group and out-group is a basis for social interactions, cooperation, limitation and interdependence. Regarding this, Brewer (1999b: 432-433) explained that, in the context of international cooperation, the cost-benefit calculation is a natural mechanism that limits mutual cooperation and interdependence. Individuals are likely to cooperate if they see the potential benefits receiving from others and clearly outweigh the costs of cooperation. The decision to cooperate will also require that the level of trust is well over distrust, on the basis that individuals expect that others will cooperate as well. Therefore, in order to have such levels of trust and altruism without the risk of excessive costs, it is important that social differentiation and clear group boundaries are established to delimit interdependence and cooperation. In addition, symbols and behaviours that differentiate the members from others are important here because they can minimize the chance that group's benefits will be unintentionally allocated to out-group members and meanwhile to guarantee that the in-group members are entitled to the benefits. This orientation is coincided with Allport's argument as he pointed out that symbols of unity evolving on an international scale are 'greatly needed in order to provide mental anchorage points around which the idea of world-loyalty may develop' (Allport, 1954: 44).

Then, Brewer continued that psychological mechanisms behind the motivation and maintenance of social identification and differentiation are associated with the optimal distinctiveness model of social identity. The optimal distinctiveness theory has given an explanation of how identities are formulated in that 'social identity is derived from the opposing forces of two universal human motives – the need for inclusion and assimilation, on the one hand, and the need for differentiation from others on the other' (Brewer, 1999a: 188). The drive for inclusion is emanated when individuals feel isolated or detached from a social group, while the need for differentiation is emerged when individuals involve in a large undefined social group. At a later stage, a state of balance will be achieved 'through identification with distinctive social groups that meets both needs simultaneously' (Brewer, 1999b: 434). In this connection, well-identified group's boundaries will help to assure the processes of inclusion and exclusion. To operationalize this concept, Brigevich (2011: 2-3) conveyed that in the context of the European integration regional identities work at two levels in support of these motives. That is, national identity serves the individual's need for differentiation, while that of inclusion is satisfied by European identity at the regional level.

In the discipline of international relations, constructivism gives some interesting insights into an understanding of identity formation and can provide the furtherance of knowledge in the context of regional cooperation. In particular, it highlights the significance of internal socialization and the belief that regional community is created from common interests and understanding of the key issues along with the construction of identity (Zhang, 2007: 3). In relation to identity, constructivism defines it as a creation of meaning and views the regional integration process as a socializing structure that shapes the actors' identities and interests. According to Copeland (2000: 189), it 'focuses largely on the intersubjective dimension of knowledge, because they [constructivists] wish to emphasize the social aspect of human existence - the role of shared ideas as an ideational structure constraining and shaping behaviour'. Along the same lines, Wendt (1999: 231) stated that 'interests presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is'. Regarding how actors gain their identities, constructivism argues that, in the context of regional integration, states can obtain meaning - 'who they are, their goals, and the roles they believe they should play' - from both domestic and regional levels (Copeland, 2000: 190). Before interacting at the regional level, states have already defined themselves through domestic social and cultural contexts, which thus inform them with whom to interact and with what intention, at least in part. Subsequently, the state's behaviour will be constrained by regional norms and at the same time identities will be redefined through systemic interaction aimed at generating regional cooperation (Wendt, 1992: 392). That is, these norms are not only functioning to regulate a particular state's behaviour, but are also redefining its interests as well as developing the construction of collective identities (Acharya, 2001: 4). In other words, construction of collective identity and a We feeling are developed when states positively identify themselves and define their interests in regard to others. On the whole, in explaining a regional integration process, constructivism provides an important piece of the jigsaw, as it takes a sociological concept to theorize about behaviour as well as explaining the issues relating to ideational force. That is, under the constructivist lens, behaviour of social actors is driven by rules, norms, institutions and identities (Busse, 1999: 44).

Interpretations of the ASEAN Way

In the context of ASEAN, empirically, it was found that a majority of discussions on norms refer to the elements of the "ASEAN Way" which the collective identity of ASEAN hinges on. In fact, the ASEAN Way is a set of procedural norms adopted among member states as a means of diplomacy and multilateralism. Acharya (2001: 63) defined it as 'a process of regional interactions and cooperation based on discreteness, informality, consensus building and non-

confrontational bargaining styles'. That is, these principles are respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, settlement of disputes in a peaceful manner and renunciation of the threat or use of force. Solidum (1981: 136) emphasized that the most important of these values was perhaps the use of 'very low-key diplomacy (which) avoids fanfare before an agreement is reached'. This sort of manner is used to avoid interstate conflicts and disunity and is thus seen as a crucial element that keeps the association thriving, for it has been instrumental in helping ASEAN to become, as Beeson (2008: 16) put it, 'the most enduring organization of its sort to have emerged from the developing world'. Underlining this line of reasoning, one interviewee gave an interesting viewpoint about the ASEAN Way

> *"ASEAN Way is something created for an instrumental reason that is projected to the rest of the world… It is something they rely on. It is something they find useful. This is the way ASEAN works (no matter they feel that). There are so many things that ASEAN needs to cooperate about and if we start messing it up by moving away from the ASEAN way, commenting on internal affairs and interfering, that will break up ASEAN… So, we cannot afford to deviate from the ASEAN way."2*

Nevertheless, regarding its perceived norms and identity, the author discovered that the ASEAN Way is largely recognized only among the elites and technocrats. As an example, this can be seen in the work of Goh (2003: 115), who wrote about the time when ASEAN held the pre-APEC Business Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 1998. The US Vice President Al Gore criticised Malaysia's policies for the dismissal and subsequent incarceration of that country's Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim. However, ASEAN members considered his message to be unsympathetic and uncaring as well as an aggressive imposition of American democratic values on the politics of one of its own. Subsequently, ASEAN diplomats gathered to stress their adherence to the ASEAN Way as a cardinal doctrine of their political identity. This example shows that collective identity does exist as common values will be expressed or come out particularly when this faith was challenged by others, though it has not been proved so far that this sort of expression could happen beyond the elite and technocrat levels.

On the other side of the coin, although ASEAN Way is frequently accounted for a number of successes of ASEAN, particularly its durability when compared to other organizations of its

kind and the absence of inter-state war between members since the inauguration of organization, the elements of ASEAN Way are often argued in terms of its validity or as being a main source of its ineffectiveness and slow pace of integration. For instance, Jones (2011) critically investigated the theory and practice of non-interference among ASEAN countries. As written in his book, he contended that ASEAN countries have frequently transgressed the Association's norm of non-interference. In detail, he explained that:

> *"Whenever, domestic or bilateral issues bring ASEAN states' domestic or international standing into disrepute, key ASEAN states now regularly push for the issues to be governed at the regional level, regardless of non-interference." (Jones, 2011: 215)*

This denies the previously-discussed Constructivist explanation because such tendency of violation of ASEAN's norm of non-interference would make it illogical to argue that 'The norm has reconstituted member-states' identities and interests' (Jones, 2011: 219). Even though ASEAN tries to promote a conception of regional community that enunciate the values of national sovereignty and its right to be free from the intervention of external powers and the emergence of ASEAN Way serves to bolster this approach, yet it could not appear to iron out several major regional problems and conflicts of interests. Concentrating on national sovereignty as well as non-legalistic and consensual approaches would mean that ASEAN will be less enable to reach a mutual agreement and to carry out the implementation of policy decisions. Although the consensus and informality may constitute a particular strength of the Association, it is somewhat limited in achieving anything substantial (Smith and Jones, 1997: 147). Apart from the slow progress in deepening integration, recently one obvious example of its ineffectiveness would be ASEAN's position on the South China Sea disputes, whereby ASEAN fails to present its consensual position and reach an internal agreement to maintain its pursuing a settlement to the South China Sea dispute (Sharpe, 2003: 243).

ASEAN as a collective identity: an empirical investigation

In detailed analysis of ASEAN's collective identity for this work, different layers emerged, such that it was considered insightful to divide the discussion into two levels, namely the: state and citizen levels. This was due to the considerable differences in degrees of

socialization and the development of collective identity discovered between the two levels. That is, ASEAN is widely recognized as an elitist organisation which lacks involvement or participation from civilian sectors. As a consequence, there is a substantial gap in identity building between the groups of political leaders, diplomats and technocrats, and those from the grassroots organisations as well as ordinary citizens. At the state level, it was observed that the concept of identity consistent with a constructivist stance, because this is able to provide insights into the formation of identity in ASEAN and the actions of states. Regarding this, in one of his prominent works, Wendt (1994: 389-390) made some important observations about the formation of collective identity among a group of states, claiming that through increased interdependence and transnational convergence of domestic values, a collective identity is formed at the international level. Extending this, Adler (2006: 102) pointed out that interaction, communication and socialization are salient for the emergence of new intersubjective knowledge in the form of new rules, social structures or new processes.

Although the development of ASEAN integration has been generally considered as slow and sluggish, it should be noted that the primary concern of ASEAN integration is still always peace and security. This can be seen, for instance, in the statements laid down in the Bangkok Declaration and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, wherein it is indicated that a strict behavioural norms of ASEAN is the avoidance of conflict. Though the past experiences during the colonization and Cold War periods deepen antagonism among ASEAN countries making that tension could arise easily, since the inauguration of the grouping there has been no large-scale war, or planning for such an event, against a fellow member. This is witnessed by the fact that Article 13 to 17 of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation concerning a peaceful settlement of any arising disputes3 has never been invoked by the calling of a meeting of the High Council. Regarding this, despite some emerging conflicts among members, most of them were resolved by low-key diplomacy and informal practices between political leaders. In the author's view, this shows a positive evidence of the ideational adherence to norms and the existence of a collective identity owing to a heightened level of trust among members.

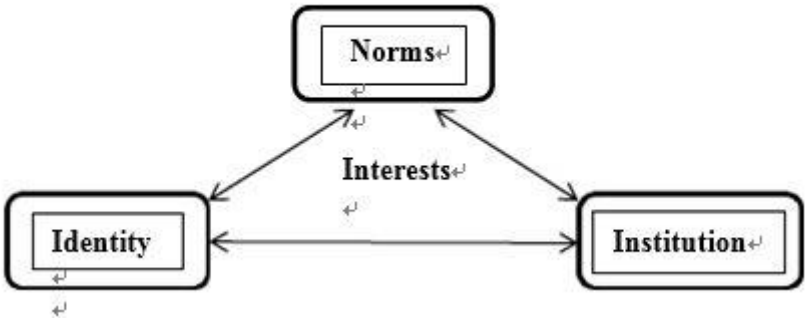
In explanation, through dynamic international interaction over time and their perceived common interests, the degree of interdependence and convergence between ASEAN members has increased. As a consequence, the political elites and technocrats are tied into regular contacts and meetings and they start to adhere to norms and identify their interests with each other which could lead to the development of strong interdependence and a feeling of belonging to a community. This can be explained by Wendt's stance that 'dependency, whether intersubjective

or material, is a key determinant of the extent to which an actor's identity is shaped by interaction' (Wendt, 1994: 289). It also coincides with the viewpoint of one interviewee who argued:

> *"I see identity as something that evolves as we do things together as we work together. And then as this evolves it can have a positive feedback loop into the whole integration process. So, it is a loop thing… as soon as you build more common values, then you come to share more similar idea and values. Then, the level of trust will be increased and, with the increased trust, it is easier for the integration process to proceed."4*

From the author's perspective, if constructivist viewpoint is taken into consideration, the ASEAN Way will increasingly be seen as the norms of the organisation that reflect a collective identity shared among its member countries and their political elites at the regional level. That is, it could be considered as being a by-product of the regional integration process, being formed and very much influenced by the political leaders' experience, knowledge, beliefs and values. Moreover, it gives meaning to actions as well as shaping the group and individual state's foreign policies.

Figure 2: The abstract relationships between norms, identity and institution



In the author's view, instead of narrowly focusing on sovereignty and the principle of non-interference, the roles of norm and identity could be better understood through viewing ASEAN as a dynamic process where ASEAN integration is steered by various drivers. In line with Constructivist explanation, Figure 2 demonstrates that identity and institution have solid ties with norms of the association, while interests lie in the centre as they are the most essential determinant and serve as a basis for regional cooperation. The existence of norms developed by states' interaction in the dynamics of the regional integration process will incrementally forge collective identity as well as shape the behaviour of political leaders and the design of institutions. Identity, once emerged, represents the norms to provide a meaning for involved actors, distinguish them from others and inform them of what they are here for. On the other hand, institutions are something of a by-product of the process, occurred to safeguard norms and being a key mechanism for supporting the construction and managing collective identity. On the whole, these three forces are evidently correlated and reinforcing each other and intricately embedded in the dynamics of regional integration to preserve national interests. Because the elitism in ASEAN integration keeps downplaying the institutions, the author would contend that this is the reason why ASEAN has to stress the vitality of norms in order to rebalance or offset the weakness, ensuring the continuity of the association and the achievement of its original goals. Therefore, the arguments made by Jones that devaluate Constructivist justification and the role of norms do not seem to be feasible from this perspective.

ASEAN's response to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1978 is perhaps an exemplar of the formation of ASEAN collective identity as well as how the organisation's norms were able to influence the policies of the member states. By way of explanation, in order to respond to the Vietnamese aggression, Busse (1999: 48-51) pointed out that ASEAN had a few options to choose

from. The first was to ignore the situation and stay neutral, which was deemed sensible by the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore who were not stakeholders in the conflict as the war had no direct impact on their security. The second choice was to form a military alliance against Vietnam, which would also have been beneficial to ASEAN, particularly in safeguarding the validity of its norms and providing additional security to a fellow member, namely, Thailand as a frontline state. In the end, the existence of the ASEAN norms directed the decision to adopt a third option. Seeing that the building up of a military alliance was too provocative and that the revered norms should be preserved, ASEAN decided to use its favoured style of diplomatic campaigning against Vietnam, through informal practice as well as personal communication between leaders. To some degree, this was productive because, on the one hand, it demonstrated the reiteration and validity of its norms, and on the other hand, it evaded the confrontation which could possibly have led to a widespread war. Regarding this, Sharpe (2003: 238-239) viewed that 'ASEAN was successful in upholding its declared principles of the respect of sovereignty and the peaceful settlement of disputes and consequently played an important role in upholding the security of its members in the region'.

The case of Thai-Cambodian border dispute is another interesting case to investigate. Although the disputes were impermanently resolved in the end by the significant change in Thailand's domestic politics and interpersonal relations between political leaders, not by ASEAN's effort, during the conflict reaching its climax there were several attempts from ASEAN partners to reduce the tension and prevent an outbreak of fighting. Talks and meetings were held at different levels, both bilaterally and multilaterally. As current chair of ASEAN, Indonesia played an active role in mediating the dispute by offering to send ceasefire observers to the disputed area, under the permission of UN Security Council, as well as hosting talks and meetings between foreign ministers to mediate the situation. Nevertheless, this Indonesia's commitment to peaceful resolution of the conflict and regional security has an equivocal meaning as 'allowing Indonesian observers to both sides of the Thai-Cambodian border marks a change in ASEAN's approach that used to be known for its strict non-interference policy' (Gollmer, 2011).

Moreover, the South China Sea disputes are a contrasting case where norms and identity fail to influence the group's policies and positions on critical issues particularly when it comes to national interests. In fact, this dispute is far more complex than being an ordinary territorial conflicts like the case of Thai-Cambodia one. The complexity of the conflict lays in the fact that four out of ten ASEAN members (Brunei, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam) have claims to features in the disputed water. In turn, these four have, to a various degree, overlapping claims with each other as well as with China, a superpower and an important dialogue partner of ASEAN.

At the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2012, ASEAN members attempted to discuss with China in order to formulate a code of conduct for the South China Sea. Due to the overlapping interests and the fact that each member state has its own stance on relations with China, the meeting failed to come up with a consensual position on the disputes as some ASEAN members appeared to side with China. As a non-claimant and a closed ASEAN friend, Thailand has had an intimate relationship with China for decades, while Cambodia has recently gained tremendous benefits from Chinese investment and donor. Indonesia and Singapore seem to be content with non-claimant and back-seat status, refusing to provoke or confront China over contested waters. Regarding this, it can be understood that many of ASEAN countries considering their ASEAN membership is less important than maintaining ties with China in good order.

Thus, to conclude, it is contended that the ASEAN Way, to some degree, has been playing a substantial role in shaping ideas, decisions and action at the state level. In line with theoretical explanation, after members have recognized that they belong to the group, the feeling of togetherness and construction of identity have begun to be developed through the sharing of certain principles or values, or the sense that members feel they have mutual interests or something important in common. As elucidated in this paper, the case of the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict posed a threat to regional peace and security, which led to the demand for an instant response and mutual commitment towards this by ASEAN. This links to the previous contention that collective identity and shared values will be explicitly declared when they are challenged by outsiders or when it is threatening the ultimate goal of association which is security. Similarly, the case of Thai-Cambodian border dispute demonstrates its strict adherence to the norms of peaceful settlement of dispute or renunciation of use of force. Although this time ASEAN could not end or prevent the disputants from fighting effectively, considerable efforts to preserve the norms and to mediate the situation can be evidenced. Finally, the case of South China Sea depicts an extensive intricate territorial dispute in the region and is very much involved potential national interests. This time the norms cannot play out to influence the group's decision and action because the conflict causes a deep-down disruption to their national interests. However, as the association could survive and went through a number of regional challenges, the author would conclude that at the state level ASEAN collective identity, to some degree, does prevail among the member states.

Moving away from the elites and technocrats, collective identity at the citizen level could be a different story. As mentioned earlier, constructing collective identity among the diverse ASEAN citizens seems to be a great challenge for the regional and national governing bodies,

which will require substantial change by all the involved parties. The key questions are those of does collective identity exist at the citizen level in ASEAN? Also whether and if so, to what extent do people in the member countries feel attached to ASEAN? Unfortunately, only a few studies focusing on ASEAN awareness have been published to date. Perhaps, the most prominent work is that by Thompson and Thianthai under the title *"Attitudes and Awareness toward ASEAN: Findings of a Ten Nation Survey".* They conducted a survey of university students from the ten member states in order to measure their awareness of and attitude toward ASEAN, including their general knowledge about it as well as their orientation towards the grouping. However, this survey was aimed at targeting only a group of students from the top or national universities of each member state and consequently, was restricted to finding the views of the most highly educated members of the next generation of ASEAN citizens.

The findings of this survey do generate some interesting implications for the future of ASEAN. On the whole, Thompson and Thianthai (2008: 63) concluded that 'students across the region demonstrate a fairly high level of knowledge about the Association and have generally positive attitudes toward it. They go so far as to generally agree when asked if they consider themselves to be citizens of ASEAN'. According to the report, the most enthusiastic attitudes were found in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the least affluent and most recent member states, while the most sceptical ones were found among Myanmar's students. Singapore students also expressed some scepticism, but the researchers concluded their attitudes could be categorized as 'ambivalence'. The rest of the countries had generally positive attitudes. On the whole, over 75% of the students recognized themselves to be citizens of ASEAN, while nearly 90% and 70%, respectively, felt that ASEAN membership was beneficial to their countries and to themselves. In the author's view, although this research provides future implications for ASEAN, particularly the way to detach itself from being an elitist organization, the outcomes do not truly reflect general awareness of ASEAN at present. One reason for this is that this survey was funded by and conducted on behalf of the ASEAN Foundation, an important institutional body of the Association in charge of promoting greater awareness and participation in ASEAN's activities. More importantly, targeting only students from the national universities betrays the fact that they were only interested in measuring the attitudes of people who were young, highly-educated and well-financed, not just ordinary citizens of ASEAN. As such this research does not represent an accurate picture regarding the level of awareness of middle-class citizens, who are supposed to be the main driving force behind ASEAN. It should also be noted that in many of Southeast Asian countries access to good education is very much determined by economic circumstance. Therefore, most of those targeted students were likely to have come from elite or high-income families and,

in relation to the social structure and culture of business and networking in Southeast Asia, likely to become elites, technocrats or upper-class citizens in the future.

Perhaps, the findings from the author's interviews can give additional insights and pragmatic reflections on the existence of collective identity among ASEAN citizens. Addressing the first question about the existence of collective identity at the individual level, in contrast with the results of the above survey, there were quite a substantial number of participants in this study who agreed that collective identity in ASEAN does not exist at the citizen level. For instance, these following statements are some of the reflections recorded on this matter:

> *"I must admit that I am a little bit more sceptical at that (citizen) level. That is where you do have a great deficit."5*
>
> *"(About existing identity at the citizen level) As far as popular perception is concerned, I am afraid to say that there is nothing… There have been surveys across Southeast Asia recently asking people on the street, such as what do you feel about ASEAN? Do you know what ASEAN is? And a lot of people don't know."6*
>
> *"Nothing at all. It is only at a diplomatic or elite level. But if you go below that, then I would say no."7*
>
> *"(About identity at citizen level) that is (clearly) less because ASEAN is well-known as a project of the elites… (For Identity) among students, journalists, woman groups, that is something that is in its very very early days"8*
>
> *"(That is) only among the elites and only scholars who work on ASEAN. I don't think there is really identity at the ground level."9*

Additionally, this was supported by an interview given by Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak in the New Straits Times, which demonstrates the presence of detachment from ASEAN and the need to cultivate awareness about it among the youth. He stated:

> *"It is precisely this mindset that we need to change by increasing the younger*

generation's interest in ASEAN and helping them see and understand their power and their potential."10

Finally, it also coincided with the result of communal surveys conducted by Christopher Roberts. In his analysis, he revealed that 'while grassroots regionalization does appear to have contributed relatively high levels of regional knowledge and awareness, it has not yet generated a significant collective identity', due to the remaining lack of trust in considering whether other ASEAN countries are 'good neighbours' (Roberts, 2012: 173). To this point, the author would conclude that the evidence points to the fact that, at citizen level an ASEAN collective identity barely exists.

The next question is about the emergence and the role of collective identity in constructing the regional community. As mentioned earlier, constructivists advise that collective identity is socially constructed through communication, interaction and common experiences among members and, in return, collective identity helps to create meaning and provide an explanation to state and individual actions as well as regarding the foundation of common interests. Therefore, for ordinary citizens, I would contend that identity helps people

to distinguish themselves as a member of the group and thus construct a sense of belonging. This issue was clearly made by one of the respondents when asked about the accommodative culture in ASEAN who concluded that:

"It is part of the process that brings us to distinguish ourselves as ASEAN."11

To be more specific about this concern, the viewpoint expressed by a Singaporean scholar perhaps well explains this concern:

"It (identity) can foster unity and familiarity among people. Identity is not something that you arrive at. It is always influx. It is always being redefined. So, it is apparently a moving target. I think the important thing is the process through which people try to craft or construct common identity. The process means that we try to find a common ground, I try to understand you and you try to understand me… And the best way to find a common ground is (through) common interests, (such as) concerns over survival and security."12

This statement advocates the constructivist explanation and the earlier position put forward by this researcher that identity is a by-product of the regional integration process. This implies that collective identity cannot be promoted right away, because it is highly dependent on the ongoing process for its construction. Although the issue of identity is relatively intuitive and very hard to quantify, all the interview respondents involved in this study did agree, in general, that identity should play an important role in ASEAN integration.

The last point for discussion is about how to create or promote collective identity among people and a number of respondents gave constructive insights into this matter. A Malaysian scholar posited:

> *"If ASEAN starts maturing to its people and people can look to ASEAN as a way that… ASEAN can actually safeguard me or help us. Then, maybe that identity will grow… ASEAN should do things that benefit ordinary people and that people can see (or feel) that ASEAN is useful to them."13*

Also, as observed by a former director who worked at the ASEAN Secretariat:

> *"(the idea is that) Once you let people visit each other and they see neighbouring countries, the n identity that (showing) we are in the same region, we are in the same ASEAN community will slowly emerge."14*

This implies that collective identity will be constructed, as for the elite level, when there is sufficient interaction between people from different ASEAN nations. Moreover, some of the collected data stresses the role of education in constructing a regional identity, with, for instance in this regard, the former Secretary General of ASEAN commenting:

> *"We should have more knowledge of one another… and the devotion to provide good education for our young people."15*

The viewpoint of the former Secretary General corresponds with work written by Michael E. Jones. He wrote about how ASEAN's identity and a sense of belonging together can be constructed, by emphasising the role of education in the process as this has been found to be of key importance in the study of collective identity. In his own words:

> ‘For the citizens of ASEAN to become truly regional, it will be necessary to know other cultures outside of their own community and country. Borders will be made “fluid” and citizens will be able to move much more freely in the region… The responsibilities to know others, how to be respectful of others, and how to empathize and communicate cross-culturally will require education as these, like democracy and politics, never come intuitively. A broader view of the world and how to engage in it will be crucial tools for ASEAN regional citizens.’ (Jones, 2004: 147-148).

Discussion and conclusion

Collective identity is one of the most complicated issues in the study of regional integration, for it is intuitive, very subjective and involves multidimensional factors in the process of its construction. Southeast Asia has evolved from a region dominated by European colonial powers one that has been attempting to shape its own destiny. Its vast diversity and the absence of cultural homogeneity make it difficult for Southeast Asia to be recognized as a definable region and underpin the fact that it has been encountering difficulties in constructing regional unity and identity. However, ASEAN appears solely to be the most important mechanism to tackle this problem by promoting the necessity of deepening the interdependence between member states. Using conventional patterns of international relations and interactions, it has helped in region-building, having now distinguished itself from the rest of the world, thus making it a distinct entity to external perceptions. In association with theoretical explanations, the author concurs with the view that the regional integration is a process of identity building itself and thus fully supports Acharya’s perspective that the construction of an ASEAN identity is ‘identity-in-the-making’, rather than ‘identity in being’ (Acharya, 2005: 104). Regarding the study of collective identity in Southeast Asia, he also went further to purport ‘regionalism in Southeast Asia is not a slideshow to power politics, but a potentially transformative dynamic. Without taking cognizance of norms, identity and institutional-building, one would only gain a partial and distorted view of regional order in Southeast Asia’ (ibid: 98). In the analysis of identity formation, constructivism appears to explain the formation and the importance of a collective identity at the regional level. Repeatedly, it has been made clear that identity helps states to gain meaning and define ‘who they are, their goals and the roles they believe they should play’.16 Additionally, as appeared in the work of Acharya and Stubbs (2006: 127), it is pointed out that ‘ideational forces, including norms and identity, are very much a part of the regional environment or “structure” that shapes Southeast

Asia's regional order'. From this it can be inferred that identity plays a crucial role in providing an explanation for state actions, including those of individuals who act on behalf of the state, and the foundations of state interests at the regional level.

In the context of ASEAN, as demonstrated by this research, a majority of discussion about norms and identity have revolved around the elements of the ASEAN Way. This set of crucial principles, proclaimed as an association's mean of multilateralism, acts as a mechanism for avoiding conflicts and disunity within the group and as such greatly determines the formation of identity at the state level. That is, it plays an important role in shaping ideas, decisions and action of the group and its member states. As pointed out by constructivists, by the increased interdependence and the convergence of shared values, i.e. 'we-feelings' or feelings of togetherness, are gradually formed through systemic international interaction, communication and socialization. It is claimed here that to some extent, through the dynamics of regional integration, collective identity will, more or less, occur automatically because it comes as a by-product of the regional integration process, which is very much influenced by political leaders' experience, knowledge, beliefs and values. In particular, the cases of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia and the Thai-Cambodian border dispute have convinced the author that ASEAN's identity, to some degree, does exist among elites, diplomats and technocrats. However, the case of South China Sea dispute hints that the functionality of ASEAN way can be greatly limited or deviated once state's survival or vital national interests are at risk.

The formation of collective identity at the citizen level is a thought-provoking matter and demands a significant change by all the associated parties. According to the documents and interviews, the data demonstrated that collective identity only rarely exists at the citizen level, but that, as at the state level, citizen identity can be socially constructed through communication, interaction and common experiences among people across the region. Thus, it is concluded that the collective identity and feeling of togetherness among ordinary people cannot be achieved overnight. That is, the forging of identity needs to take time and involve the proactive promotion of interaction as well as the sharing of common experiences. As mentioned by one respondent from this research, identity is a moving thing, influx, always being redefined and highly dependent on the process. In my view, a transnational system that facilitates and encourages the connectivity and movements of people and information needs to be created. Moreover, as retrieved from the psychological literature, in order to set up clearer group's boundaries ASEAN should be more insular by focusing more on internal strengthening rather than seeking further external cooperation. Meanwhile, this should be carried out together with the creation of 'symbols of

unity', as Allport (1954: 44) posited that 'in order to make the human in-group seem real' such as flags, logos, songs, a shared currency, sports events, capitol buildings, holidays, inter-connected transport networks and etc.

The notion of concentric royalties has made clear that multiple identities can be present. As long as they do not clash and being compatible with each other, there is no need to substitute or deteriorate national sentiments as both can be strong at the same time. In this connection, the insistence on national sovereignty and non-intervention of ASEAN would not plague the formation of wider regional identity if both levels of identities are well designed and managed, to reinforce each other. Moreover, I have addressed in this paper that norms of the association have close ties with identity and institutions. As long as common interests are guaranteed, these three drivers are intricately functioning in the dynamics of ASEAN integration and tend to reinforce each other. The norms themselves play a key role in the construction of collective identity and the design of institutions. Evidently, with the apparent weaknesses in collective identity and institutional arrangements in ASEAN, the norms of the association act as a central mechanism that contributes to the survival of the association and the normalization of relations between member countries, making it difficult to be discontinued.

Finally, the literature and findings discussed in this paper clearly highlight the importance of collective identity in ASEAN integration and the need to transform the association from being an elite organization, into a people's one. The remark of a former ASEAN technocrat clearly affirms this, when he states:

> *"In the long run, you cannot build a regional community. You cannot push for regional objectives without support from (regional) people. They must know. They must recognize. They must support."17*

In other words, it is not the citizen's responsibility to be in touch and acquaint themselves with the Association, but rather, it is ASEAN's responsibility to perform this task, by engaging with the citizens and bringing them on board. As suggested by the cost-benefit calculation, it is crucial to make them see, feel and experience how ASEAN can be beneficial to their routine lives. However, this may requires a reinterpretation of norms to allow constructive consultation on the existing problems and for moving towards a more participatory community. Lastly, education,

particularly in a way that empathizes and familiarizes people with the region and neighbouring countries, could prove to be a vital factor in determining the success and the continuation of ASEAN. As Acharya (2005: 112) concluded in his work, 'ASEAN's success then as now depended on defending its norms, increasing socialization and pursuing a regional identity'.

Notes

1 See 1967 ASEAN DECLARATION, FORTH.

2 NESADURAI, H. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Kuala Lumpur, 5 March 2013.

3 See Treaty of Amity and Cooperation

4 LHAY WEE, Y. 2012. Interviewed by the author [in person] Singapore, 13 December 2012.

5 EMMERS, R. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Singapore, 22 January 2013.

6 LIOW, J. C. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Singapore, 17 January 2013.

7 MUHIBAT, S. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Jakarta, 23 March 2013.

8 CABALLERO-ANTHONY, M. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Singapore, 7 January 2013.

9 NESADURAI, H. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Kuala Lumpur, 5 March 2013.

10 To see the full article, please go to http://www.nst.com.my/top-news/young-people-show-disinterest-in-asean-1.70904

11 YONG, O. K. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Kuala Lumpur, 21 March 2013.

12 LIOW, J. C. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Singapore, 17 January 2013.

13 NESADURAI, H. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Kuala Lumpur, 5 March 2013.

14 CHALERMPALANUPAP, T. 2012. Interviewed by the author [in person] Singapore, 20 December 2012.

15 YONG, O. K. 2013. Interviewed by the author [in person] Kuala Lumpur, 21 March 2013.

16 See Wendt (1999) and Copeland (2000).

17 CHALERMPALANUPAP, T. 2012. Interviewed by the author [in person] Singapore, 20 December 2012.

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[2-3]

ASEAN CENTRALITY AND THE AGENT-STRUCTURE CHALLENGE IN EAST ASIA: Exploring the complexities of the South China Sea Dispute?

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The evolution of ASEAN centrality and its manifestations have greatly restructured the development of regionalism, not only in Southeast Asia but also across the East Asian region. What this article attempts to do here is to present the structural roles of ASEAN in the accommodation of ASEAN norms in East Asia. It is contended that much of the literature on this subject overly engages with the power and material structures which ASEAN or Southeast Asia continuously grapples with. These material structures focusing on power are undoubtedly valid. However, such an approach does not wholly take into account the full complexity of the emergence of ASEAN centrality in East Asian in the past decades and the challenges ahead.

As with the issue of interpretation of ASEAN centrality, the complexities of the South China Sea dispute has increasingly become a great challenge. In this study, China's commitment to the principle of ASEAN centrality and ASEAN norms is specifically examined. Although the country is somewhat ambivalent towards ASEAN principles, it has yet to breach any of the relevant norms. However, there has been increasing tension over the South China Sea, leading to suspicions that China intends to be a dominant power in the region. However, it is still too early to predict its true intentions; it may also be difficult to predict whether or not China would change its foreign policy, given the complexity of its regional and global roles.

This paper tries to answer a number of questions, including: (i) how does ASEAN play a role of structure and of agent? (ii) whose norms matter in China-ASEAN relations? (iii) how does China accommodate the ASEAN centrality and ASEAN norms in the South China Sea issues, and how can this be measured? (iv), what are the impacts of the recent South China Sea developments on the ASEAN norms?

This article argues that some of the challenges facing ASEAN relate to the Failure to clarify the Association's role as an agent while the its normative structure remains relevant to regionalism in East Asia. To ensure its centrality, ASEAN needs to secure its agency role as a

collective group, in a manner that its normative structure is well stipulated. Before dealing with the South China Sea issues, this study considers the conceptual discussion over ASEAN centrality with particular regard to the agent-structure problem.

ASEAN Centrality and the Agent-Structure Problem

ASEAN centrality, a newly coined term without a clear definition, implies that ASEAN needs to be more coherent to remain a core element in the dynamics of its external relations. ASEAN centrality first appeared in the ASEAN Charter as a purpose and principle of ASEAN. In article 1 and 2, the Charter states that the purpose of ASEAN is "to maintain the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners in a regional architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive." As a principle, the Charter mentioned "the centrality of ASEAN in external political, economic, social and cultural relations while remaining actively engaged, outward-looking, inclusive and non-discriminatory"(ASEAN, 2007a). ASEAN centrality is also perceived as a desirable tool and benchmark in addition to the integration initiatives in the region and shaping external relations with major partners. Thus ASEAN centrality aims to enhance its cohesion, economic integration, and international influence (Petri & Plummer, 2014, p. xi). Those focusing on power based on material conditions often perceive ASEAN centrality as a 'myth' (Weatherbee, 2014). ASEAN's limited material power as a collective group of medium-small powers has become less important as the rivalry between the U.S. and China has increasingly become apparent in the region. Power-oriented approach reveals some structural weaknesses in the East Asian region as far as ASEAN is concerned. Any involvement in larger structures carries the risk that ASEAN becomes supplanted, or even weakened as a regional organisation (Öjendal, 2001). Thus, it puts ASEAN in a somewhat paradoxical situation. East Asia regionalism with ASEAN in the centre was possible due to lack of regionalism in Northeast Asia. Given the higher interdependency among China, Japan, and Korea, there will be a strong possibility for further development of Northeast Asian regionalism.[1]Such development would potentially indicate the decreased relevance of an ASEAN-led East Asian regionalism. In the case of China-ASEAN relations, the political factors tend to manifest in a complex and somewhat negative form. In general, negotiations between the more powerful country (China) and smaller ones (ASEAN member states), may translate to rather favourable results for the former, due to unbalanced negotiation power. This unbalanced negotiation power problem is the fundamental reason for the grouping among the small states. Thus, arrangement of bilateral negotiations

[1] For Northeast Asian Regionalism, see (Hyungdo, 2005; Rozman, 2004).

within the existing framework may lead the way towards unbalanced negotiations, unless the greater power strictly observes courtesy and good conduct.

These power problems have deeply challenged regionalism in Southeast Asia through ASEAN Community and the ASEAN Charter. ASEAN has claimed to be a "central force" not a "driver" in expanding regionalism in East Asia (J. Lee, 2010). The anxiety over the absence of an ASEAN community and possible overrule by the East Asian community made ASEAN member states consider more action towards further integration. For the most part, ASEAN's objectives have mainly shifted towards regional integration. Among the concepts of the ASEAN Community, the ASEAN Economic Community is probably in line with the logic of regional integration, which can be achieved through a more rule-based institution.

ASEAN centrality also reflects the Association's leadership structure. Stubbs considers ASEAN's leadership as a problem-solving mechanism which can help develop relevant systems for regional consultation (Stubbs, 2014). Mely argues that the ASEAN's structural position as 'the node in the cluster of networks' enables it to play a central role in the regional architectures (Mely, 2014). Unlike a power-centric approach, both Stubb and Mely emphasise ASEAN's normative role and share their views that ASEAN's limited power serves its leadership positively, since ASEAN is seen as no threat by the major powers.

A more significant aspect is that the adoption of ASEAN centrality has become pervasively dependent on its leadership, based on the accommodation of the ASEAN norms by the relevant parties. However, the adoption of the ASEAN norms as a process of forming a normative structure has not completely displaced power struggle among the powers. The centrality of ASEAN as a normative structure is not solely determined by its structural position. More importantly, ASEAN centrality is increasingly becoming a matter of practice as a modus operandi and prescribes or proscribes norms.

The structures in IR mean a material and ideal/normative structure. The material structure in IR, from a rationalist perspective, is mainly concerned with the distribution of power where interests and identity are given. From a constructivist perspective, emphasis is given to the ideal and normative structures where identity and interest can be constructed rather than fixed. Wendt considers the constitutive effect of structures on agents. Thus, the structure is not inducible to the properties or interactions of ontologically primitive individuals (Wendt, 1999, p. 27). Constructivists argue that the structure-agent relations are more flexible, as they are mutually constituted rather than given (Christian, 2013, p. 225). Structures not only constrain agents but also construct the interests of agents. The structure can constrain the actors with behavioural effects, while it can also construct actors with property effects in particular identities and interest (Christian, 2013, pp. 224-225). Thus, structures can alter an agent's behaviour together

with the relevant interests and identities. According to Giddens, structures and agents are inseparable, as they are interrelated to one another, which are called the "duality of structure." Alder suggests the possible transformation in mutual co-constitution of structures and agents through practice (Lamsal, 2012, pp. 113-114).

While sharing this notion of the duality of structure, Alder suggests the possible transformation, in particular, the institutionalisation of ideas and knowledge as social practices (Adler, 2005, p. 15). Adler agrees that institutional agents are effective for broader collective understandings, which are important in organising relations and condition.. However, he proposes and deals with two sets of structure-agent relations, including national and international regimes. In the former case, the institutions are agents and the structure is trans-national, while in the latter case, states are the agents while the structure is transnational (Adler, 2005, p. 78). To remain a united agent, the consciousness of being 'We' and 'Region' should be shared by regional entities. It is easier to express when the members realise a shared fate and identity. If such shared ideals are absent, engaging in dialogue does not necessarily indicate collective agreement, but there would be persistent attempts to distinguish 'We' and 'Others'.

The argument here is that despite the lack of a common heritage and tradition between China and other East Asian countries, the normative structure has developed mainly through the recognition and practice of the ASEAN norms. The practice of ASEAN centrality formed through the structuration of ASEAN norms in large remained untested. However, the material structural changes since the expansion of the ASEAN membership and the rivalry among the great powers have increased the complexity of the agent matters. It has increasingly weakened the agency role of ASEAN. The real challenge in dealing with the South China Sea dispute has appeared as a matter of agency, which further constrains the practice of ASEAN centrality within the constructed normative structure.

ASEAN Norms and China

Defining and measuring the ASEAN norms is a challenging tasks, given that ASEAN is not very institutionalised and is very informal. According to Acharya, the ASEAN norms refer to: (1) non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, (2) non-use of force in the settlement of disputes, (3) the pursuit of regional autonomy, and (4) the practice of the "ASEAN Way"(Acharya, 2001, pp. 47-49). The ASEAN Way centres on consultation and consensus-based decision-making. Consultation or *Mushawarah* was initially among friends and brothers

but not with opponents.[2] While it was based on kinship, neighbourliness and a sense of community, they had to prudently pursue mutual understanding. Thus, the process of consultation necessarily pertained to readjustments of each other's different viewpoints. In the process, the majority did not impose their views on the minorities. Long and intensive 'negotiation' was often necessary to reach consensus or *Mufakat*, to which the existence and the role of personalities of leadership is a key factor (Thambipillai and Saravanamuttu, 1985,p.11). It also often includes informality and tradition of hanging together. In a broader sense, the ASEAN Way means the unique way (of ASEAN) in practicing norms such as unconditional implementation of non-interference and consensus. Thus the two terms, ASEAN Way and the ASEAN norms, are often used interchangeably.

Despite the serious disagreement among realists, China's engagement with ASEAN has to be recognised as a case underpinning China's peaceful ascendancy, since there has been as yet an absence of fierce conflicts in the region. The adoption of the ASEAN Way by China is perhaps the most important development as far as constructivists are concerned, as it is often considered an alternative world order. As the norms of a group of small countries, ASEAN, incorporating non-interference, peaceful resolution efforts, respecting sovereignty, and respecting ASEAN's centrality in regionalism and multilateralism have been received and accepted by a global power, China (Johnston, 2003; Shambaugh, 2004; Stubbs, 2008). In a similar vein, China remains a "status quo state" rather than a "revisionist state", as it is not trying to change the "rule of the game" (Johnston, 2003). It however seems that the assessment of China's commitment to ASEAN norms as a member of the "international community" remains suspicious to realists (Jones & Smith, 2007).

There are several reasons for claiming China's peaceful engagement and respect for ASEAN norms. It is argued that a notable example of that can be found in the process of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) where significant improvements in the relations between China and ASEAN through socialisation of China were witnessed (Johnston, 2007, pp. 160-181; Katsumata, 2006). China was the first country from outside the region to accede to the TAC in 2003,[3] which led the way for other countries to follow. On the South China Sea issue, China has signed major agreements for peaceful settlements, although the matter remains unresolved. In the economic sector, trade between China and ASEAN has increased in favour of the latter in terms of trade balance (Katsumata, 2008). In fact, China was the first country to sign a FTA with

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[2] *Mufakat* and *darah* (kinship or blood ties) are of three fundamental principles of Malay social organisation along with kesayangan, or love for all close relationship (Clammer, 2000,p.28) .

[3] The dates of the Accession of the TAC by non-ASEAN states are as follows. Papua New Guinea (5 July 1989); China (8 October 2003); India (8 October 2003); Japan (2 July 2004); Pakistan (2 July 2004), South Korea (27 November 2004); Russia (29 November 2004); New Zealand (25 July 2005); Mongolia (28 July 2005); Australia (10 December 2005); France (20 July 2006); East Timor (13 January 2007); Bangladesh (1 August 2007); Sri Lanka (1 August 2007); North Korea (24 July 2008); European Union (23 July 2009).

ASEAN as a collective unit in November 2002. At the same time, bilateral relations with individual ASEAN member states have also improved.

Despite China's successful moves towards socialisation, ASEAN's perception and response to China's actions are still crucial matters. ASEAN as a group of small countries may prefer to be "bandwagonning" or "balancing" China. Observation and assessment of the collective reaction of ASEAN has been complex, while individual responses of member states have rendered these arguments controversial. Given that the responses from ASEAN member states were often in mixed forms without clear evidence to support a uniform position, there has been a new conceptual understanding, including "hedging", which is an alternative to "bandwagonning" and "balancing" (Kuik 2008; Liow, 2005).

However, while China's trajectory has shown a certain level of commitment without critical breach of the norms, some suspicious circles argue that China would change its approach after achieving its strategic goals in the long term. For many of the ASEAN member states, China's favourable engagement with ASEAN is a relatively new development in comparison to the long-standing antagonism of many Southeast Asian countries towards China. These sentiments had their origins in the history of the tributary system and the ideological and security threats during the Cold War. A prominent historian, Wang Gung Wu, emphasises the matter of perception in the confidence building process with China. According to him, any commitment by China in the APT process often raises doubts as to the real intentions of the country.[4] This account suggests that although China has acted as a good partner so far, it failed to get enough trust of the related parties that are in various strategic positions.

China has shown its political will for the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the region and respecting territorial sovereignty mainly under the aegis of the non-interference principle. However, it was not an existing norm for China at the beginning of its engagement with ASEAN. It was absorbed through an incremental evolution process rather than with the changes in the domestic and international conditions. In practical terms, at least until the end of the 1960s, China never gave up the idea of interference as an option of her foreign policy (Haacke, 2005, p. 112).

The end of the Cold War was certainly an important catalyst accelerating China's internal economic reforms towards a market economy under the Chinese Communist Party's direction. After decades of antagonism and conflicts with Vietnam, the end of the Cold War initially would mean the isolation of China from the world. For strategic reasons, China has been sensitive to the penetration of external powers into the region through the establishment of military bases in the region. As economic development was crucial to maintain the legitimacy of the Chinese

[4] Interview with Professor Dr. Wang Gung Wu in Singapore, December12, 2008.

Communist Party, political stability through economic growth became a major concern. Thus, China has resisted exerting any sub-regional hegemony in Southeast Asia (Haacke, 2005, p. 116).

As an external factor, in particular, the U.S. Asian policy has been a determinant historical and structural factor for the relations between China and Southeast Asia (Ba, 2003). As earlier mentioned, the restoration of diplomatic relations in the 1970s between some ASEAN member states and China was the result of the reconciliation between the U.S. and China. The U.S. continuously maintains dominant interest in the China-ASEAN relations.

The outward diffusion of the existing group's norms requires newcomers from outside to respect, and at least try and learn the existing norms. There would be three form of responses on the part of new actors towards the extant norms of the existing group, ASEAN, including the adoption of the ASEAN norms, the co-existence of ASEAN norms with the individual norms of the new actors, and the rejection of the ASEAN norms. If their norms are the same or complementary with the ASEAN norms, the new actor's choice is likely to be adoption. If they have their own norms, the possible co-existence or rejection will be determined by the new member's intention of promoting their own norms and the relations between their own norms and those of ASEAN. If their own norms are contrary to ASEAN norms and are actively promoted, then, the possibility of rejection is high. But despite the promotion of their own norms, if they are complementary to the ASEAN norms, they could co-exist.

China has not simply adopted the ASEAN norms. While China has tried to show its respect for ASEAN norms and centrality, it has simultaneously revitalised its own norms. Through for instance, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence was enshrined by Chu En Lai in 1950s, the 'Policy of Good Neighborliness' (PGN) in the mid-1980s, and the New Security Concept (NSC) in 1997, along with the universal norms of the Charter of the United Nations.[5] Also, in the Joint

[5] The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence was first enunciated for the peaceful management of conflict with India. It includes mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; peaceful co-existence (Yahuda, 2003, p. 192). The PGN was not only the expression of China's changing views and strategies but also the reflection of the historical legacy of suspicion of many of Southeast Asian states towards China. The PGN was expected to mitigate the perception of China as a 'threat' to neighbouring countries and major global powers. It pertained to confidence building with Southeast Asia, which included the unqualified support for political systems by befriending the respective leadership; strategic engagement in the interests of sub-regional stability; call for closer economic co-operation; and the intensification of cultural and political exchanges (Muni, 2002, p. 20). In particular, the assertion of unqualified support for political systems was in line with ASEAN's unconditional implementation of the non-inference principle. It was due in part to China's own concern about the domestic affair of 1989 and its aftermath. It was a critical juncture not only for China's domestic politics but also its foreign relations. Since then, China has widely been an object of international criticism on its suppression of demonstrations, but there is scarcely any criticism from Southeast Asia. The New Security Concept adopted by China in 1997 bore even closer resemblance to ASEAN norms, despite its conceptual scope stretching beyond the geographical limitations of Southeast Asia. While NSC questioned the validity of the use of force or threat to use force as an option to solve disputes, it advocated mutual trust and benefit, equality, and co-operation/co-ordination (Haacke, 2005, p. 115).

Statement in 1997, the leaders of China and ASEAN member states affirmed that "the Charter of the United Nations, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and universally recognized international law should serve as basic norms governing their relations"(ASEAN, 1997). In fact, without mentioning the originator and specific requirements for making an exceptional case, "they reaffirmed in particular their respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states" (Haacke, 2005, p. 114).

As operational norms, the agreement was not much different from the way in which ASEAN had conducted itself, which included the principles of mutual understanding, consensus, consultation, and cooperation (ASEAN, 2004, P.6) In a relatively recent case of the Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues, the notion of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence was first stated ahead of other norms.[7] The adherence to the ASEAN norms was not solely China's unilateral concession. In return, since 1997, ASEAN members have collectively reaffirmed their continued adherence to the "one China" policy.[8]

The relations between these norms inherently are not in contrast to one another. In a large sense, they claim to be universally beyond their own geopolitical boundaries. As mentioned, the practice and subscription is of concern, and matters, rather than their typological differences. The norms are shared and respected by China in a conservative way. The unconditional implementation of ASEAN's non-interference principle and consensus is an indication of China's commitment to the ASEAN Way.

The linkage between China and Southeast Asia represents a cultural notion of Asia versus the West. As China's cultural diplomacy was an important step to engage deeply in Indonesia during Sukarno's presidency (Liu, 2006), China's approach to ASEAN is also very much similar in tradition. For instance, China had dispatched delegations to ASEAN to learn the ASEAN way of doing business. It echoed the 'Asian Values' or 'Asian Way' as advocated by the leaders of Singapore and Malaysia. While this may be the subject of controversial debates, China may add weight to the concept of Asian values which basically emphasises the traditions of

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[5] See the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea(ASEAN, 2004).

[6] See the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea(ASEAN, 2004).

[7] "Confirming that cooperation should be conducted on the basis of observing the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and other universally recognized norms of international law, which are embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, and respecting the legal systems of all countries." The Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues (ASEAN, 2002b).

[8] See the Joint Statement of the Meeting of Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN and the President of the People's Republic of China, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 16 December 1997 (ASEAN, 1997).

Confucianism. This is often camouflaged to counter Western criticism. For instance, it has been said that the ASEAN-China concord contributed to prevent the Western countries from compelling ASEAN to change its policy on human rights issues such as in Myanmar (Katsumata, 2008, p. 184).

Structuration of ASEAN Norms in South China Sea

It seems that South China Sea appeared to be a myriad of competing claims through recent developments. It is however clear that, solving the relevant South China Sea disputes will be a crucial test for ASEAN centrality. While the Declaration on the Code of Conduct (DOC) and the agreed guideline on DOC can be recognised as a historical development for the peaceful resolution of overlapping claims over the islands in the area, the stability of the situation is not guaranteed by the DOC. In the process of making the DOC, China has perhaps politically benefited from the priorities placed by the member states on their own national interests (Haacke, 2005, pp. 139-140).

On the South China Sea issues and efforts for their peaceful resolution, China equally emphasised the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence again along with TAC, the Charter of the United Nations, and the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Moreover, the two parties did not restrict themselves to any specific norms but extended the basic norms governing state-to-state relations to other universally recognised principles of international law (ASEAN, 2002a).

The non-interference principle and peaceful resolution have been stated as core principles in almost all major documents relating to the South China Sea. It has not only been the core principle for the ASEAN and China's norms, but also the most crucial and immediate practical goal of relevant parties (Table 2).

Along with the regional and national norms, universal norms have been adopted in dealing with the South China Sea disputes. The UN Charter and its role has been less stated in the official documents, while the 1982 UNCLOS has appeared in major documents. The role of the UN was mentioned in the 2003 Press Statement of the Chairperson of the ASEAN+China Summit, ASEAN+Japan Summit, ASEAN+Republic of Korea Summit and ASEAN+India Summit, where other major powers were present. After a long absence, it was inserted again in the 2002 documents emanating from the ASEAN 20th and 21st Summits. The reappearance of the UN Charter and its role probably indicate that ASEAN needs to adapt the universal norms to regional instruments in dealing with China, especially given the reemergence of military tensions between China and ASEAN clamant states like Vietnam and the Philippines over the

South China Sea. The Chairman of the 15th ASEAN-China Summit, specifically noted that relevant leaders have "agreed to use the existing dialogue mechanisms *between* and among the ASEAN Member States and China at all levels to promote mutual trust and confidence."[9] It is worth noting that, this was not the first time such statements would appear in the official documents. It was for instance mentioned in the 1998 Ha Noi Plan of Action and the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

The consultation and consensus were equally emphasised throughout the related documents. In the Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC 2011, consensus is reaffirmed and other the ASEAN Way-like rules are stated such as "voluntary basis" and "a step-by-step approach".

Over the last twenty years of engagement in the South China Sea issues, ASEAN has tried to secure peace and stability in the region by enforcing the non-interference principle and ensuring peaceful resolution. ASEAN has also tried to preserve its regional autonomy by practicing consultation and consensus, which prevents China from using its power to overrule the negotiations.

It can be said that ASEAN member states once considered the South China Sea disputes as a catalyst to enhance regional unity. There have been attempts to reach a common ground on the South China Sea among the ASEAN member states and related nations. The geographical area of the South China Sea once fell to the Japanese authorities during the Second World War. Contending territorial claims over the Sea had been managed by the somewhat neutral position of the US. No single country successfully claimed territorial sovereignty or gained US support for ownership claims during the Cold War. There was little effort to figure out the resolution of the disputes. This was merely the result of balance of power as the strategic value of the South China Sea was not clearly acknowledged at that time.

Despite the early claims over the South China Sea, in 1990, China revealed an idea of the joint development of the area, which drew the attention of some Southeast Asian states including Indonesia and the Philippines. Indonesia thereafter organised a series of unofficial conferences on the South China Sea issue among the related parties including Taiwan. The Philippines joined the discussion towards peaceful resolutions. The idea of demilitarisation of the area and joint development of resources was proposed by Fidel Rasmos in the midst of the Mischief Reef Crisis in 1995. This effort further developed into possible joint management or development of the middle area of the South China Sea by an Indonesian diplomat. The idea of creating a regional zone was however rejected by the related parties, in particular China. Nonetheless, this failure did not mean a stalemate among the countries concerned. China and

[9] http://www.asean.org/images/documents/Final_Chairman's%20Statement_15th%20ASEAN-China%20Summit.pdf

ASEAN signed the Declaration on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in 2002 (Tønnesson, 2005, p.221).

ASEAN states once remained united during the bilateral tensions between China and the Philippines in 1995, caused by building an artificial island on the Mischief Reef. Then new member of ASEAN, Vietnam, took an active role as it shared similar disputes with China(Tønnesson, 2005, p.222).

The Philippines Politician, Jose Almonte, tried to apply the concept of "Southeast Asia's maritime heartland" on the South China Sea. In his terms, the South China Sea once bridged the southern part of present day South China Sea by Sunda Shelf about 15,000 years ago. After ice melting, the South China Sea provided crucial routes for trade between India and China. Thus, the South China Sea encompasses the whole region of littoral Southeast Asia. Common maritime cultural tradition also provided some regional ties. Later, the concept of maritime heartland was further developed as inland sea while emphasising the importance of the South China Sea as a route for global communication and trade (Tønnesson, 2005, p.222). On the possibility of common identity, Lombard proposed the concept of "another Mediterranean", which considers southern China as part of Southeast Asia (Tønnesson, 2005, p.225-226). Meanwhile Alain Forest focused less on the Southeast China Sea as a channel to connect the region, but instead focused more on the coast, land and river (Tønnesson, 2005, p.229).

Despite Almonte's ambitious suggestion, cohesiveness of ASEAN member states seems weakened. During the conflict over the Mischief Reef in 1998, without much support from ASEAN, the Philippines signed a bilateral code of conduct agreement with China, which paved the way for the Declaration on a Code of Conduct in 2002 between China and ASEAN (Tønnesson, 2005, p.223).

Throughout the negotiations, the two parties identified conceptual gaps on the on the South China Sea. While ASEAN mentioned the "Disputed Area" to refer to the Spratlys and the Paracels and emphasised the respect for the freedom of navigation and air traffic, China specified Nansha Island as the disputed area, without mentioning the Paracels (Tønnesson, 2005, p.224). The joint Declaration indicates the mutual recognition of the need for cooperation, but also clearly indicated the distinction between "we" and "others" as to ASEAN and China. At the same time however, given the tradition and condition of ASEAN, it is highly unlikely that the South China Sea would be reframed as "Southeast Asian Sea" to exclude China from it.

The notion of culture and hanging together were not absent in the official document on the South China Sea. For instance, the Chair of the 18th ASEAN Summit in 2011, stated that "we therefore reaffirm the principle of ASEAN, on the basis of unity and solidarity, to coordinate and to endeavour to develop common positions in its dialogues with its Dialogue Partners."

Much earlier than this, the 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea stipulated that "wishing to promote the spirit of kinship, friendship and harmony among our peoples who share similar Asian traditions and heritage." Thus, the South China Sea is presented as a regional area which ties the relevant states together. It also shows that Southeast Asian states are distinguished from "Others" in terms of tradition, kinship, heritage and culture.

Table 1. ASEAN Norm in the Major Official Documents on the South China Sea

	Non-interference Sovereignty ,democracy, human right, non-use of force	**Consensus Informality, consultation, hanging together**	**Motivation / Culture**	**Actors /mechanism**
ASEAN Declaration On The South China Sea Manila, Philippines, 22 July 1992	EMPHASIZE the necessity to resolve all sovereignty and jurisdictional issues pertaining to the South China Sea by peaceful means, without resort to force;		WISHING to promote the spirit of kinship, friendship and harmony among our peoples who share similar Asian traditions and heritage;	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as the basis for establishing a code of international conduct over the South China Sea;
DECLARATION ON THE CONDUCT OF PARTIES IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA-2002	resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force, through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea;	The Parties concerned reaffirm that the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea would further promote peace and stability in the region and agree to work, on the basis of consensus, towards the eventual attainment of this objective.		
Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC. 2011		decision to implement concrete measures or activities of the DOC should be based on consensus among parties concerned . voluntary basis and a step-by-step approach promote dialogue and consultation		

Table 2. ASEAN Norms in the Official Documents on the South China Sea

Documents	Non-interference Peaceful resolution	Consensus and Consul tation	Identity/ culture	Co-existence of norms[10]
2011 Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Strengthening Defence Cooperation of ASEAN in the Global Community to Face New Challenges	V			U
2011 Chair's Statement of the 19th ASEAN Summit	V			U
2011 Chair's Statement of the 18th ASEAN Summit	V			
2011 Press Release ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat				
2010 Chairman's Statement of the 17th ASEAN Summit	V			U
2010 Chairman's Statement of the 1st ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus)	V			U
2010 Chairman's Statement of the 17th Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			U
2010 ASEAN Chairman's Statement on the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences+1 Sessions	V			
2010 Chairman's Statement of the 13th ASEAN-China Summit	V	V		
2010 Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2011-2015)	V	V		
2010 Chairman's Statement of the 16th ASEAN Summit	V			
2010 Joint Communique of the 43rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting	V			U
2009 Chairman's Statement of the 12th ASEAN-China Summit				
2009 Chairman's Statement of the 16th Regional Forum	V			U
2009 Joint Communiqué of the 42nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting	V			U
2009 Blueprint on the ASEAN Political-Security Community	V			
2008 Chairman's Statement of the 15th ASEAN Regional Forum	V			U
2008 Joint Communiqué of the 41st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
2007 Chairman's Statement of the 11th ASEAN-China Summit				U
2007 ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting - Three-Year Work Programme				
2007 Chairman's Statement 14th ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
2007 Joint Communiqué of the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
2007 Chairman's Statement of the 110th ASEAN-China Summit.	V			

[10] C: the Charter of United Nations, F: the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence , U: the the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea , T : the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

2007 Chairperson's Statement of the 12th ASEAN Summit	V			
2006 Joint Statement of ASEAN-China Commemorative Summit	V	V		
2006 Chairman's Statement of the 13th ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
2006 Joint Communiqué of the 39th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
2005 Chairman's Statement of the 11th ASEAN Summit	V			
2005 Chairman's Statement of the 9th ASEAN-China Summit	V			
2005 Report of the ASEAN-China Eminent Persons Group	V	V		U
2005 Chairman's Statement of the 12th Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
2005 Joint Communiqué of the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
2004 Press Release of the ASEAN-China Senior Officials Meeting on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea	V			
2004 Terms of Reference of the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea	V	V		F/ U C/T
2004 Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity	V	V		
2004 Vientiane Action Programme	V			
2004 Chairman's Statement of the 10th ASEAN Summit	V			T
2004 Chairman's Statement of the 11th Meeting of ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
2004 Joint Communiqué of the 37th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
2003 Press Statement of the Chairperson of the ASEAN+China Summit, ASEAN+Japan Summit, ASEAN+Republic of Korea Summit and ASEAN+India Summit	V			U (role of UN)
2003 Chairman's Statement of the 10th Meeting of ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
2003 Joint Communique of the 36th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
2002 Press Statement by the Chairman of the 8th ASEAN Summit, 6th ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+China Summit	V			C U
2002 DECLARATION ON THE CONDUCT OF PARTIES IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA	V	V		F/T
2002 Chairman's Statement in the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			U
2002 Joint Communiqué of 35th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
2001 Press Statement by the Chairman of the 7th ASEAN Summit and the Three ASEAN+1 Summits	V			
2001 Chairman's Statement of the 8th ASEAN Regional Forum…	V			U
2001 Joint Communiqué of the 34th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U

2000 Chairman's Statement of the 7th Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			U
2000 Joint Communiqué of the 33rd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
1999 Chairman's Press Statement on ASEAN 3rd Informal Summit	V			
1999 Chairman's Statement of the 6th Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
1999 Joint Communiqué of the 32nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
1998 Ha Noi Plan of Action	V			
1998 Chairman's Statement of the 5th Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
1998 Joint Communiqué of the 31st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
1997 Statement of the Meeting of Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN and the President of the People's Republic of China	V			
1997 Chairman's Statement of the 4th Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
1997 Joint Communiqué of the 30th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			U
1996 Press Statement of the 1st Informal ASEAN Heads of Government Meeting	V			U
1996 Chairman's Statement of the 3rd Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			U
1996 Joint Communiqué of the 29th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			
1995 Bangkok Summit Declaration	V			U
1995 Chairman's Statement of the 2nd Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum	V			
1995 Joint Communiqué of the 28th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			
1994 Joint Communiqué of the 27th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			
1993 Joint Communiqué of the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting .	V			
1992 Joint Communiqué for the 25th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting	V			T
1992 ASEAN DECLARATION ON THE SOUTH CHINA SEA	V			T

Agent problem in the South China Sea

Recent developments in the South China Sea appeared more with despair. The standoff happened on 10 April 2012 between China and the Philippines at the Scarborough Shoal where both states claimed sovereignty. Attempts by the Philippines navy warship to arrest Chinese fishermen of poaching in the area was disrupted by Chinese Surveillance Vessels. China dispatched the patrol ship after the Philippines decided to maintain naval ship in the area which resulted in the replacement of the Philippines warship with a smaller coast guard vessel. The

Philippines accused China of escalating tension with an assertive move.[11]

The standoff situation and growing military concern effectively deepened the US-Philippines relations. The Philippines conducted military exercises with the U.S. and further sought the support of the latter by providing military hardware including patrol vessels and aircraft, radar systems and coast watch stations during the standoff. The rather limited powers of the Philippines military largely explains the strategic alliance with the U.S. The Philippines Foreign Secretary, Alberto del Rosario tended to support this view when he noted that “the Philippines cannot compete with China militarily and was seeking a diplomatic solution” (*Jakarta Post*, April 20, 2012).

There is little disagreement that China has adopted a rather aggressive approach against the claimants, in more recent times. However, from China’s perspective, the country is interested in regional peace and stability by using marine surveillance ships rather than warship, which prevents any unnecessary accidental clash among naval ship (Wang 2012). Regional claimants, in particular Vietnam and the Philippines, are blamed by China for their aggressive stance. The U.S. has actively denounced China for escalating tensions in the region, as the Obama administration has made a change in its Asia policy, through the so called a “pivot” to Asia. A Chinese military officer argues that, "China now faces a whole pack of aggressive neighbours headed by Vietnam and the Philippines and also a set of menacing challengers headed by the United States, forming their encirclement from outside the region."[12] Also, another military officer, Zhu Chenghu, particularly argued that, territorial claims by the Philippines as well as Vietnam are "unreasonable and illegal", based on China’s historical interpretation, and blamed the U.S. for "meddling" and prolonging the current tension. (*The Star*, July 26, 2012).

During an ASEAN-related meeting in 2012, in Phnom Penh, the South China Dispute was a controversy among the parties concerned. There was great concern whether the code of conduct could be agreed upon in order to avert clashes over the disputed area. ASEAN foreign ministers agreed on the Six-point Principles on the South China Sea in July 2012.[13] It did not cover issues

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[11] On the event, the Philippines Foreign Affairs spokesperson Raul Hernandez indicated that, "we understand that the world is watching, and the issue at hand has a wider implication on how China is asserting its territorial claims, which have no basis in international law." (*Jakarta Post*, April 20, 2012) http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/04/20/philippines-says-new-china-ship-aggravates-sea-row.html

[12] The officer is Xu Zhirong, a deputy chief captain with China Marine Surveillance, interview with the June edition of China Eye, a publication of the Hong Kong-based China Energy Fund Committee (The Star, July 26, 2012) http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/7/26/worldupdates/2012-07-25T210752Z_1_BRE86O1P5_RTROPTT_0_UK-CHINA-SOUTHCHINASEA&sec=Worldupdates

[13] ASEAN’s Six-Points Principles are as follows: 1) the full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2002); 2) the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2011); 3) the early conclusion of a Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea;4) the full respect of the universally recognised principles of International Law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); 5) the continued exercise of self-restraint and non-use of

of bilateral mechanisms which China has long favoured as a way to resolve disputes with related parties, rather than multilateral or regional ones.

It is worth noting that the Six-point principles are not the only principles enshrined in the previous agreements. It was rather the response of ASEAN after it unprecedentedly failed to issue a joint communique at the foreign ministers meeting in Phnom. There has been concerns over the role of Cambodia as ASEAN Chair in 2012. Diplomats in the region accused Cambodia of being shadowed by China's influence to prevent ASEAN from putting the South China Sea issue on the agenda. However, it can be said that, Cambodia's "neutral" stance was to avoid endangering peace. Immediately after the fiasco, Indonesia's foreign minister, Marty Natalegawa, visitedtwo related countries, including Vietnam and the Philippines, which called shuttle diplomacy to make collective views on the issue.

Responding to the Six-Point Principles, a Chinese Foreign Ministry official is reported to have said that China is willing to work together with the group's members to implement the DOC and "open to consultations with the ASEAN on the conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea."[14] It indicated China's persistent intention to use bilateralism in dealing with the South China Sea issues. It can be seen that despite the increasing dichotomy among the ASEAN members, the ASEAN norms served as a normative structure. However, the agent problem seems to be a more significant challenge to practice these norms.

Despite the issues surrounding the Six-Point Principles, Indonesia, which has played the de facto leadership role in the region was not able to end the escalating conflicts among the ASEAN member states. For instance, the Cambodian ambassador to the Philippines was summoned, as he accused the Philippines and Vietnam of conducting "dirty politics" by pressing ASEAN to take the South China Sea issue as a top ASEAN agenda.[15]

Along with the conflicts between the Philippines and China in Scaborough Shoal, there was another escalating dispute between Vietnam and China over the latter's international bid for oil exploration in disputed area. Vietnam's declaration of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Spratly and Paracel islands by endorsing a maritime law in June 2012 resulted in China's countermeasures. China declared a Sansha city in the disputed area with its army garrison. In order to contain China, the US has more actively engaged with its allies in the region including Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam, by enhancing military cooperation. The

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force by all parties; and 6) the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of International Law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is agreed that the principles should be consistent with the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (1976) and the ASEAN Charter (2008). http://www.cfr.org/southeast-asia/aseans-six-point-principles-south-china-sea/p28915

[14] http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-07/21/c_131729932.htm

[15] ASEAN in crisis: Divided we stagger, *The Economist*, August 18, 2012. http://www.economist.com/node/21560585.

Philippines and Vietnam issued a joint statement on strategic partnership in 2015, which indicated strong political will for close cooperation on the South China Sea. These developments placed ASEAN in a more difficult position to play a role in easing tensions among the related parties with no improvement in sight.

The recent decision by the Permanent Court Arbitration (PCA) on the South China Sea in July 2016 seemingly appears to be the peak of confrontation rather than a reconciliation. The PCA ruled that China's claims over the South China Sea had no legal and historical basis and China had violated the sovereign rights of the Philippines. It was not surprising to see China's refusal of the decision, as it already excluded itself from the compulsory dispute-settlement proceedings of the UNCLOS. More interestingly, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Vientiane in July, after the ruling, has not witnessed the serious conflicts among the member states. The PCA ruling which signalled China was not mentioned in the joint communique of the AMM but only its serious concerns on recent and ongoing developments. Instead of exchanging fierce words, ASEAN and China were able to produce a Joint Statement on the Full and Effective Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea. The joint statement states that the parties undertake to resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to threat or use of force, through friendly consultations and negotiations by sovereign states directly concerned, and agree to work on the basis of consensus (ASEAN 2016). Since the ruling of the PCA, it seems the related parties have exercised self-restraint by avoiding provocative and assertive reactions.

Conclusion

The ASEAN centrality is outcome of complex combination of material and non-material factors in international relations in East Asia. The ascendency of China as a regional and global power has been the main reason behind the dynamics of regional order. While ASEAN remains a middle-power as a collective group, it found itself facing internal and external challenges. The re-engagement of the United States with Asia, the long lasting rivalry between China and Japan, and the emergence of traditional and non-traditional security issues in the region could possibly weaken the cohesiveness of ASEAN. The South China Sea dispute has increasing become a political and security threat to regional peace. ASEAN and China have however kept the issue under control. This was possible by forming a normative structure, by adopting ASEAN centrality and norms. Forming a normative structure does not necessarily mean the practice and implementation of norms, as they remain untested.

The possible dismantling of ASEAN unity would be the most serious challenge for the ASEAN member states in the long term. At present, member states must find effective avenues to address emerging threats. Averting potential clashes over the South China Sea is probably the most important matter. There have been continuous efforts to build a regional framework for peaceful resolution of the South China Sea dispute between and among ASEAN member states and China. These efforts were derived from the ASEAN norms which evolved into the AEAN centrality.

China's approach, which reflects the complexity of its political and economic strategy and other ideal factors would add weight on one side of the dichotomous grouping. On the matter of norms, the symmetry among the members is a crucial factor for maintaining or changing a certain norm between them. The widening asymmetry among ASEAN members in this context, and China's conservative way of subscribing and practising the non-interference principle certainly will eventually aggravate the agent problem of ASEAN centrality.

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[Session 3]

[3-1]

DUST AND SANDSTORMS IN NORTHEAST ASIA: POTENTIAL FOR ENHANCING ASEAN CENTRALITY

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ABSTRACT

Seasonal dust and sandstorm (DSS) events are a serious air pollution issue that is currently affecting the Northeast Asian region, the countries of China, South Korea and Japan in particular. While countries in this region has recognized the transboundary nature of this problem and have made some attempt at cooperation over the issue, this cooperation has been sparse, and spread among several disjointed bodies. Recognizing this, scholars have recommended two options for the improvement of the current DSS cooperation in Northeast Asia: entrusting one mechanism to play a leading role in organically interconnecting existing mechanisms, or the launch of an umbrella mechanism to do the same. This paper argues that the launch of a new mechanism is the most appropriate way forward.

Adjacent to Northeast Asia, the Southeast Asian region is also facing a similar case of air pollution, that of transboundary haze. Unlike Northeast Asia, regional haze cooperation in Southeast Asia has generally been coordinated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). While the haze in Southeast Asia still persists, indicating that the ASEAN haze regime cannot be considered completely successful just yet, the ASEAN model of haze cooperation does contain some lessons that may be informative to Northeast Asia in DSS mitigation.

In consideration of this, the paper proposes the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Environment Ministers Meeting as an existing framework that can serve as an umbrella mechanism for the reconfiguration of cooperation over DSS. Apart from being the most appropriate forum to enable learning and the sharing of best practices between the regions, other benefits to such a configuration are: (1) the subsuming of DSS cooperation within the APT framework should be able to resolve many of the

political tensions that have thus far been limiting cooperation over DSS, (2) the adoption of the ASEAN haze model beyond the Southeast Asian region could serve as a confidence-building measure among ASEAN member countries to continue to support regional haze mitigation efforts, and (3) expanding APT cooperation beyond the political and economic realm would serve to enhance ASEAN centrality for the benefit of the immediate Southeast Asian region, and also for the larger East Asian region in general.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the DSS problem in Northeast Asia, covering its cause and effects, cooperative mechanisms currently in place, and the challenges to effective cooperation over DSS in this region. The second part then turns to transboundary haze in Southeast Asia, covering cause and effects, cooperation under ASEAN, and also highlighting the differences between the ASEAN haze regime and DSS cooperation. The final part of this paper focuses on the ATP as an umbrella mechanism for DSS cooperation moving forward, particularly on how this would benefit both DSS cooperation in Northeast Asia, and ASEAN centrality as a whole. The scope of analysis of this paper will cover the period after the conclusion of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)/Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Project on Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms in 2005, up till present times.

INTRODUCTION

Seasonal dust and sandstorm (DSS) events are a serious air pollution issue that is currently affecting the Northeast Asian region, the countries of China, South Korea and Japan in particular[1]. While countries in this region has recognized the transboundary nature of this problem and have made some attempt at cooperation over the issue, this cooperation has been sparse, and spread among several disjointed bodies. Recognizing this, scholars have recommended two options for the improvement of the current DSS cooperation in Northeast Asia: entrusting one mechanism to play a leading role in organically interconnecting existing mechanisms, or the launch of an umbrella mechanism to do the same. This paper argues that the launch of a new mechanism is the most appropriate way forward.

[1] While the extent of the DSS includes other countries like Mongolia and North Korea, this paper is limiting its geographic scope to China, South Korea and Japan, because these countries are the ones that have been comparatively more actively involved in DSS cooperation thus far.

Adjacent to Northeast Asia, the Southeast Asian region is also facing a similar case of air pollution, that of transboundary haze. Unlike Northeast Asia, regional haze cooperation in Southeast Asia has generally been coordinated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). While the haze in Southeast Asia still persists, indicating that the ASEAN haze regime cannot be considered completely successful just yet, the ASEAN model of haze cooperation does contain some lessons that may be informative to Northeast Asia in DSS mitigation.

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[2] This project was a preliminary investigation into the DSS issue, and has been credited for inspiring existing regimes like the NEASPEC and TEMM to kick start first regional cooperation with the aim of countering the DSS problem in the Northeast Asian region (Kim, 2014, p. 159).

DUST AND SANDSTORMS IN NORTHEAST ASIA

DSS in the Northeast Asian region originate primarily in arid areas along the Yellow River and deserts such as Inner Mongolia in China and the Gobi Desert in northern China and Mongolia (Jung, 2016, p. 2). It is a phenomenon in which soil and mineral particles are picked up by the wind in these arid regions, and are carried to a height of several thousand meters (Yamamoto, 2007, p. 45). Westerly winds then carry these particles towards other parts of China, the Korean Peninsula and Japan, and sometimes even reach the United States of America (Kim, 2009, p. 23). It is known locally in China as 'yellow sand', 'hwangsa' in the Korean Peninsula, and 'kosa' in Japan (Futrell, 2007, p. 57). The phenomenon is often observed from early spring through to early summer (March to May) when low atmospheric pressure passes over Northeast Asia. When it occurs, the sky fills with a yellow haze (Yamamoto, 2007, pp. 45-48).

DSS episodes are not new. Chinese scholars reported the first major dust storm in 1150B.C. while South Korean scholars wrote of 'dust falling like rain' in 174A.D. In Japan, DSS was commonly reported from the 15th century onwards (Futrell, 2007, p. 57). While DSS is originally a natural phenomenon, anthropogenic causes have rapidly expanded the desertification of source areas, resulting in increased frequency and intensity of these storms (Kim, 2014, p. 159, Yamamoto, 2007, p. 45). These include population growth, urbanization, and unsustainable land-use like overgrazing by livestock, deforestation, the gathering of fuel-wood, and mismanagement of water resources. These anthropogenic activities affect the local topography, vegetation and snow ground cover, surface roughness, soil moisture and soil particle size, making these lands more susceptible to wind erosion (Jung, 2016, p. 2, Yamamoto, 2007, pp. 46-47). Gravity causes the relatively large particles to fall quickly, but winds can carry smaller particles (with diameters as small as 4μ) over great distances. These smaller particles have the potential to absorb anthropogenic air pollutants during transport (Yamamoto, 2007, p. 48).

DSS particles have significance impacts on human health, the environment, and the economy. In terms of health, DSS causes respiratory, dermatological, and ophthalmological diseases, and even death (Kim, 2009, p. 23, Yamamoto, 2007, p. 50). In terms of the economy, bad episodes of DSS can contaminate food, damage buildings and land, and paralyze infrastructure such as transportation hubs, communication networks, and power and water supply systems (Jung, 2016, p. 2, Kim, 2014, p. 159). The bigger particles have caused collapsed buildings, buried railways, fallen electric poles and trees,

and buried fields and orchard resulting in agricultural losses close to the source in China (Yamamoto, 2007, p. 50). The smaller particles reaching South Korea and Japan have caused particulate matter (PM) concentrations of up to more than 20 times the environmental standard there (Jung, 2016, p. 2). These smaller particles can penetrate lung tissue more easily and cause more long-lasting health effects. Bad DSS episodes have also caused thousands of schools to be closed, flights cancelled, and factories to cease operations. In South Korea alone, USD 3-5 billion of financial damages are incurred per year due to the DSS (Jung, 2016, p. 2, Kim, 2014, p. 159). The technologically advanced countries of South Korea and Japan face a further unique threat of damage caused to precision machines and electronics which require very clean conditions for optimum operation (Kim, 2014. p. 159, Futrell, 2007, p. 58).

While the Chinese government has been working to reverse desertification for decades, their efforts have been met with mixed success. Their tree planting and soil stabilization campaigns suffered from inadequate funding and poor implementation, including planting unsuitable tree species, poor site selection, and insufficient care of the trees. In some places, these problems have made the areas even drier. The central government has passed a number of laws, including the Law on Combating Desertification Prevention and Control in 2001. However, the lack of specificity on how the implement this law has limited its effectiveness (Futrell, 2007, p. 59).

Cooperation over Dust and Sandstorms

South Korea, the major recipient of DSS pollution from China, was one of the early movers in engaging China to combat DSS pollution. South Korea established bilateral agreements on environmental cooperation with China as early as 1993, focusing on forest plantation projects in China to combat deforestation and desertification, and joint observation stations and monitoring points of DSS based in China. From this starting point, cooperation between the countries affected by DSS is presently proceeding along two main axes: multilateral bodies and bilateral initiatives (Jung, 2016, pp. 5-7). The two main multilateral bodies that include DSS in their remit are the North-East Asian Sub-regional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) and the Tripartite Environment Ministers' Meeting (TEMM). Notably, both of these initiatives were initially proposed by South Korea (Jung, 2016, pp. 5-7).

The NEASPEC was established in 1993 to promote comprehensive environmental cooperation in the region and includes six member countries (China, Japan, Mongolia, Russia, South Korea and North South Korea) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia pacific (UNESCAP). Apart from DSS, the NEASPEC is also involved in dealing with other environmental issues including nature conservation, marine protection, and also establishing eco-efficient partnerships between the member states (Jung, 2016, p. 5). One of its major projects involves the implementation of the regional master plan for the prevention and control of DSS (Kim, 2014, p. 153).

The TEMM in turn has held annual meetings between China, Japan and South Korea since 1999, and has identified nine priority areas, with DSS as one of them. With respect to DSS in particular, the TMM launched a large-scale joint project under a Tripartite Director-General Meeting (TDGM) on DSS. The activities under this project included establishing monitoring and early warning networks, and providing scientific knowledge for decision-makers (Jung, 2016, p. 7). While the monitoring and early warning networks have stalled (Kim, 2009, p. 29), there has been some progress on the scientific research cooperation, with the three ministers agreeing to promote systematic research cooperation and build a network to examine technical issues related to DSS (Kim, 2009, p. 58). This culminated with the creation of the Joint Research Steering Committee on DSS (Kim, 2014, p. 160).

Japan has also engaged bilaterally with China over DSS, when the Sino-Japanese Friendship Centre for Environmental Protection was established in 1996. The Centre has initiated various DSS related research, including on-site studies to ascertain transport routes and measurement methods, and also a joint Aeolian Dust Experiment on Climate project (Kim, 2009, p. 58). Like South Korea, Japan has also spent an enormous amount of money on combating desertification in China (Futrell, 2007, p. 59).

Challenges to Cooperation in Northeast Asia

Unfortunately, the performance of these multilateral and bilateral efforts have been far below expectations (Kim, 2009, p. 19). Scholars have noted that the NEASPEC has not succeeded in showing any great leadership in turning the Northeast Asian region into a hotbed for environmental solutions and cooperation (Kim, 2014, p. 153). Furthermore, the limitations of TEMM are serious, not least in terms of information sharing activities, where guidelines and formats have not been agreed upon. This had resulted in countries only taking voluntary and spontaneous actions to combat DSS,

not sustained ones. The TEMM also still does not have any agreements on specific responsibilities and action plans (Kim, 2014, p. 155).

Also, due to the broad mandates of both these multilateral bodies, the work of NEASPEC and TEMM tend to overlap with each other, and with other bilateral initiatives, which has led to inefficiency due to a duplication of efforts and inconsistency of approaches (Jung, 2016, pp. 6-8). There is a dire lack of a coordination mechanism that can eliminate such project overlap (Kim, 2014, p. 150). For example, both the NEASPEC and TEMM have a similar 'master plan' and 'large-scale joint project' to address DSS. This has been made worse by the lack of communication between ministries, both at the local and regional scale. While both multilateral initiatives were initiated by South Korea, NEASPEC was initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while TEMM was initiated by the Ministry of Environment. And within NEASPEC, there is an inconsistency of responsible ministries within the different countries. While the Foreign Ministry is responsible in the case of South Korea, responsibility in China and Japan lies within the Environment Ministry (Jung, 2016, pp. 6-8).

Northeast Asian observers have also identified four other important elements that are currently absent from Northeast Asian cooperation over DSS: (1) a mechanism for policy dialogues, (2) a mechanism for translating science-based input into initiatives, (3) channels for engagement with related stakeholders, and (4) an atmosphere of shared ownership. Firstly, sovereignty concerns have discouraged open dialogue on policy between the Northeast Asian countries (explained further below). Secondly, despite the establishment of a of a Joint Research Committee under the TEMM, there is still little scientific consensus over DSS, hindering effective translation into policy or other initiatives (Kim, 2014, p. 150). Thirdly, the initiatives thus far have been very much focused on the elite governmental level, and have not made much effort to establish relationships with other actors, such as academia, the business community, or environmental NGOs (Kim, 2009, pp. 32-34). And fourthly, as detailed above, the historical competition and distrust between the three countries have prevented the development of a feeling of shared ownership over the DSS mechanisms (Kim, 2014, p. 160).

Due to these limitations, progress in Northeast Asia on DSS cooperation has been generally been slow, consultative, and mainly focusing around information sharing. They have failed to produce concrete outcomes which would lead to the improvement of the DSS situation (Jung, 2016, pp. 8-9). These limitations can be traced back to two points that are descriptive of Northeast Asia: under-institutionalization and disjointedness (Kim, 2014, p. 150).

Under-institutionalization has been caused by historical mistrust and power rivalry as a result from the legacy of the Cold War (Kim, 2014, p. 150), where neighbouring countries of different ideological blocs competed and confronted each other. This situation caused suspicion and distrust even in the less political areas of environmental cooperation, and now the vestiges of that confrontational relationship remain in the form of rivalry (Kim, 2009, p. 29). As detailed in the previous section, South Korea has been the country most actively pushing for the intensification of multilateral cooperation between the tripartite countries to address DSS. This is because it has a strong incentive to pursue binding environmental cooperation that would impose some constraints on its two powerful neighbours (Kim, 2014, pp. 151-152). However, comparatively greater powers of Japan and China are not as eager for such multilateral cooperation (Kim, 2014, p. 149).

Japan has always been is particularly cautious about regional programmes that consist of Northeast Asian countries alone, for fear of antagonizing its ally and defence provider the United States (Hidetaka, 2005, p. 218). China's lack of eagerness in this respect is also related to national interest. China's main focus is not on the consequences of environmental damage in neighbouring countries, but rather on its own domestic environmental problems. Thus, while China is eager to take a leading role in economic cooperation in the region, it is rather inactive in environmental cooperation (Jung, 2016, p. 8).

Disjointedness is a result of a lacking of systematic linkages. Instead of prioritizing overarching institutional arrangements, Northeast Asian institutions have evolved in decentralized, overlapping and sometimes contradictory regionalism (evidenced by the various overlapping but disconnected mechanisms to address DSS as described in the previous section). This has led to marginal adjustments, insistence on state sovereignty, and a preference for bilateralism (Kim, 2014, p. 150). For example, China prefers bilateral engagement with Japan and Korea because it believes this will enable it to have more leverage in negotiations. Japan also regards the multilateral framework as a redundant form of development aid which Japan has already been actively involved in bilaterally (Kim, 2014, p. 151). This especially obvious when it comes to financial contributions, for example the NEASPEC Core Fund where Japanese contribution has been steadily declining year to year (Kim, 2014, pp. 150-153).

As a direct result of under-institutionalization and disjointedness, cooperation in the Northeast Asian region over DSS is lacking in terms of binding regimes (Kim, 2014, p. 151). The situation over DSS in Northeast Asia can still be defined as a regulatory 'nonregime'; a "transnational policy arena characterized by the absence of multilateral agreements for policy coordination among states" (Dimitrov et al. 2007, in Kim, 2014, p. 148). There is no regional environmental convention in Northeast Asia related to DSS that establishes a long-term vision coupled with binding regulations to achieve it. China is generally reluctant to commit to binding conventions over DSS, because it fears that it will be saddled with disproportionate responsibility due to the origin of DSS from within its territory (Jung, 2016, p. 9), and also it is afraid these agreements would supersede their sovereign control over environmental decision making (Kim, 2014, p. 151).

The successful case of the European experience in resolving transboundary pollution through the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) has often been offered up as a potential model for cooperation over DSS in Northeast Asia. However, the CLRTAP experience is not likely to be transplanted successfully to this region due to substantially different political and economic systems between the region's countries, and various levels of economic development (situations not faced by European countries). Furthermore, unlike Europe there is little political empathy among Northeast Asian countries due to historical memories (Kim, 2014, pp. 148-150). Hence, Northeast Asia must look elsewhere for a more appropriate model for DSS cooperation; possibly the transboundary haze model under ASEAN in Southeast Asia.

TRANSBOUNDARY HAZE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The transboundary problem of haze in Southeast Asia is strikingly similar to the DSS problem in Northeast Asia, in both cause and effects. Like the Northeast Asian DSS, transboundary haze in Southeast Asia also originates largely from one country (the lesser-developed Indonesia) and travels across borders to reach neighbouring countries in the region (particularly the richer and more developed countries of Singapore and Malaysia).

Haze is a result of smoke emitted from peat and forest fires. While fires have been naturally occurring during the dry seasons (around August to October) in Indonesia for generations, these fires have grown in severity and intensity over the years due to anthropogenic activities (Mayer, 2006, pp. 202-203). Disturbances to the landscape, either on a small scale by swidden farmers, or on a large scale

due to commercial plantation activity, have caused the drying out of the land, making it more susceptible to fires. Fires are also sometimes intentionally set as a fast and cheap way to clear land (Colfer, 2002, p. 318). Sometimes these fires go out of control, resulting in a belching of excessive smoke into the atmosphere which is then carried by the wind to the rest of the region. Similarly to China, internal shortcomings of laws, governance and implementation coupled with a culture of corruption have limited the effectiveness of the various internal measures taken by the Indonesian government to address the haze at a national level (Varkkey, 2016).

Like the DSS, transboundary haze also has serious impacts on human, health, the environment, and the economy. Bad haze episodes can affect the economies of up to six Southeast Asian countries, and 75 million people at a time (Mayer, 2006, pp. 202-203). The minute particles (as small as 2.5μ) also easily penetrate lung tissue of those exposed to the haze, causing respiratory, dermatology and ophthalmology problems, and even deaths. It casts a gray pall over the atmosphere, blocking sunlight and affecting agriculture by reducing the rate of photosynthesis among plants. Reduced visibility also affects transportation systems (cancelled flights and closed airports), and tourism numbers to the region typically fall during the haze months (*Today*, 2006). Indonesian living closes to the fires suffer the brunt of the haze pollution, from direct health impacts, economic losses due to out-of-control fires, and loss in man-hours due to low visibility or sickness. Recent figures by the World Bank has estimated that the haze costs Indonesia about USD16 billion or 2% of their yearly GDP (World Bank Group, 2016). The haze has caused affected governments to declare repeated emergencies at worst hit areas, closing schools for days on end and restricting outdoor activities (The Sun Daily, 2013).

Cooperation over Transboundary Haze

Unlike the DSS however, regional cooperation over transboundary haze has been relatively more streamlined under the ASEAN framework. ASEAN as an organization began to acknowledge haze as a regional concern in 1985, with the adoption of the Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, which specifically referred to air pollution and 'transfrontier environmental effects'. Following this, the first Workshop on Transboundary Pollution and Haze in ASEAN Countries was held in Balikpapan, Indonesia in September 1992, specifically addressing the haze as an individual problem in the region (ASEAN Secretariat, 1995, pp. 1-5).

At the suggestion of the ASEAN Chair of Environmental Affairs in 1997, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Haze was established. This marked the beginning of the specific regionalism of haze mitigation at the ASEAN level, with the haze being given a special status of importance in the organization, separate from other transboundary environmental issues. The Meeting formulated the Regional Haze Action Plan (RHAP) under the HTTF to provide further commitments and detail to the Cooperation Plan (Evans, 2001). In the spirit of the ASEAN Way, the RHAP was designed to overcome the haze problem with concerns of culture, economy and individual governments in mind. It was a soft-law, non-binding instrument which stood on three pillars: the spirit of voluntarism, the no-fault finding rule, and the offering of assistance based on capability and expertise (Florano, 2004, p. 5). Under the RHAP, member parties were obliged to develop their own guidelines, plans, and other measures to prevent and monitor fires that could cause transboundary haze pollution.

In 1998, the ASEAN Summit in Vietnam issued the Hanoi Plan of Action that called for full implementation of the RHAP by 2001 (Yahaya, 2000, p. 46). It established a mechanism to pool fire-fighting resources for regional operations (Tay, 2008, p. 60). Specifically, it established two Sub-Regional Fire-Fighting Arrangements (SRFA) for Borneo and the Sumatra/Riau provinces in Indonesia under the RHAP to facilitate the movement of resources from one member country to the other in order to mitigate the haze problem (Yahaya, 2000, p. 48). To complement the SRFA, a SRFA Legal Group was established in 2000 to examine the legislative and enforcement issues in the region related to curbing forest and land fires (Jones, 2006, p. 437).

Up till this point, member states generally avoided legally binding agreements on environmental and haze matters (Elliott, 2003, p. 32-40). However, the 1997-1998 haze episode, which was the most severe the region had seen, sparked renewed outcry from the public and civil society. This backlash prompted member states to agree to establish a legally binding mechanism to address haze and appease civil society. Therefore, in 2001 the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze (ATHP) was proposed to provide legally binding support for the RHAP (Florano, 2003, pp. 132-133). Hence, the ATHP is notable for being one of the few legally binding ASEAN environmental agreements to be entered into force (ASEAN Secretariat, 2004).

The Agreement's stated objective, under Article 2, is 'to prevent and monitor transboundary haze pollution as a result of land and/or forest fires which should be mitigated, through concerted national efforts and intensified regional and international cooperation'. The treaty upheld states' sovereign

right to exploit their own resources as they see fit, in the pursuit of their own developmental and environmental policies (ASEAN Secretariat, 2002, p. 4), among other international law principles (Article 3) (Florano, 2003, pp. 132-133). Article 5 of the ATHP also called for the establishment of an ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Haze in Indonesia, and a supporting ASEAN Haze Fund, for the purposes of 'facilitating cooperation and coordination among the parties in managing the impact of land and/or forest fires in particular haze pollution arising from such fires' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2002, p. 6).

With the entry into force of the ATHP in 2003, the Working Group on Haze was elevated to the ministerial level, with a Conference of the Parties held on an annual basis. Under the working group were the Northern and Southern Ministerial Steering Committees (MSC), supported by their respective Technical Working Groups. The Technical Working Groups were tasked to develop the Comprehensive ASEAN Plan of Action (POA) on Transboundary Haze Pollution (ASEAN Secretariat, 2007, p. 6). The resulting POA included a cooperation mechanism for members to help Indonesia prevent haze by controlling fires, creating early warning systems, offering mutual assistance, and sharing technology and information (Khalik, 2006). The ATHP obtained full ratification by all 10 ASEAN member states with the final ratification by Singapore in September 2014 (Soeriaatmadja, 2014).

The ASEAN Transboundary Haze Regime

Another unfortunate similarity that ASEAN haze cooperation shares with cooperation over DSS is that ASEAN cooperation over haze has not been able to conclusively bring haze episodes to an end within the region. However, while it has its shortcomings, may scholars have praised ASEAN's efforts to foster cooperation over this tricky issue. For example, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hailed the ASEAN Way of haze collaboration (enshrining sovereignty and non-interference) as a pioneering achievement that could become a global model for handling transboundary issues (Severino, 2006, pp. 112-114). Haze cooperation within ASEAN can definitely be said to be more institutionalized compared to its Northeast Asian counterpart. While DSS cooperation is still at a 'nonregime' stage (Kim, 2014, p. 148), ASEAN haze cooperation is well on its way to being a full-fledged regulatory regime.

Right off the bat, in terms of the terms of reference to their respective phenomena, it becomes clear that there is more consensus among ASEAN member countries compared to the Northeast Asian countries. 'Haze' is a term collectively accepted and used by all ASEAN member states, and is formally defined at the ASEAN level as "sufficient smoke, dust, moisture, and vapour suspended in air to impair visibility". It is transboundary when "its density and extent is so great at the source that it remains at measurable levels after crossing into another country's airspace" (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008). In contrast, there are no standardized terms of reference or definition of the DSS in Northeast Asia, with each country referring to it in its own localized form.

As mentioned above, observers of environmental cooperation have identified four criteria that are lacking in the DSS cooperation mechanisms: (1) a mechanism for policy dialogues, (2) a mechanism for translating science-based input into initiatives, (3) channels for engagement with related stakeholders, and (4) an atmosphere of shared ownership. All four of these criteria are in fact present in the ASEAN haze regime. Firstly, in terms of strong policy dialogues, Article 9 of the ATHP calls for the development of 'appropriate policies to curb activities that may lead to land and/or forest fires' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2002, p. 8). This gives ASEAN the capacity to advise on appropriate fire and haze mitigation policies in ratifying states. Indonesia, which has recently ratified the ATHP, will now be subject to such policy dialogues, which should help improve its own internal regulatory shortcomings.

Secondly, in terms of the science-policy interface, the ASEAN haze regime also includes a project called the ASEAN Peatland Management Initiative (APMI), which was proposed at the 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Haze in 2002. The goals of the APMI are 'to promote sustainable management of peatlands through collective efforts and enhanced cooperation among ASEAN Member Countries towards achieving local support and sustaining livelihood options, regional benefits through reduced risk of fire and its associated haze and contributing globally in minimizing impacts of climate change' as a result of carbon release from peatlands. This initiative was to complement other haze initiatives by providing science-based policy solutions to issues of fire prevention and control in the region's peatlands. The initiative was established in collaboration with the Global Environment Centre (GEC), an NGO focusing on peatland conservation in the region (ASEAN Secretariat, 2003, p. 1).

Thirdly, in terms of stakeholder engagement, ASEAN haze cooperation has long involved various stakeholders from academia, the business community, and NGOs. One good example of this

engagement is the Panel of Experts (POE) that was established to support the implementation of the POA under the ATHP. The POE consists of 29 nominated experts from various fields, including academia, business, and NGOs. According to the ATHP, the POE 'may be utilised when taking measures to mitigate the impact of land and/or forest fires or haze pollution arising from such fires, and also for the purpose of relevant training, education and awareness-raising campaigns' (ASEAN Secretariat, 2002, p. 10). This move was meant to engage and empower regional experts (Hameiri and Jones, 2013 , p. 468). ASEAN also has a long-standing relationship with GEC, a as mentioned above.

Fourthly, ASEAN has successfully been able to develop its haze regime in an atmosphere if shared ownership. Like China today, India was also initially reluctant to commit to ASEAN haze initiatives. Similarly to DSS within China, Indonesia was also the major source of the haze affecting the larger region. Indonesia was also wary that it would be saddled with disproportionate responsibility over haze mitigation, and was also worried that ASEAN mechanisms would supersede their sovereign control over environmental decision making. ASEAN has been exceptionally accommodating to Indonesia's concerns, for example, the ATHP was very carefully worded as to not place blame on any particular country. Furthermore, the ATHP also explicitly mentions the member states' sovereign right to exploit their own resources as they see fit, in the pursuit of their own developmental and environmental policies (ASEAN Secretariat, 2002, p. 4). All this contributed towards Indonesia finally agreeing to sign the ATHP in 2002, and finally, after over a decade of slow but steady encouragement by ASEAN and its member states, ratify it in 2014 (Soeriaatmadja, 2014). In this way, the ASEAN haze regime truly reflects a spirit of shared ownership and responsibility.

And while the process of DSS cooperation in Northeast Asia is characterized by under-institutionalization and disjointedness, this is not the case for cooperation over haze in Southeast Asia. Indeed, the Southeast Asian states also have a history of historical rivalries and mistrust between them. However, Southeast Asian states were able to put these rivalries aside as a result of years of normalization and socialization through ASEAN. This was guided by the 'ASEAN Way norms' enshrined in the organization's guiding document, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, which prescribe how regional interactions should be carried out. This includes the search for consensus, the principles of sensitivity and politeness, a non-confrontational negotiation process, behind-the-scenes discussions, an emphasis on informal and non-legalistic procedures, non-interference and flexibility (Kivimaki, 2001, p. 16).

As a result, environmental cooperation in ASEAN, and over haze in particular, can be characterized as well-institutionalized and centralized. ASEAN has prioritized overarching institutional agreements over haze, and any bilateral mechanisms are subsumed under the regional mechanisms (for example, the Singapore-Jambi and Malaysia-Riau collaboration under the ATHP's Adopt-A-District programmes) (Khalik, 2007). Each haze-related ASEAN mechanism attempts to build upon and complement the earlier ones, and this has helped to avoid overlapping or contradictory regionalism. And while state sovereignty is still paramount, the region's preference for non-binding regimes is slowly but surely moving towards more legally binding ones, as member states raised their level of comfort and commitment with each other. The ATHP thus establishes a long-term vision for a haze-free ASEAN coupled with binding regulations to achieve it.

ASEAN PLUS THREE AS AN UMBRELLA MECHANISM

When comparing the ASEN haze regime with the present DSS mechanisms in Northeast Asia, it is clear that a more holistic approach is needed to cover all components necessary for more effective DSS management (Kim, 2014, p. 150). An effective governance system should be designed to respond to new and changing situations, reflecting specific characteristics of environmental cooperation in Northeast Asia. Scholars have identified two options moving forward: the launch of an umbrella mechanism, or entrusting one mechanism to play a leading role in organically interconnecting existing mechanisms (Kim, 2009, pp. 19-20). Due to the under-institutionalized and disjointed nature of Northeast Asian regionalism, entrusting one existing mechanism to play a leading role in connecting the other mechanisms would be likely to fail, as the same old issues will arise again.

This paper instead proposes that a new umbrella mechanism would be the preferred way forward. In December 1997, East Asian countries held the first APT Summit, which consisted of the ASEAN members, China, Japan and South Korea. The APT mechanism was originally developed as a comprehensive forum to discuss economic, political, and security issues in the broader East Asian region (Hidetaka, 2005, p. 212). Sentiment is generally quite positive about the potential of the APT framework to develop as the central organ for regional cooperation in the broader East Asia (Hidetaka, 2005, pp. 212-213).

THE APT has now evolved into other areas, including the environment, specifically through the APT Environment Ministers' Meeting. This meeting is an annual ministerial meeting among the Environment Ministers of the APT countries, established in 2002. At the fifth meeting, the ministers updated their original list of priority areas to focus on five specific areas: environmental education, dissemination and promotion of environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production, climate change issues, biodiversity management, and integrated water resource management. ASEAN Environment senior officials have conducted separate consultation visits to all three Plus Three countries to establish working level contacts with relevant officials and institutions to further implement specific activities agreed upon by the Ministers (ASEAN, 2009, p. 27).

However, at present, there are currently no projects housed under the auspices of the APT Environment Ministers' Meeting (ASEAN, 2009, pp. 27-28). An umbrella mechanism to subsume DSS cooperation in Northeast Asia may be such a suitable project. There is actually some precedence for this: at the second APT Environmental Ministers' Meeting in 2003, ASEAN had already expressed its intention to participate in the TEMM (Suzuki, 2004, p. 29). Such a development should be beneficial not only the Northeast Asian countries in terms of combating DSS, but also to the larger East Asian region in terms of overall ASEAN centrality.

Potential Benefits for Dust and Sandstorm Cooperation

In terms of the benefit to Northeast Asian countries, such an umbrella mechanism would (1) overcome immediate stumbling blocks to cooperation, (2) facilitate the learning process between the regions, and (3) encourage cooperation in other areas in the long run. Firstly, the subsuming of DSS cooperation within the APT framework should be able to overcome the political leadership tensions that exist between the parties, which have been the main stumbling block to cooperation. With two great powers and one middle power awkwardly jostling for leadership (or at least, refusing to take the back seat), cooperation over DSS has been under-institutionalized and disjointed, which has resulted in a lack of a common vision for a DSS-free region (Kim, 2009, p. 30).

Japan, China and South Korea have all already acceded to ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, and by extension, the ASEAN Way (Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 570). As mentioned above, this ASEAN Way emphasizes ad hoc consensual decision-making through flexible consultation. This 'way' or engagement often lacks a formal agenda and the members can participate

in the gathering as equal partners in a frank atmosphere (Hidetaka, 2005, pp. 208-209). Hence, by transferring leadership outside the immediate Northeast Asian region to the APT mechanism that is governed by TAC norms, this should remove leadership tensions and allow the three countries to engage with each other on equal grounds. It will also promote a common purpose, mutual identity and shared ownership, between the parties, which will be particularly useful in garnering committed Chinese participation to combating DSS.

Furthermore, as has been seen in the ASEAN haze regime, what starts out as informal arrangements can eventually became more formalized and institutionalized (as evidenced by the legally binding ATHP). Under the ASEAN Way, when members begin cooperative initiatives, the 'logic of argumentation' is usually at play to socialize members to the idea of cooperating with each other. This is useful to accumulate common knowledge about the situation from each country and to utilize informal dialogue and argumentation. After a shared understanding has been achieved, members will begin to incorporate the 'logic of appropriateness' which usually involves more concrete directions and actions to be pursued for cooperation (Hidetaka, 2005, p. 222). This pattern will be useful to overcome the problem of under-institutionalization within the Northeast Asian DSS 'nonregime', by socializing the countries involved to develop more concrete directions and actions to address DSS, possibly also including legally binding ones when the countries involved are well and ready.

Secondly, this umbrella mechanism can facilitate the sharing of best practises between the regions over these similar transboundary pollution issues. It is interesting to note that ASEAN's initial request to participate in the TEMM was actually so that ASEAN members could learn from the preceding cooperation activities conducted at the TEMM level (Suzuki, 2004, p. 29). However, from the preceding discussion, it would seem that Northeast Asian APT members may in fact have more to learn from the ASEAN countries in the realm of cooperation over transboundary haze.

Policy dialogue, science-policy interface, and stakeholder engagement are all important areas that have been identified above, that are absent within Northeast Asian DSS cooperation, but present within the ASEAN haze regime. Firstly, since there have been difficulties in making tangible outcomes out of environmental cooperation among Northeast Asian countries, a softer approach, such as policy dialogue as outlined in the ATHP may be more effective and practical in influencing a counterpart's policies (Kim, 2014, p. 150). Secondly, using the APMI as a model, Northeast Asia could garner ideas to achieve more scientific consensus through its Joint Research Committee under

the TEMM. And thirdly, the DSS initiatives that have been very much focused thus far on the elite government level, can be expanded to engage other important stakeholders like academia, the business community, and environmental NGOs, all actors that have been important in developing a more holistic approach to haze mitigation in the Southeast Asian region.

Finally, in the long run, such cooperation in this 'softer' area of the environment may serve as a means by which to alleviate broader political tensions in other 'harder' areas like politics and economy in Northeast Asia (Jung, 2016, p. 9). By normalizing interaction under such a 'soft' atmosphere, this would presumably increase trust and raise the level of comfort between the three parties (Hidetaka, 2005, pp. 208-209), that may help to overcome any remaining psychological barriers to cooperation in other areas. Indeed, the APT framework has thus far already shown positive record in helping Northeast Asian government officials to build a sense of common purpose and identity (Hidetaka, 2005, pp. 208-209), and this should be encouraged to expand to as broad a remit as possible.

Potential for Enhancing ASEAN Centrality

ASEAN centrality can be defined by ASEAN's growing leadership role in Asia's regional architecture, and its role as the main node in dense and overlapping networks connecting multiple stakeholders in the region. It also includes the ability to influence events and decisions, and to mobilize collective resources, energies, and wills (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 2). The ASEAN Charter in turn stresses the need to "maintain the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners in a regional architecture that is open, transparent, and exclusive".

ASEAN places such emphasis on the concept of ASEAN centrality because of its importance to regional stability. In the broader East Asian environment driven by great power competition, there are very real fears of great power influence and manipulation among ASEAN member states (Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 574). Furthermore, a regional crisis among any of the three Northeast Asian states could easily spill over into Southeast Asia (Kassim, 2012, p. 1). Being in the region's driver's seat is seen as a way to effectively manage Sino-Japanese rivalries, and to ensure that their partners remain committed to peace and stability (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 6). Hence, it becomes imperative that ASEAN coordinate its efforts to engage, lock-in and enmesh major powers into its regionally led frameworks (Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 574). Indeed, building an East Asian

community based on ASEAN norms would be preferable to a regional order predicated primarily on power calculations. Hence, what ASEAN lacks in material power and size, the group is making up for it by utilizing its centrality, underlying legitimacy, and trust to maintain broader regional stability for all (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 11).

Alongside the other regional institutional networks like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS), the APT mechanism is an important element of ASEAN centrality, where ASEAN looks to stamp its imprint on regional agendas and strategies (Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 572). Subsuming such an important element of environmental management under the APT mechanism would be important to further enhance, as well as maintain ASEAN centrality for the benefit of the region. Scholars have suggested two key ways that ASEAN centrality can be further enhanced: (1) by showing greater leadership in developing the regional architecture to arrive at solutions to regional issues and, (2) by enhancing its internal unity and common voice on key regional and global issues (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 1, Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 565).

Firstly, ASEAN centrality can be enhanced by ASEAN showing greater leadership in developing the regional architecture to promote solutions to regional issues. This includes helping to initiate and coordinate collective action over such issues (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 2). While DSS does not directly reach any of the countries in Southeast Asia, nevertheless it can be seen as a broader regional issue, because it is an issue affecting several of ASEAN's most important dialogue partners. By proposing solutions of this issue based on an internal model of environmental cooperation (the haze), ASEAN would be portraying the role not only of regional agenda-setter (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 2), but more importantly, of a proactive intellectual facilitator and a progenitor of good, actionable policy ideas (See, 2013, p. 29). By being the fulcrum of the evolving regional architecture (Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 564) (in this, case, expanding the remit of the APT), ASEAN can reinforce their position as being in the driver's seat central to the region's long-term designs (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 2). In the long run, this will also of course increase Northeast Asia's confidence of ASEAN centrality in the broader East Asian region.

Secondly and more specifically to haze, ASEAN centrality can be strengthened by enhancing its internal unity and common voice on this key regional issue (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 1). As mentioned above, the haze is a good example of ASEAN countries cooperating on a key regional issue. While the ASEAN haze regime is quite extensive, especially when compared to DSS mechanisms, this does

not mean that it is without its weaknesses. Significantly, as noted above, haze events have not abated in the region. Furthermore, a few recent events related to transboundary haze cooperation have threatened internal unity: Indonesia's non-ratification of the ATHP, and Singapore' unilateral passing of their Transboundary Haze Pollution Act.

ASEAN cooperation over transboundary haze almost came to an impasse when Indonesia, one of the signatories of the ATHP, refused to ratify the ATHP for over a decade. Due to Indonesia's unwillingness to ratify the agreement, haze cooperation was severely limited in three important ways: (1) member countries were unable to deploy firefighting assistance immediately when a fire was detected in Indonesia, and had to instead go through the slower diplomatic clearance channels, (2) the establishment of the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Haze and its dedicated Secretariat that was to be in Riau was delayed indefinitely, and (3) member states were not able to comment on Indonesia's forest and fire policies and the implementation of their laws, as was allowed for under Article 9 of the agreement (Varkkey, 2016, p. 190-192). Indonesia finally ratified the ATHP after 12 years, at the end of 2014. While this is promising, it is still early days and Indonesia's progress on the three items mentioned here is still slow.

Singapore's Transboundary Haze Pollution Act 2014 is a domestic statute that provides for criminal and civil liability for any Singaporean or non-Singaporean entity causing or contributing to transboundary haze pollution in Singapore (Woo, 2014). This was a marked departure from the traditional ASEAN approach to resolving regional issues, which prioritizes diplomatic over legal solutions (Mayer, 2006, p. 202-218). The Singaporean government used this act in 2016 to obtain a court warrant against the director of an Indonesian company linked to haze-causing fires This resulted in a diplomatic row where Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Minister, Siti Nurbaya Bakar declared that what Singapore had done was 'controversial' and did not show 'mutual respect', an important component in the regional's ASEAN Way of engagement (Ismail, 2016a). She reminded Singapore that the ATHP had precedence over haze related matters, and that as parties of the ATHP, they need to respect each other's sovereignty over haze issues (Ismail, 2016b).

Both of these events have threatened ASEAN's internal unity. Indonesia's decade-long non-ratification led states to question whether ASEAN is really unified in its quest to resolve the haze issue once and for all. Singapore's unilateral law indicated that Singapore may have lost confidence in ASEAN's 'way' of approaching regional issues. While Singapore has since clarified that the Act

did not mean that Singapore was giving up on the agreement (Chan, 2016), this again raises questions of whether ASEAN is capable of acting in a unified manner, and with a common voice. Acting in unity and with a common voice is important for ASEAN centrality because only a united ASEAN can show its external dialogue partners that it is capable of playing a central role and offer regional leadership (Tay and Tan, 2015, p. 10, See, 2013, p. 28).

Hence, if the ASEAN haze regime is adopted as a model for DSS cooperation within the APT umbrella mechanism, countries from outside the region would now look to ASEAN as displaying exemplary environmental cooperation. This would serve as a confidence booster for ASEAN member states, especially the wavering ones like Indonesia and Singapore, to continue to put their support behind the ASEAN haze regime. Furthermore, this would provide additional motivation to Indonesia, which has just ratified the ATHP, to quickly put into place all the measures that were outstanding before ratification, to serve as an example for Northeast Asia over DSS. By extension, this would help ASEAN rebuild its consensus and united voice on this key regional issue, to further enhance its position of centrality in the East Asian region.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been an exploration of the possibility of both the Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian regions mutually benefiting from each other in the process of resolving a common environmental issue, that of transboundary air pollution. The overwhelming similarities between the causes and effects of DSS and haze would suggest that parallels should also exist in the efforts towards solving them. Hence, the fact that the mechanisms developed to address these issues in both regions have evolved in very different directions definitely warranted further investigation.

This paper has argued that there are important lessons to be learned from the Southeast Asian haze experience, which can be transplanted to Northeast Asia. Furthermore, an existing regional mechanism, the APT, could provide a suitable umbrella mechanism to facilitate such learning. Such an arrangement would not only inject new confidence into the ASEAN haze regime, but also serve to enhance ASEAN centrality for the benefit of the broader East Asian region. While more research needs to be done on how such an umbrella mechanism would actually look like (in terms of secretariat, funding, specific programmes etc), this paper intents to provide a starting point for considerations in that direction.

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[3-2]

Place and Region: Regional Identity in ASEAN Centrality

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The various dimensions of ASEAN Centrality – internal, institutional, and external –highlight that promoting or upholding ASEAN's central role in different regional and international arenas requires a certain internalisation of, and identification with ASEAN's principles and purposes. This sense of identification with the region takes on different aspects in the various ASEAN member states, and is usually framed by national perspectives and attitudes. This paper examines the opportunities and challenges for entrenching an internal centrality of ASEAN in the ASEAN integration efforts, by looking first at the broad trends and challenges affecting ASEAN community-building, then delving deeper into the findings of a survey on perspectives and attitudes of young people toward regional cooperation and integration. The author's argument is:

- A sense of regional identity is central to entrenching ASEAN centrality.
- National interests and perspectives influence attitudes towards ASEAN.
- There is no alternative to ASEAN centrality but future efforts at ensuring ASEAN centrality will need to pay more attention to how national populations perceive and/or identify with regional processes.

ASEAN – finding centrality in diversity

As 2015 drew to a close, members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced the accomplishment of their ASEAN Community objective. This was qualified with an acknowledgement that several priorities and commitments remained "work in progress". The 27th ASEAN Summit in November 2015 laid out a roadmap for continuing the work over the next decade towards 2025. This reflects the diversity of ASEAN member states – politically, economically, and socially – which acts both as a boon and a bane for regional integration efforts.

ASEAN has lived with diversity since its inception in 1967. To accommodate this, some flexibility was built into ASEAN processes. This has arguably afforded ASEAN a broader scope to assert its regional role and space. But the nature of this flexibility also limits the extent to which ASEAN's regional role can effectively deal with external influences. These are wide-ranging, including great power rivalry and competing strategic and economic interests, and globally relevant pressures brought on by changing climate conditions, stresses in the global financial system, population increases, the double-edged sword of technological advancement, and the insidious rise of extremism and radicalism under the guise of nationalism. All this contributes –constructively or otherwise – to perceptions of what ASEAN can or cannot do regionally and nationally. These perceptions will also be influenced by the following realities that ASEAN members face[1]:

- Leadership transitions in several ASEAN member states have led to new or different interpretations of regional institutions and processes.
- These leadership transitions have also led to new or nuanced interpretations of the ASEAN Way's flexibility, when domestic and regional interests collide.
- ASEAN's central role will find tensions when regional commitments do not find traction with member states' diverse national interests.

ASEAN's central role, or ASEAN centrality as it is widely termed, is essentially a commitment by ASEAN members to exert a collective leadership in reaching agreement on or deciding important issues affecting the region and its members.

Experts have explained that in a narrower perspective, ASEAN centrality is about securing a role for ASEAN as the primary driving force in its external dialogue as well as in regional cooperation processes. This also expands to the cooperation processes that ASEAN has initiated with various external partners. This central role is to be achieved by providing constructive, proactive and innovative leadership. The ideal is to conduct ASEAN's external engagements in an active, outward-looking, inclusive, non-ideological, non-discriminatory manner that is beneficial to both ASEAN as a collective whole, its individual members, and the external partners. ASEAN centrality

[1] I highlighted these realities in a paper jointly authored with Masahiro Kawai and Bill Hayton on "ASEAN's Regional Role and Relations with Japan: The Challenges of Deeper Integration" published by Chatham House in February 2016. The full paper is available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-02-18-asean-regional-role-kawai-thuzar-hayton.pdf

has been enshrined as one of the "new" principles of ASEAN in the ASEAN Charter, in Article 2, Paragraph 2 (m). Implementing ASEAN centrality is premised on providing some form of political equality (at least in form) by not having any permanent single "leader" in ASEAN. The annual rotation of ASEAN Chairmanship, the emphasis on consultation and consensus in decision-making, and the continued enforcement of equal financial contributions to the operations of the ASEAN Secretariat are illustrations of centralizing ASEAN as an institution.

The ideal for ensuring ASEAN's central role in the manner mentioned above, however, may remain just an ideal. This is where the diversity of ASEAN acts as the bane as different individual member states have different national positions on regional issues, based on their individual national interests. Also,

Different ASEAN member states lead different areas of cooperation in ASEAN, based on their strengths and interests. This is the same case for ASEAN members coordinating the grouping's relations with Dialogue Partners. In both instances, the diversity of external cooperation processes present their own challenge to ASEAN centrality.

- ASEAN has established Dialogue Partnerships with Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), New Zealand, Russia and the United States, and a sectoral partnership with Pakistan. The United Nations is also a Dialogue Partner, and ASEAN holds observer status at the UN. Papua New Guinea is a Special Observer to ASEAN meetings. ASEAN holds summit-level meetings with each of its Dialogue Partners regularly.

- In addition to these "ASEAN+1" summits within the structure of each dialogue partnership, strategic "leaders-led" discussions take place at the East Asia Summit (EAS) where heads of state/government of the ASEAN states sit together with counterparts from Australia, China, India, Japan, the RoK, New Zealand, Russia and the US to discuss a wide-ranging list of issues and concerns relevant to the region as well as globally.

- ASEAN's dialogue process has an "enhanced" track with the ASEAN Plus Three engagements between ASEAN members and Dialogue Partners such as China, Japan and the ROK in practically all sectoral areas of cooperation.

- The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) expands the regional security dialogue to 27 participants from different geographical locations. In addition to the ten ASEAN members, the ten Dialogue Partners and Papua New Guinea, the ARF participants include Timor-Leste, Mongolia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

- The highest level of regional consultations on cooperation among defence ministries takes place at the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) established in 2006, and expanded in 2009 to include the defence ministers from eight of the ten Dialogue Partners[2] in an biennial ADMM-Plus.

ASEAN leads all these processes and fora by setting the discussion agenda and convening the meetings in conjunction with ASEAN's own key meetings in these areas. However, this is more of a 'default' centrality – ASEAN takes the central role as convenor of the regional dialogues under the ASEAN institutional framework. This does not always translate to a leadership role by ASEAN. Several experts and analysts have emphasized that this needs to be earned[3].

Yet ASEAN is central(ised) in nature, despite its diverse systems and levels of development. ASEAN's decision-making by consensus, and adherence to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs centres regional discussions. This "ASEAN Way" also centres how decisions are upheld. Member states constantly refer to these core principles in their discussions, particularly those in the political-security sphere. Thus, while critics express frustration at the ASEAN Way citing weakness of regional institutions and diluted effectiveness of regional decisions, proponents of the ASEAN Way continue to highlight that its informality creates a conducive environment for freer discussion of regional issues and concerns without the binding commitments that these discussions may entail.

Central to the ASEAN Way is the emphasis on ASEAN's unity of purpose, which is assigned greater value than national or personal interests. This has recently become a topic for soul-searching in the wake of several instances where regional unity has been seriously shaken over the clash of

[2] The same Dialogue Partners that currently participate in the EAS (EAS expanded its membership in 2011 to include Russia and the US).
[3] Personal interviews, including with ASEAN Secretariat officials current and past.

national interests with regional commitments. The 45th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting's failure in 2012 to issue its annual joint communiqué over disagreement on language to be used in referring to competing territorial claims in the South China Sea was the first major instance. Then, in 2015, the 3rd ADMM-Plus meeting failed to issue a joint statement over differences of national positions (by the US and China) on the South China Sea issue. In 2016, ASEAN planned to issue a joint statement on this topic on the sidelines of a special meeting among ASEAN foreign ministers and their Chinese counterpart, but did not manage to do so due to lack of consensus. Tensions between China and ASEAN member states after the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague decided the legality of the Philippines claim in the Spratlys also affected the 49th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting discussions in Vientiane this year.

Thus, ASEAN today finds itself in a situation where a) the external dimension of ASEAN centrality continues on an active trajectory, as demonstrated by the lead role accorded to ASEAN in the ASEAN-initiated regional processes, as well as an increasing representational value at other regional and international fora; and b) the institutional centrality of ASEAN continues to be reinforced, especially in upholding the role and functions of the rotational ASEAN Chair, the ASEAN Secretary-General and the ASEAN Secretariat, and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN; but c) the internal dimension of ASEAN centrality or the need to be serious about commitments to achieve an integrated ASEAN Community is a continuing concern.

ASEAN today

It is widely accepted that ASEAN is primarily a political community. The discussions on regional security among the ASEAN members and their dialogue partners, and with countries from a wide geographical reach[4], highlight the interlinked nature of political-security cooperation. ASEAN's political community-building is considered more or less complete with the question of Timor-Leste's membership viewed as a function of time.

ASEAN has also focused on getting the economics right since its establishment. The ASEAN Free Trade Area has been a reality since 2003 and ASEAN is now working on economic integration

[4] In addition to the ten ASEAN members and the ten ASEAN Dialogue Partners (Australia, Canada, China, the EU, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the United States), the ASEAN Regional Forum also includes North Korea, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Papua New Guinea.

through closer connectivity in the institutional and infrastructure areas. Economic integration will bring important benefits of lower transaction costs, greater mobility and wider consumer choices to the people in the member states. The timelines set for economic integration are on track, with strategic underpinnings acting as additional motivators.

ASEAN's main deliverables in the decade towards 2025 will thus be in seeking to deliver the "people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN" to populaces in each of the member states. Efforts will thus be shaped by an imperative to "get the people on board", i.e. more interface or engagement with national populations.

Getting the people on board

For the ordinary person on the street, ASEAN integration is still an abstract idea.
The challenge of making ASEAN real to its people is gaining more focus as ASEAN moves towards a people-centred community.

People determine the tempo of regional integration. People are the region's pulse. The people in ASEAN are some 620 million strong. The daily lives of these people are touched by myriad aspects of ASEAN integration in motion, yet the majority are unable to 'connect the dots' of regional decisions affecting national situations which in turn influence how regional agreements are negotiated.

Internalising – and indeed, centralizing - ASEAN is thus a daunting task. But, despite differing views on how to go about it, ASEAN states have accepted the importance of taking on the task, particularly in issues that have some direct impact on the peace and prosperity of the people. People-related issues are also important for engendering a sense of community among non-policy stakeholders, as these are the issues that member states have to grapple with as domestic concerns and priorities, regardless of whether regional cooperation prioritises or exists for these concerns. Yet, ASEAN's people priorities are also those that many international meets have collectively prioritised in the name of the world's citizens.

Establishing a sense of belonging and identification with the region is thus an important first step towards internalising the centrality of ASEAN and its institutions in representing the region – and its diverse concerns – as a collective whole. This is easier said than done.

At the regional level, ASEAN's people-related indicators paint an impressive picture. The male and female populations are roughly equal. A relatively young population with a median age below 40 points to a potential demographic dividend. ASEAN members have curbed the spread of communicable diseases. It has a high literacy rate, although more males than females are able to read and write. The use of English, which is ASEAN's working language, is widespread. The regional poverty rate is 15 percent. The unemployment rate is less than 10 percent. About 80 percent have access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation. The internet and smartphone revolutions have helped in broadening and flattening people's access to information – 120 percent have mobile phones through which they access the internet.

This is the ASEAN that is described as a single entity. But the diversity of Southeast Asia is the reality that ASEAN members still face daily. When ASEAN statistics[5] are separated from the regional aggregates to national-level indicators, a stratified ASEAN emerges with high-achieving Singapore at the top and countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar clustered at the bottom of most regional indices. The question of "what are the benefits of being in ASEAN" resonates differently among and within the member states.

Additionally, there is still a thin sense of belonging to the region, despite largely positive attitudes among the young people. A recent survey carried out in 2014-15 to gauge the awareness levels and attitudes of young people towards ASEAN[6] found that regionally, over 80 per cent view themselves as "citizens of ASEAN"[7], but views and attitudes towards ASEAN differed at national

[5] ASEAN's statistical indicators are shared both in the regional aggregate and by individual country in the ASEAN Statistical Leaflet 2015, published by the ASEAN Secretariat. http://www.asean.org/storage/2015/11/ASEAN_Statistic_Leaflet_2015.pdf

[6] The key findings were first presented at a public seminar on 24 August 2015, held in Singapore and organised by the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute on the sidelines of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' ASEAN Day reception. The full report "Do Young People Know ASEAN?" co-authored by Eric Thompson, Chulanee Thianthai and Moe Thuzar was published in May 2016 by ISEAS.

[7] This is an improvement compared to 75 percent identifying themselves as such in 2007.

levels (with the newer members the most enthusiastic), as did national attitudes towards other ASEAN countries. ASEAN ambivalence continues in Singapore, and is emerging in Thailand.

The following section summarises the findings of the survey, which updated an earlier survey in 2007 carried out among university students in the ten ASEAN member states, to gauge levels of ASEAN awareness, as well as attitudes towards and aspirations for regional integration. The initial survey was undertaken at primary national universities in the major cities of the ten ASEAN countries. The 2014-15 update returned to the primary survey sites, and expanded the survey to 12 additional universities across the region[8]. This was in order to test for regional, socioeconomic and/or ethno-religious differences in particular nations. The results found that young people in this region identify ASEAN positively with regionalism and cooperation, but many view ASEAN and regional cooperation in the context of their own nation. This is probably due to how ASEAN is discussed in each national context, as well as the mainly urban, English-speaking focus of ASEAN initiatives.

Region and place matter in building identity[9]

The 2007 survey posed 18 questions to gauge ***attitudes*** toward the region and ASEAN; ***knowledge*** about ASEAN; ***orientation*** toward countries within the region; ***sources*** of information about the region and ASEAN; and ***aspirations*** for the region and ASEAN. To this, the 2014 survey added two more questions. The first asked the students to provide one-word descriptions of ASEAN, its member states, some of the ASEAN Dialogue Partners, and other countries/continents. The second was a triad-test of similarities and differences among ASEAN members.

In both the 2007 and 2014 surveys, positive attitudes towards ASEAN have remained generally consistent, while awareness and knowledge of ASEAN show some increase.

<u>Attitudes:</u> In 2007, there was a strong sense of ASEAN citizenship almost everywhere in the region. In the 2014 Survey, this sense of ASEAN citizenship has remained strong, and increased among the universities where the survey was repeated. The main exception was at Chulalongkorn

[8] 4,623 university students across 22 universities in the ten ASEAN member states participated in the 2014 Survey.
[9] This section condenses and summarises further the key findings from the 2014-15 update to the ten-nation survey on ASEAN awareness and attitudes. The full findings have been published by ISEAS in May 2016.

University in Thailand, where attitudes and sense of ASEAN citizenship remained generally positive, but showed some decline compared to the previous survey. Another important shift, in the opposite direction, was found in Myanmar. Despite some difficulty with data collection (both in 2007 and 2014), the results in 2014 showed generally positive attitudes toward ASEAN, which was also the regional norm. Compared to the primary universities within the same country, the sense of ASEAN citizenship tended to be as strong as or stronger among the additional universities. The exception was in Malaysia, where University of Malaya students showed greater affinity for ASEAN. Perceptions of benefits of ASEAN membership, both to one's country and oneself personally, remained high everywhere.

Both the 2007 and 2014 Surveys found a general tendency among the students to see ASEAN members as culturally similar but economically and politically different. There were some substantial differences from nation to nation. Still, from the responses within and across nations, the patterns of thinking tended to support a view that attitudes are largely shaped by national frames-of-reference. Singaporean students tended to see the greatest dissimilarity amongst ASEAN members, while the greatest overall similarities across all three dimensions were found in Indonesia, Vietnam, and, in 2014, Myanmar.

Knowledge: The 2014 update found a modest decrease in self-reported familiarity with ASEAN, but a general trend of equal or increased objective knowledge about ASEAN. This may be because students are now more knowledgeable about ASEAN, particularly where attention has been given to the run-up to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in recent years; but with this, students are also more aware of how much they do not know about the region, and thus have decreased self-reported familiarity. The clearest measure of an increase in objective knowledge about the region was a greater recognition of the ASEAN flag almost everywhere we conducted the survey. In 2014, as in 2007, the lowest objective knowledge about ASEAN was found among students in the Philippines, followed by those in Singapore. Myanmar students, who had been the least objectively knowledgeable about ASEAN in 2007, displayed knowledge in 2014 that was more in line with regional averages. Vietnamese students were best at identifying the date of ASEAN's founding. Thai and Brunei students were best at identifying ASEAN countries on a map. Recognition of the ASEAN flag was over 90 percent in Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Orientation: The 2014 Survey found the same general "Maritime-Mainland" divide in salience, which was also the case in 2007. Students from Mainland Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos,

Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam) are generally more cognizant of other Mainland countries and similarly those from Maritime nations (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore) are generally more cognizant of other countries in the Maritime grouping. In some instances, students from the Mainland group exhibited greater awareness of Singapore and Malaysia than of other countries in their own sub-region. Thailand often had greater salience than Brunei among students from the Maritime group. Thailand and Malaysia remained the most salient countries generally for students across ASEAN as a whole. Brunei remained the least salient country to students across the region.

In the 2007 Survey, Singapore was the preferred destination for both travel and work, with Thailand and Malaysia as second and third choices. In 2014, Singapore again emerged as the most desirable destination for travel among students across the region, though its popularity as a travel destination less clear-cut. Singapore was the top travel choice for all except Lao students in 2007, but Thailand emerged in 2014 as the top travel destination for students in Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia. Malaysia was the third choice, with Vietnam as a close fourth. While Singapore remained the overwhelming choice of destination for work, Thailand replaced Malaysia as the second most popular destination.

There were also some within-nation variations with respect to travel and work destinations in responses from the additional universities surveyed. The greatest within-nation consistency was observed in Singapore and Vietnam, while results from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand showed some variation based on co-ethnic or regional factors. In Indonesia, for example, Brunei was a strong secondary destination for travel and work among predominantly Muslim students in Aceh, but not so for the predominantly Christian students in Kupang, West Timor. Muslim-minority students from both Walailak University in Thailand and Mindanao State University in the Philippines rated Malaysia as a desirable work destination to a much greater degree than their national counterparts at other universities surveyed.

Interest in learning about other ASEAN countries remained high in 2014. The same pattern of ASEAN enthusiasm held, with the greatest interest coming from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. In contrast to 2007, Myanmar students this time exhibited the same generally positive to enthusiastic interest as students elsewhere in the region. Interest in learning about ASEAN tended to be generally higher in the additional universities we surveyed in 2014.

Sources: Ranking of sources of information about ASEAN from a list of fourteen possible sources, were largely similar to those in 2007. The most obvious change was the increasing importance of the Internet as a source of information and a decreasing significance of radio. Television and school remained the first and second most important sources of information in every nation except Myanmar. In Myanmar (among the Mandalay University sample), internet and newspapers were the first and second sources of information, followed by television. Books were fourth, and school fifth. While newspapers and books continued to be among the most important sources of information for the region as a whole, these were surpassed in 2014 by the Internet, which emerged as the third most important source of information.

In 2007, Internet and radio were secondary sources of information regionally, after television, schools, newspapers and books. This reflected a varied media environment in which the Internet was more important in certain nations while the radio remained popular in others. In 2014, however, the Internet had gained popularity everywhere. Conversely, the importance of radio had dropped, particularly in places like Cambodia. This is a good indication of the shifting, and, to some extent, homogenising of the media environment, at least in terms of the media of communication. Also in 2014, the importance of friends as a source of information rose modestly. This may be attributable to the rise of social media and the expansion of networks and definitions of friends (e.g. "Facebook friends"). Family, travel, movies, music, and work experience remained the least important sources of information about ASEAN.

Aspirations: In 2014 as in 2007, there was a strong positive attitude across all nations when asked to indicate agreement or disagreement on the importance of eight aspects of regional integration and cooperation: 1) Cultural Exchanges, 2) Economic Cooperation, 3) Development Assistance, 4) Educational Exchanges, 5) Security and Military Cooperation, 6) Political Cooperation, 7) Sports Competitions, and 8) Tourism. The most noticeable shift between the two surveys was that Economic Cooperation fell from first to third most important aspect of integration across the region. Tourism and Development Assistance, which ranked second and third in 2007, moved to first and second in 2014. The focus on launching the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, may well have highlighted the drawbacks as much as the benefits of economic cooperation to citizens of the region, leading some to view it with less enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the overall importance and positive attitude toward economic cooperation remained high. Educational Exchange, Security Cooperation and Sports rated as mid-tier areas of importance for regional cooperation, but with a great deal of variation from nation to nation. For example,

Educational Exchange ranked first in Laos and Myanmar and second in Brunei and Cambodia, but seventh in Malaysia and Singapore (both 'importers' rather than 'exporters' of exchange students). Conversely, Security Cooperation ranked first in Singapore and second in Malaysia, but seventh in Laos and Thailand. Sports Competitions ranked second in Indonesia and third in Malaysia, but seventh in Brunei and eighth (last) in Singapore. The least important aspects of integration and cooperation across the region were Cultural Exchanges and Political Cooperation. These two were among the aspects ranked last in all nations except Singapore (where they ranked sixth and third respectively). Overall, these results were extremely similar to those from the previous survey. Less enthusiasm for integration and cooperation was registered in Thailand, at least among the primary university students. Nevertheless, the responses from Thailand remained overall positive.

As in 2007, students tended to focus on issues of people-to-people exchange (Tourism, Economic Cooperation, and Educational Exchange) more than state-to-state issues (Security and Political Cooperation). This was also true when students were asked about issues crucial to cooperation and awareness of ASEAN. Poverty reduction and educational exchanges ranked as the highest areas of priority. Poverty reduction ranked first or second in every nation. Educational exchange ranked first through third everywhere except Singapore and Malaysia. Science and technology development remained third overall, but in 2014 was very close in overall average ranking to health and disease control, and natural resource and environmental management. Singapore students ranked science and technology development low and there were divergent views on health and disease control (Singapore ranked this second, but it was seventh for Vietnam). Disaster assistance ranked highly in Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore but in the bottom half everywhere else. Regional identity ranked last in five of the ten nations and in the bottom half in eight of the ten. However, it ranked as the most important issue in Vietnam, and fourth overall in Thailand. Cultural preservation was again the least important issue in all nations except Indonesia and Myanmar.

Describing ASEAN: This is one of the two additional sections to the 2014 Survey. Respondents were given a list of 20 countries and regions, including ASEAN, the ten ASEAN member countries, and nine additional regions and countries for comparative purposes, and asked them to write one word that they would use to describe each. The one-word descriptions provide some insights into how students from across the region think about ASEAN and its members.

Across the region, words to describe ASEAN primarily related to regionalism (e.g. Southeast Asia, Asia, 10 countries) and cooperation (organization, unity, etc.). Economic cooperation and the AEC

specifically featured in the answers from about half of the universities. Similarly, five nations associated ASEAN with development. Singapore and Thai students associate ASEAN with poverty, though Vietnam and Brunei students associated it with wealth. Many students associated ASEAN with their own nation, except for those from Brunei and the Philippines. Diversity, culture, cultural diversity and related terms were mentioned by all except those from Philippines and Thailand. The most negative descriptions of ASEAN were found in Singapore where about 11 percent of students described ASEAN as "useless" (or a synonym) and Thailand where about seven percent described ASEAN as "stupid" (or similar). Conversely, about 15 percent of Vietnamese students and five percent of Singapore students described ASEAN in positive terms.

The descriptions of individual ASEAN member nations were often complex and varied across the region, though there were also some dominant, primary association with each country.

- Brunei was primarily described in terms of oil, wealth, its status as a sultanate, and its small size. Islam was an important descriptor for Brunei in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore.
- Descriptions of Cambodia overwhelmingly centred on Angkor Wat and secondarily on poverty. Other frequent descriptors include "culture" (or similar terms) and references to the Pol Pot and Khmer Rouge era.
- Indonesia's many islands and large size featured in all responses from across the region. Islam was an important descriptor for Indonesia from six nations, but not in Brunei, Malaysia or Indonesia itself. Everywhere, except in Vietnam, Indonesia was associated with well-known places within the country, particularly Bali and Jakarta. There was a diversity of descriptions in economic terms. There was a tendency to associate the country with poverty or under-development by students from more affluent nations (such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand) and described in terms of development, a good economy or economic growth by students from less affluent nations (such as Cambodia and Laos).
- Laos appeared to be the least known country in the region. Laos rated the largest number of non-responses for descriptions, other than Laos' immediate neighbours. Poverty, underdevelopment, or, to a lesser extent, development was a leading descriptor for Laos everywhere, except Thailand. A secondary set of responses related to traditional culture, ethnic dress, food, and natural resources.

- Malaysia was described widely in ethno-religious (Malay, multiracial) and religious terms (associated with Islam). Reference was made in all university samples to tourism, frequently citing the Malaysia tourism slogan "Malaysia, Truly Asia." Locations (especially Kuala Lumpur) and landmarks (particularly the KLCC or Twin Towers) featured prominently in descriptions of Malaysia. Malaysia's economy was noted mostly in positive terms but in a few as "poor" or "developing." Also, given the timing of the survey, mention to air disasters was made in many university samples. Students from Mandalay University in Myanmar indicated Malaysia as a destination where there are many Myanmar migrants.
- Myanmar was associated primarily with the country's politics. Aung San Suu Kyi, as an iconic figure, featured in response from all nations except Vietnam. Common reference was also made to the military government as well as to war and conflict. Students from all nations also associated Myanmar with poverty and development, except in Laos where respondents referred to investment and trade. Reference to Myanmar's Buddhist heritage was particularly strong in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, and elsewhere students made frequent reference to pagodas or specifically the Shwedagon.
- The two most common descriptors for the Philippines, found in all sets of responses, referred to natural disasters and islands. Other common associations were in reference to language, pop culture, Manila, sports, and food items. Many descriptive terms prominent in some nations' descriptions – such as labour migration, the economy, tourism, religion or education – appeared only in a few nations' responses.
- Singapore has a much more singular, common image across the region. The primary set of associations for Singapore, found across all university samples, centred on modernity, wealth and the country's small size. A second order set of associations, also found in all the sets of responses, referred to tourism, cleanliness and high standards of education.
- Thailand also had a strong, similar image across the region, centring on tourism, food and the country's political situation and conflict over the past decade. Other significant associations made were in reference to agriculture and exports, the transgender culture and to elephants. Less universally, but in several countries, Thailand was described in terms of culture, popular culture, the monarchy and religion.
- The two main associations for Vietnam were war and/or politics, and the economy. Reference was made as well to Vietnam's rapid economic growth. Other significant associations made reference to agricultural production, Vietnamese culture, food and tourism.

Cognitive Maps of ASEAN: The final section of the 2014 Survey asked students to judge the similarities and differences among ASEAN member nations. The resulting "cognitive maps" of the ASEAN members indicate a strong national framing of perceptions of region. At the same time, the results also demonstrate several transnational patterns of perceptions about the region.

- A "Malay-Muslim" pattern was observed across Brunei, Indonesia (though not in KupangUndana), and Malaysia (at University of Malaya and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, where the students were not themselves Malay-Muslim; though not at the private-run Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman). In this pattern, the majority Muslim countries of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia along with Singapore are clustered together and contrast primarily with the "CLMV" countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) and secondarily with the Philippines and Thailand, which form a residual grouping. Some echoes of this are seen in clustering of Malay-Muslim countries in the cognitive maps of both Mindanao State University in the Philippines and Walailak University in Thailand, where samples were at least 80 percent Muslim.

- A "Mainland-Maritime" pattern was shared by all student samples from Thailand, as well as those from Cambodia and Laos. In the Mainland-Maritime pattern, the strongest contrast among countries are between the five Mainland countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam and the five Maritime countries of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

- A third pattern with some transnational reach was the "Singapore exceptionalism" pattern. In this pattern, Singapore is sharply contrasted with all other countries in the region. The Singapore exceptionalism pattern was produced by all students in Singapore (including Malay students from the National University of Singapore) and by the Chinese-Malaysian students from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman as well as Chinese-Malaysian students from Universiti Malaya when examined separately.

Along with these transnational patterns, those produced by Myanmar, Philippines, and Vietnam students were more unique to those countries. The Myanmar pattern shows some visual similarities to all three of the transnational patterns mentioned above, but it is not highly correlated with any one of them. The Philippines pattern clusters the Philippines with Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia in contrast to the CLMV countries, with Brunei and Thailand as intermediaries between

the two. The Vietnam pattern clusters Vietnam with its neighbours Cambodia and Laos, primarily in contrast to the Maritime countries but secondarily in contrast to Thailand and Myanmar.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the findings is evidence of what might be considered a transnational, centralised and elite perspective in thinking about the relationship among ASEAN members, particularly in the primary, "flagship" universities in the survey. This suggests that along with strong national and sub-regional framings of perceptions of Southeast Asia, there is also a general, shared, transnational frame-of-reference that is being absorbed by university students at top, centrally located universities. This may reflect a transnational elite discourse about the region to which students at leading universities are most attuned (or exposed to).

The perceptions of ASEAN as an elite organisation are not new, and have probably been reinforced by the nature of ASEAN discussions which are carried out in English, ASEAN's official working language. ASEAN documents are also originally produced in English, and each member state then takes on the task of translating key documents into national languages. This presents an additional challenge to how the wider public identifies with or discusses ASEAN at national levels, in the local vernacular. How can ASEAN centrality be internalised if communication or understandings of ASEAN's common concerns are not widely discussed?

In recent years, ASEAN as an institution has had the positive effect of getting civil society more organised around topical themes and priorities on the ASEAN agenda. But translation of these recommendations into regional or national-level initiatives has met with slower progress. It is thus timely for ASEAN to find and tackle some cross-cutting commonalities where regional actions will resonate nationally.

Where are the commonalities?

Common concerns for citizens in the member states of ASEAN include mobility in education, employment and travel, which can be exacerbated by internal pressures of rapidly urbanising societies and the results of climate change and natural disasters.

The master plan on connectivity will link ASEAN countries and peoples together like never before in all aspects – physically through road, rail and energy networks, virtually through the internet and

mobile networks, and culturally when people move across borders to live, work, study and spend their leisure in any ASEAN country of their choice.

The region is also particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, with extensive, heavily populated coastlines in both maritime and mainland Southeast Asia, large agricultural sectors, and large sections of the population living below the poverty line. Impacts of climate change are resulting in social consequences such as migration (within or across borders) in search of better livelihoods.

The need for adequate access to food, energy and water, especially in rural or depressed areas, compete with narrowing disparities in education enrolment and attainment. Even with young populations raring to enter the workforce, ageing societies and job-skills mismatches will place additional stress on social protection needs. And, the role of religion and culture in Southeast Asia's multi-racial, multi-cultural societies will continue to be an important consideration in dealing with the rising threat of extremism.

The concern that ASEAN members most commonly share today is the urgency of countering the threat of extremism and terrorism caused by the Islamic State (IS). The co-existence of multiple ethnic and religious communities in Southeast Asia requires a delicate calibration of regional and national responses that do not conflate extremism and religion.

ASEAN's people-related challenges illustrate the 'messiness' of real life; with many cross-cutting issues influencing how countries coordinate internally and among themselves. This presents a unique opportunity for localising ASEAN centrality. It is important to coordinate ASEAN's community-building act regionally and nationally, as national issues can have regional implications, with political, economic and social consequences.

No alternative to centrality

The notions explored in this paper highlight that the importance of further entrenching ASEAN's central role in regional cooperation and external relations, in a way that resonates with national priorities and needs.

ASEAN need not be insecure about ensuring its centrality, as there really is no alternative to ASEAN assuming the central convenor role. ASEAN serves as a useful framework to shape the regional outlook and balance political tensions as a middle ground, as well as in shaping attitudes towards regional integration efforts. But it is not enough to just rely on the current role of ASEAN as a default convenor of regional meetings which engage the major powers on wide-ranging issues. While this is an important first step, geopolitics demands that ASEAN centrality be now infused with new or independent ideas.

There is thus a significant potential – albeit with considerable work – to centre the region and ASEAN as its representative organisation in the various national psyches. The survey results show that there is a nascent foundation upon which future efforts can be built.

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[3-3]

How Would ASEAN Respond to One Belt, One Road? A Strategy of Multilayered Diversity[1]

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1. Introduction

The history of Southeast Asia and ASEAN after World War II has been a history of partnership, cooperation and competition with major powers surrounding the region. During the Cold War, Southeast Asian countries have been successfully muddling through the structure of Cold War and superpowers' rivalry. In the post-Cold War era, Southeast Asian countries enjoyed a short-lived period of relative freedom from the interference of superpowers. Then again, the rising China puts economic and security pressure on Southeast Asian countries since early 2000s. On top of that, the US Pivot to Asia made the regional strategic picture more complicated in recent years. ASEAN now faces the same old question – how to muddle through the strategic competition between China and the US and how to safeguard its strategic autonomy while maximising its interests.

This paper examines potential responses of individual Southeast Asian countries as well as that of ASEAN to the Chinese One Belt, One Orad (OBOR) Initaitive as a way to understand how ASEAN countries respond to the strategic pressure upon them. ASEAN countries, when it comes to their strategies towards bigger powers, defied a simple definition. Individual countries as an independent sovereign countries have their own foreign policy directions and strategies. At the same time, they

[1] A draft for presentation. Do not quote without permission.

often face the external players collectively in the name of ASEAN. The foreign policy and strategy of ASEAN is not always a simple sum of individual strategies. In fact, quite often the ASEAN strategy contradicts with foreign policy direction of an inidivudual member unintentionally. Analytically, this makes an understanding of ASEAN countries very complicated. Strategically, it actually makes the options of ASEAN countries richer. Any analysis of Southeast Asian strategic move, especially towards bigger powers, has to mind these two levels – those of individual countries as well as of ASEAN.

This paper, after the introduction, first surveys past relations between ASEAN countries and China as a background of analysing ASEAN countries' view on One Belt, One Road (OBOR). After that, the paper touches upon ASEAN's collective response and view on OBOR, which is followed by ASEAN individual countries' response to the Chinese initiative. Especially in this part, a categorisation of ASEAN countries by different views on OBOR is attempted, although it is still very rough and preliminary. Last but not the least, there should be an analysis on ASEAN's stance in-between Chinese OBOR and the US pivot to Asia. ASEAN strategy and response has a great implication on the strategic rivalry between the Chinese OBOR and the Indo-Pacific concept, a strategy of US pivot to Asia.

2. Historical Path of ASEAN-China Relations

An understanding of current ASEAN-China relations and ASEAN's strategy towards China should start from a review of the past ASEAN-China or Southeast-China relationship, especially after the independence of countries and the advent of nation-states, which dates back to 1940s. The initial relationship was shaped by the Cold War order.

Southeast Asian countries, particularly those ASEAN 5 countries, regarded China as one of the biggest security challenge until 1980s. One of the main goal of ASEAN was a collective response to the communism spreading in Southeast Asia in the 1950s. During this time, China as well as the former Soviet attempted to 'export' communism to Southeast Asian countries. At the same time some countries had their own domestic threats from home-grown communism, which made those countries more suspicious of China. It went as far as ti suspect ethnic Chinese in their border as a channel for the import of communism from China.

This sense of insecurity reached its peak in 1970s. When Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1978, China intervened in support of Cambodia. This hardened ASEAN suspicion on Chinese intention in Southeast Asia. At the same time, however, ASEAN countries, especially Malaysia and Thailand, attempted to manage China threat by approaching China rather than distancing it. This move shows a tradition of ASEAN diplomacy that manages bigger powers surrounding ASEAN through engagement rather than disengagement.

The troubled relations between ASEAN and China met a turning point – the opening of China and the Tianmen Square Incident. While some Southeast Asian countries have been attempting to establish official relations with China in the 1970s, now it was China's turn to approach ASEAN countries in the 1980s. After Tianmen Square Incidence, China faced severe criticism from the international community. ASEAN countries, however, were more sympathetic to the Chinese position. When China was still very cautious to expose itself to the international community, the sympathetic attitude of some ASEAN countries was very encouraging for China, which made ASEAN as an entry point of and a testbed for China in international community.

There were important developments in the partnership between ASEAN and China in the 1990s. East Asia faced a whole new economic and security environment after the end of Cold War. There was a power vacuum in the region after the collapse of Soviet and the withdrawal of the US. ASEAN countries attempted to fill the vacuum with new multilateral institutions such as ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asian Economic Group that former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir, suggested. China enthusiastically supported those ASEAN initiative to get the trust of ASEAN countries. In addition, China tried to take common positions and stances with ASEAN countries in many international issues including human rights issue.

While the 1990s is characterised as a period of building confidence between ASEAN and China, China turned to economy to level up its relations with ASEAN in the 2000s. Based on the confidence building effort in the 1990s, Chian proposed China-ASEAN FTA. China made a big concession to persuade ASEAN countries (Wang Yuzhu and Sarah Y. Tong 2015). This was the beginning of economic engagement of China with ASEAN countries that characterised the relations between ASEAN and China in early 2000s. With the sky-rocketing trade volume between the two and the ever expanding Chinese economy, China became one of the most important elements for the sustained growth of ASEAN economy.

In the mid of 2000s, the relation between China and ASEAN had another turning point. While the economic relations in the first half of 2000s is mainly about trade, the one in the send half of 2000s revolved around China's investment in infrastructure building for ASEAN developing countries. ASEAN developing economies was (and still is) badly in need of massive capital input for the infrastructure development required for economic growth. China provided the needed capital especially for mainland Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar. This seemingly generous investment by China made the relations between ASEAN and China even closer (Wade 2010; Cook 2014).

The Chinese effort towards Southeast Asian countries in the past 30 years still has many challenges to overcome. Security matters over South China Sea territorial dispute re-emerged in the late 2000s, which reminded ASEAN countries that China still poses security threat to ASEAN countries. The resurgence of South China Sea dispute provided a cause for the US to return to Asia militarily. The US re-strengthened strategic partnership with some ASEAN countries. Now China faces the internationalisation of South China Sea dispute, which China opposed from the beginning of the dispute. The US could manage to come back to Southeast Asia by fully exploiting its experience of cooperation during the Cold War period. Meanwhile China realised that the level of confidence that ASEAN countries have in China is still not enough (Lee 2012b, 225-234).

Still the colossal Chinese economy is crucial for sustained economic growth of many Southeast Asian countries. A closer look, however, at the economic merit of China reveals a nuanced implication for ASEAN economies. Economically more advanced countries in ASEAN may find some opportunities in Chinese economy. China is a big market for manufactured goods produced in some manufacturing economies of Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the Chinese economic assistance to developing ASEAN countries may have a negative impact in the long term – economic dependency, although the assistance in short-term is a boon for those economies. On security matters, some ASEAN countries without hesitation choose China as number one security threat, while for some others who do not claim territories in the South China Sea, the Chinese security threat is not that conspicuous. Chinese OBOR initiative is operational in this complicated and multi-layered strategic, security and economic nexus between China and ASEAN.

3. ASEAN's Collective View on OBOR

ASEAN has not officially announced its view on the initiative, but overall, ASEAN collectively neither displayed a negative assessment nor rejected the OBOR initiative. There is a point to dive deeper into ASEAN's assessment of OBOR. We can identify some positive as well as negative elements that would shape the ASEAN view on OBOR.

First of all, negative elements are mostly related to geopolitics and security matters. China shares land borders with Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam. Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei are connected to China via sea. It means that they have maritime borders although there are buffers of high seas in-between. The global power, sharing borders with ASEAN, is a strategic and geopolitical burden for ASEAN countries. Scholars of geopolitics such as Robert Kaplan explain that what Caribbean Sea is to the US is what South China Sea is to China. The US emerged as a sea power when it had control over the Caribbean Sea. China would do the same in the South China Sea to be a global sea power (Kaplan 2014, 32-50).

The Philippines and Vietnam are most vocal among those involved in the South China Sea issus. The dispute is not just a simmering tension among these countries. It often develops into physical clashes, cases in international courts and so on. Some other countries have their own share of disputes with China in the South China Sea. Some of them have tension over maritime territories and others have overlapping maritime limits with China. Most of Southeast Asian countries do not have urgent security threat other than the dispute in the South China Sea against China. Six out of ten ASEAN countries have such a security threat of confronting China in the sea.

On the contrary, the positive element of OBOR from the perspective of Southeast Asia is related to economic benefits. In fact, there is little official position on OBOR expressed collectively in the name of ASEAN. Nevertheless, Chinese vision of OBOR that building economic networks through sea and land and thus economic connectivity among regional countries is acceptable by most of ASEAN countries. Furthermore, if one regards the OBOR and the AIIB are in a package, the merit of the initiative is even higher. Developing countries in the region are badly in needs of massive capital for infrastructure building, which is exactly the proposed goal of AIIB.

ASEAN's positive view on OBOR-AIIB is found first of all in official response of ASEAN. There are two examples of this. First one is the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, 2016-2020 and the second example is

the chairman's statement from the 18th ASEAN-China Summit in Kuala Lumpur, 2015. These two documents contain a welcoming view on the AIIB. There is no official document that mentions OBOR issued by ASEAN. The first document simply mentions that the ASEAN welcomes the establishment and implementation of AIIB. The second document express ASEAN's positive view on the AIIB's contribution to the enhancing ASEAN connectivity. It says,

> The ASEAN Leaders appreciated China's continued support for the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) and looked forward to the imminent establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). We looked forward to its role in facilitating regional connectivity, along with China's continuing support for the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and its post-2015 agenda (Chairman's Statement of the 18th ASEAN-China Summit, 2015).

What is behind this expectation of ASEAN is that the fund raised by AIIB could be invested into the infrastructure development of the developing countries of ASEAN. The official goal of AIIB was to increase regional connectivity by investing in the infrastructure development of regional developing countries. It should be mentioned here that enhancing ASEAN connectivity is a major instrument in ASEAN's effort to build ASEAN Community. The proposed goal of AIIB is almost identical with the goal of enhancing ASEAN connectivity. Therefor AIIB is expected to have a lot to offer for the building of ASEAN community from the perspective of ASEAN countries (ASEAN 2011).

The share and voting right allocated to ASEAN developing countries have merits too. Developing countries in ASEAN, although welcomed the AIIB, do not invest much in fund raising. As shown in the Table 1 most of Southeast Asian countries' shares are less than 1% while Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines have more than 1%. The voting rights of those countries are much bigger than the share of investment. Except Indonesia, all Southeast Asian countries' voting right/share ratio is more than 100%. It means that all Southeast Asian countries have more say in AIIB than they actually contribute, except the case of Indonesia whose ratio is 93%. In the case of Cambodia, Laos and Brunei, the ratio is over 500% which means that they have voting rights, 5 times bigger than their contribution. In fact, the voting rights might not be so effective or not be so decisive in the decision-making. Nevertheless, this gives an impression that the AIIB serves the interest of ASEAN developing countries, thus extracting a favourable view on AIIB from those countries.

Table 1. AIIB Share/Voting Right Ration of EAS Member Countries

Countries	Date of Accession	Share (%)	Voting Right(%)	Voting Right/ Share (%)
Brunei	14/10/24	0.05	0.31	620
Cambodia	14/10/24	0.06	0.32	533
Laos	14/10/24	0.04	0.30	750
Myanmar	14/10/24	0.27	0.49	181
Vietnam	14/10/24	0.68	0.84	124
Malaysia	14/10/24	0.11	0.36	327
Philippines	14/10/24	1.00	1.11	111
Singapore	14/10/24	0.25	0.48	192
Thailand	14/10/24	1.45	1.50	103
Indonesia	14/11/25	3.42	3.17	93
China	14/10/24	30.34	26.06	86
India	14/10/24	8.52	7.51	88
New Zealand	15/1/5	0.47	0.66	140
Australia	15/4/3	3.76	3.46	92
Korea	15/4/11	3.81	3.50	92
Russia	15/4/14	6.66	5.93	89

(Source: AIIB information from Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_Infrastructure_Investment_Bank)

Given the reality of economic relations between ASEAN countries and China, ASEAN countries are heavily dependent on China for their economic sustainability. In addition, for the future economic growth of ASEAN, China, despite current economic difficulties, has potential to grow further, which is a boon for the economic future of ASEAN countries. Thus economic partnership with China is very crucial and ASEAN has good reason to be on board in support of OBOR and AIIB.

Table 2. Top 10 Trade Partners of ASEAN in 2014

Countries	Amount (USD Mil.)			Share (%)		
	Export	Import	Trade	Export	Import	Trade
ASEAN	329,642	278,565	608,207	25.5	22.5	24.1
China	150,407	216,119	366,526	11.6	17.5	14.5
Japan	120,224	108,818	229,042	9.3	8.8	9.1
US	122,375	90,054	212,429	9.5	7.3	8.4
EU	132,484	115,824	248,308	10.3	9.4	9.8
Korea	51,624	79,815	131,439	4.0	6.5	5.2
Taiwan	39,472	68,841	108,313	3.1	5.6	4.3
Hong Kong	85,275	14,097	99,372	6.6	1.1	3.9
Australia	45,345	25,029	70,373	3.5	2.0	2.8
India	43,326	24,382	67,708	3.4	2.0	2.7
Sum	1,120,174	1,021,543	2,141,717	86.7	82.6	84.7
Others	172,226	214,673	386,899	13.3	17.4	15.3
Grand Total	1,292,400	1,236,216	2,528,616	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Source: ASEAN Secretariat, http://www.asean.org/?static_post=external-trade-statistics-3)

Table 2 shows that the magnitude of ASEAN's collective economic partnership, trade, with China. China accounts for 14.5% of ASEAN's trade which is roughly 5% points higher than that of the US, EU and Japan. In addition, ASEAN is receiving substantial investment from China although the investment dependency is not as substantial as that of trade. FDI from mainland China to ASEAN account for just 6.5% of all FDI that ASEAN countries receive. If the investment from Hong Kong is added, however, it accounts for more than 13% of all FDI to ASEAN. Then it is ranked at No. 3 following investment from EU and intra-ASEAN investment.

Table 3. Top 10 Investors to ASEAN in 2014

Countries	Amount (USD Mil.)	Portion (%)
EU	29,268	21.49
ASEAN	24,377	17.90
Japan	13,381	9.83
US	13,042	9.58
Hong Kong	9,505	6.98
China	8,869	6.51
Australia	5,703	4.19
Korea	4,469	3.28
Taiwan	2,814	2.07
Canada	1,264	0.93
Sum of top 10	112,694	82.75
Others	23,487	17.25
Grand Total	136,181	100.00

(Source; ASEAN secretariat, http://www.asean.org/?static_post=foreign-direct-investment-statistics)

On top of this practical consideration of economic benefit that ASEAN can expect from its relations with China, the tradition of ASEAN strategy towards bigger powers has some impacts on the ASEAN's overall favourable perception on the OBOR and AIIB. A question that how to make ASEAN's relations with bigger powers for the economic growth and interests of ASEAN members has got higher priority than other questions especially ones related to security. While security related questions have been a sensitive issue within ASEAN, economic matters were viewed as one that brings practical benefits to members without much impinging on sovereignty of individual countries.

The economy first strategy tradition has shaped ASEAN's strategy towards bigger powers – not saying no to none. As a strategy for survival, ASEAN always has taken a stance of keeping equal distances from superpowers (Lee 2012a, 56-64). This strategy has made ASEAN quite often make a

positive response to the proposals by superpowers surround ASEAN. At the same time, ASEAN never have taken side with a particular superpower.

Many of ASEAN countries do not find a contradiction between ASEAN being dependent on the US for security matters and being dependent on China for economic growth even if there is a severe strategic competition going on between the two superpowers. ASEAN always cultivates good relations with superpowers surrounding ASEAN. Putting these two elements, practical economic consideration and tradition of ASEAN diplomacy together, it is easy to expect that ASEAN has a favourable or welcoming view on OBOR-AIIB. Or least, ASEAN does not reject the Chinese initiatives.

4. Individual View of ASEAN countries on OBOR

It is equally difficult to find individual ASEAN countries' view on OBOR. Individual governments do not express their view on OBOR especially when they are not crystal-clear yet on what exactly OBOR is and is intending to do, which even China is not quite sure about either. Given this, one of the way to detour this is to look at objective circumstances that have implications for a country's attitude toward OBOR. With this in mind, we can identify a few variables that may affect a country's view on OBOR – economic variable, security consideration and historical experiences.

Economic variable can be further divided into two parts. First, there are potential benefits that a country gets if it welcomes or joins OBOR or AIIB. Or, there might be a risk of deepening economic dependencies on China when they embrace the initiatives. This second aspect needs further elaboration. Obviously, if one country is included in the Chinese project of OBOR, there is a chance for the country's economy gets dependent on Chinese economy. But, this is not all. The economic dependency may cause dependencies on other aspects, especially strategic and security. Heavy economic dependency may prevent a country from making independent decision-making on foreign policy and strategic issues.

As was the case of collective ASEAN, trade partnership with China is crucial for almost all Southeast Asian countries. In most of the Southeast Asian countries, China is either No. 1 or 2 trading partner. The only exception is Brunei and surprisingly Cambodia. Brunei does not export much to China. China is No. 7 export destination for Cambodian products. Nevertheless, China is No. 2 source of import for the two countries.

Table 4. Rank of China in Trade with Southeast Asian Countries

	Ranking (Import)	Import Amount (USD Mil.)	Ranking (export)	Export Amount (USD Mil.)
Brunei	-	-	2	1,922
Cambodia	9	438	2	3,604
Indonesia	2	17,606	1	30,624
Laos	1	1,601	2	2,032
Malaysia	2	28,204	1	35,328
Myanmar	1	14,162	1	10,312
Philippines	3	8,022	1	10,662
Singapore	1	51,471	1	44,374
Thailand	1	24,826	1	38,528
Vietnam	2	14,906	1	43,868

(Source: ASEAN-Korea Centre 2015, 48-50)

Table 5 shows the trend of FDI to Southeast Asian countries from major FDI sources. What is interesting from this table is that Chinese investment is crucial in countries sharing bordes with China – Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. China is No. 1 source of FDI for these countries. China dubles the investment of the second biggest investor in those countries.

Table 5. FDI Inflows to Southeast Asian countries from major partners (%)

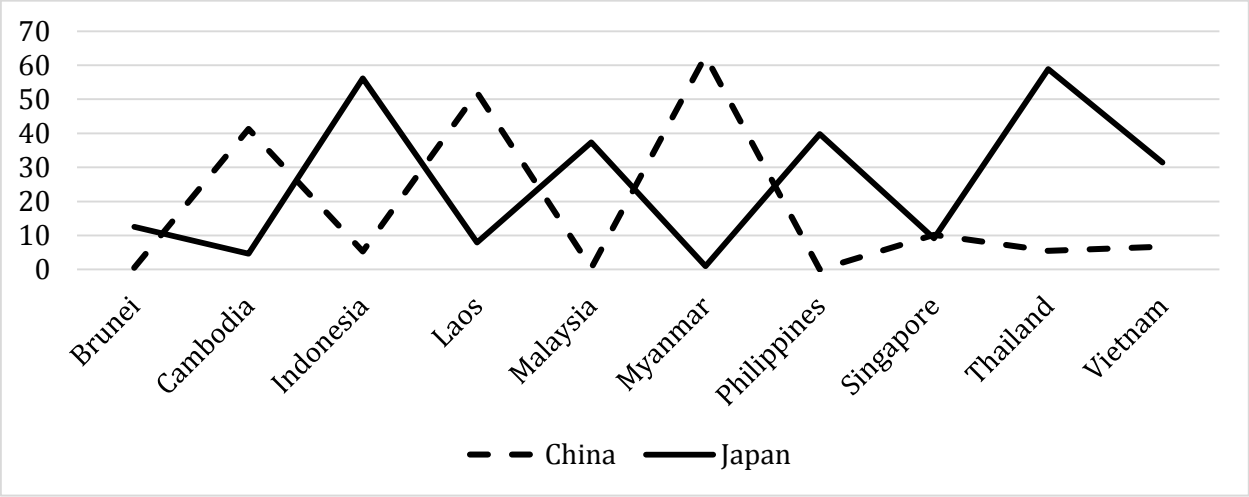
	Korea	China	Japan	EU	US	Australia	Total
Brunei	0	0.5	12.5	83.5	3.3	0.2	100
Cambodia	28.1	41.3	4.6	15.5	5.6	4.9	100
Indonesia	7.2	5.3	56.1	17.5	7.7	6.2	100
Laos	9.1	52	7.9	28.4	0.5	2	100
Malaysia	4.7	0.4	37.3	41.2	12.8	3.6	100
Myanmar	5.4	62.7	1	29.3	1.4	0.3	100

Philippines	1.6	0	39.8	-9.6	64.5	3.7	100
Singapore	1.5	10.2	9.1	56	18.7	4.5	100
Thailand	3.1	5.5	58.9	17.3	13.6	1.6	100
Vietnam	23.7	6.7	31.4	18.8	18.4	1	100

(Soutc: ASEAN 2014)

In addition, the destinations of the FDI from Japan, EU and the US show a stark contrast with that of China. Especially, China and Japan have totally non-overlapping patters of investment. China invests very small in countries that receive heavy Japanese investment and vice versa.

Graph 1. Different Patterns of FDI from China and Japan to Southeast Asia.



Political and security factors have a negative impact on a Southeast Asian country's acceptance of Chinese OBRO. It is largely due to the fact that there is not much for China to offer for the security of Southeast Asian countries. Security element can be further divided into two aspects. First, a geopolitical factor – if a country shares a border with China or not matters. Second, South China Sea issue, without doubt, matters. There are countries having disputes with China in the South China Sea, countries feeling strategic pressure from China in the South China Sea and finally countries having nothing to do with the South China Sea dispute. Countries in different strategic settings against China may have different views on Chinese initiatives including OBOR.

The last variable – historical experience – is an anecdotal one. While we can categorise Southeast Asian countries by economic and security variables, the historical experiences are mostly used to

explain outlier cases. Historical experience of a country had a substantial impact on the country's view and perception on China and thus stance towards OBOR. This variable includes factors such as similarity in political system, diplomatic tradition of a country, experience of major war against China, ethnic composition of a country and etc.

Table 6. Measuring Favourable View on China of Southeast Asian countries[2]

	Security		Economy		Favourability
	Border	SCS	Developing	Dependency	
Brunei	Low	Middle	Low	Low	Low
Cambodia	High	High	High	High	High
Indonesia	Low	Mddle	Middle	Low	Lw
Laos	High	High	High	Hgh	High
Malaysia	Middle	Middle	Low	Low	Low
Myanmar	High	High	High	High	High
Philippines	Low	Low	Mddle	Low	Low
Singapore	Low	Middle	Low	Middle	Low
Thailand	Middle	Middle	Middle	Middle	Middle
Vietnam	High	Low	Middle	Middle	Middle

Three countries, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar have a condition that are likely to extract a favourable response to the Chinese policy towards neighbours or more specifically OBOR and AIIB. Meanwhile, countries like Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines are less likely to have a positive views on those Chinese initiatives. Overall this observation is likely to reflect individual ASEAN countries' perception on China. Nevertheless, there are some elements of individual country context that need further elaboration.

Cambodia and Laos are likely to show most favourable response to the Chinese initiative. They kept friendly stance to China and Chinese foreign policy towards neighbouring countries. Especially, Cambodia, by strongly defending Chinese position on South China Sea first in 2012 and agains in

[2] This is not based on any statistical measurement, but the scores are measured in relative terms

2016, earned a name, the closest ally of China in Southeast Asia. The country also has very intimate relations with China historically. It has been very close to China during the Cold War and it is shown in Chinese intervention to rescue the country when Vietnam invaded Cambodia. Laos, one of the least developed countries in Southeast Asia has a great hope in Chinese economic assistance. The two countries share a history of communist regime, which Laos still is. Being ruled by communist party, Laos of course has a party to party relations with China.

A country that defies an easy description among those higher in rank is Myanmar. In the past, the only window for Myanmar to the outside was China during the military dictatorship. This made Myanmar so much dependent on China in many areas, especially in economic and military fields. In addition, being economically less advanced, the country might have a great interests in the economic assistance that China offer through OBOR and AIIB. Objective condition is likely to make Myanmar a country close to China along with Cambodia and Laos. The reality on the ground, however, might be different. Since 2011 when Myanmar initiated overall reform and liberalisation, Myanmar government has tried to keep some distance from China, realising the danger of being too much dependent on China (Jaishankar 2015). For the reasons like this, Myanmar is not as close as Cambodia and Laos to China at the moment.

Two countries that stand far opposition to Cambodia and Laos on the spectrum are the Philippines and Vietnam. The merit of economic benefits offered by the AIIB and OBOR is offset by the threat that China poses in the South China Sea. The Philippines is an ally of the US. Vietnam is rapidly developing military cooperation with the US in recent years. The Philippines has taken to the issue of Chinese claim of 9 dash line to permanent court of arbitration, in which the country won against China recently (Tomkiw 2016) . New president, Duterte, might have softer stance than former president, Auqino. Nevertheless, the fact that the Philippines have problem with China in the South China Sea would not change. Economically too, the Philippines by no means close to China.

Vietnam is still a developing countries, bordering with China and have substantial economic relations with China. The Vietnamese view on China is not likely to be positive since the country has dispute against China in the South China Sea. In addition, Vietnam has historically many troubles with China. Geographical proximity matters here. The country have felt the pressure from the expanding China. They also were in dispute over border when Vietnam was in dispute with Cambodia. Meanwhile, there is a delicate difference between Vietnam and the Philippines – similarity of political system. Vietnam is under communist rule. The two countries had long developed party-to-party partnership

which is an effective channel to settle the the score in the time of big troubles or differences. Given this, Vietnam has more nuanced attitude towards Chinese initiative compared to the Philippines.

In between these two extremes, there are countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. This group can be divided further into two blocs – positive neutral (Malaysia, Thailand) and independent neutral (Indonesia and Singapore). Malaysia and Thailand traditionally have put much emphasis on economic partnership with China. These two more advanced countries with substantial manufacturing sector used to see rising China an opportunity for a vast new market for their products. These countries have been more pragmatic than ideological in their foreign policy. They are also countries that made diplomatic ties with China before the Chinese economic opening first among anti-communist Southeast Asian countries. Not surprisingly, the tradition of putting more emphasis on economic benefit is likely to produce a positive stance towards Chinese initiatives like OBOR and AIIB. Although Malaysia has overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea, it has made an effort not to sacrifice economic relations with China at the expense of territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Indonesia and Singapore are in a kind of grey area. They are not all out to support OBOR-AIIB, but at the same time do not reject the initiative outright. This somewhat ambiguous attitude is a typical in ASEAN foreign policy tradition. Indonesia traditionally prefers a foreign policy that minimise the intervention of superpower in the region so to maximise the autonomy of regional countries. Meanwhile Singapore is very keen on balance of power given its small size and more importantly national goal of survival in between bigger countries (Acharya 2008).

Roughly, Indonesia has vast domestic market and has been more introvert economically, while Singapore from the beginning has cherished free trade and thus puts much importance on its economic partnership with neighbouring countries. Given these economic tradition, Indonesian stance towards OBOR and AIIB has a chance to be less positive than that of Singapore. In addition, Singapore is more likely to regards the OBOR from the perspective of enhancing connectivity in the region, which will have positive impact on Singaporean economy.

Overall, there are no countries at the moment outrightly reject the Chinese initiative. But at the same time, they have show nuanced differences depending on their relations with China. Considering economic and security variables, there are likely to be roughly four different stances of Southeast Asian countries – highly positive including Cambodia and Laos; positive – Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar and Thailand; cautiously positive – Indonesia and Vietnam and; reserved – the Philippines.

5. Strategic Implication of OBOR towards ASEAN

In a short term, Southeast Asian countries collectively and individually have rather positive stance towards the Chinese initiative of OBOR and AIIB. They are of opinion that they have more to gain than lose. Those countries distancing themselves from China strategically do not reject the initiative outright. In a longer term, the OBOR and AIIB can be a serious challenge to ASEAN countries when the strategic rivalry between China and the US deepens. Particularly if the strategic rivalry between China and the US gets worse, then the strategic premium that ASEAN countries used to enjoy between China and the US would diminish substantially.

There is a good reason that any superpowers surrounding Southeast Asian countries to respect the interests and voice of ASEAN countries. The ASEAN countries, as a collection of 10 countries, have made a unitary voice in regional affairs. Any country that wants a hegemony or wants to exercise influence over regional countries had to listen to the voice of ASEAN countries. Since it was very crucial to make these 10 countries be on their side, any superpowers that have relations with ASEAN countries had to endorse ASEAN centrality and to make various concessions to ASEAN countries (Lee 2012a, 67-69). This strategic circumstance allowed ASEAN to have strategic leverage over superpowers and increased the strategic weight of ASEAN countries.

This strategic edge would face a serious challenge coming from the Chinese OBOR. China is effectively linking OBOR with CICA and seemingly has in mind a broader regional framework in which China exert substantial influence. China expanded its neghbouring countries strategy to Central Asia, South Asia and Middle East beyond Southeast Asia when China announced a New Asia Security Initiative in 2014 CICA summit. What this means is that China effectively increased its strategic options. China now has more countries and regions that potentially are in the Chinese sphere of influence. Developing countries in the Central Asia, South Asia and Middle East are potentially in competition with Southeast Asian developing countries over China's economic assistance (Lee Jaehyon 2015).

There are two implications of this Chinese expansion for ASEAN countries. China has more countries in need of its economic assistance. This means that the share of Southeast Asian countries is now smaller given that there is a limit on Chinese resources to distribute to regional countries. At the same time, this situation means that China can get support from other countries in Central, South and

Middle East Asia. China then has less incentive to listen to Southeast Asian countries and to make concession to Southeast Asia. In extreme case of China losing all ASEAN support, still China has other countries to support its projects in Central, South and Middle East Asia. It measn that the strategic weight of ASEAN countries will be obviously lighter than before.

Pretty much the same scenario is applicable to ASENA's partnership with the US. At the moment, the US is promoting a new regional and strategic concept of Indo-Pacific (Medcalf 2012a; 2012b; Gnanagurunthan 2012; Zhao Minghao 2013; Salil 2013; Beeson 2014). The new concept has its strategic rivalry against China in mind if not outright containment of China (Lee 2015). The intention is obviously to expand the US influence in the region against China. Japan, Australia and India are emerging as staunch supporters of this new regional concept. There is a virtual coalition of these four countries of the US, Japan, Australia and India is being shaped against the growing influence of China in the region.

The intention of the US making a coalition with these three regional powers are maximising power with minimum number of countries with highest effectiveness and efficiency. US strategy is completely different from that of US. While China is amassing maximum number of small countries for the winning coalition, the US is trying to build a coalition of minimum number of countries with credible power. This strategy of the US has implication for ASEAN countries too. If the US can build a credible coalition against China with Japan, Australia and India, then US no more in need of smaller Southeast Asian countries' support.

If the US has the support of a few big voices in Southeast Asia, then the rest of ASEAN countries are optional for the US. The US would be satisfied if countries like economically important Singapore, regional power, Indonesia and the Philippines and Vietnam that are in dispute with China in the South China Sea are in the coalition of the US against China. If not, there is no incentive for the US to try to get all these 10 ASEAN countries in to their camp by making concession as the US did in the past.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a widespread welcoming tone in Southeast Asia over Chinese initiative of OBOR and AIIB. There is, however, no concrete response and action yet. Individual countries' expected responses to the Chinese initiative will be quite complicate and nuanced, depending on their relations with China in economy and in security. Some developing countries, countries that have

positive experience in history, and the countries that do not have particularly acute troubles with China in the South China Sea are likely to have positive view on the OBOR. Meanwhile those countries that have disputes against China in the South China Sea, the security consideration is likely to overwhelm the expected economic benefit of OBOR.

What is more interesting here is the strategic dilemma that the Southeast Asian countries would have when the strategic rivalry between China that attempts to expand its sphere of influence in the Asia-Pacific and the US that is all out to undermine the Chinese expansion gets worse. So far, Southeast Asian countries, individually and collectively, have played a smart strategy – not to be in a particular side and keeping neutrality to maximise their interests and chance of survival. This strategy, however, might not work as it did before if the strategic rivalry between China and the US deepens.

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[3-4]

The Dual Deficits Dilemma and ASEAN's Centrality in East Asia

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Abstract

While literature focuses on the role of ASEAN in the expanded regionalism of East Asia, we still do not know much about what drives ASEAN to act in certain ways at certain times, not in others, and why it does so. This paper focuses on these questions. Particularly, it focuses on the dual concerns of ASEAN state elites regarding marginalization as a major factor that affects their vision for the institutionalization of the broader region as well as a desire to shape their role in the region. Employing the concept of the 'dual-deficit dilemma,' this paper argues that ASEAN's position on the designs of East Asian regional mechanisms has reflected the member states' efforts to address that dilemma, which stems from the inversely related nature of autonomy- and attraction-deficits in relation to other major powers in the region. Both security and economic regional arrangements are discussed to support this claim.

Introduction

With the most recent focus on regionalism, interactions among states and non-state actors at international and regional levels have received significant scholarly attention, and the case of East Asia is no exception. A phenomenon that observers have frequently noted in this region is that ASEAN has been successful in claiming a central role in shaping the layers of multilateral

institutions in East Asia; non-ASEAN members seem to accept this role and recognize ASEAN as the leading player in decision-making for development of these institutions.

Although studies abound on ASEAN's role in setting normative and institutional rules around East Asia, they seem to be insufficient in discussing chronological variance or specifying why ASEAN states desired to build the institutions as such. A constructivist approach would highlight ASEAN's normative settings to explain why the Association designed expanded regional arrangements as such. For example, this approach could show how new regional cooperation in East Asia was designed to be compatible with the normative settings of ASEAN. However, the approach does not adequately explain why ASEAN held fast to certain local norms (e.g., consensus, informality, etc.) yet allowed a normative departure from other local principles (e.g., Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality [ZOPFAN], which prohibits the inclusion of external powers in security issues, illiberal economic practices, etc.) when designing expanded institutions. The local fit thesis may suggest that leaders' selective consideration of ideational fitness or the hierarchy of local norms caused this variance. However, it remains unclear how this hierarchy of local norms, if it exists, works or on what basis leaders make such selective considerations.

Another approach highlights domestic politics. For example, Solingen provides a domestic coalition analysis, arguing that the rising political power of internationalist forces since the 1980s led to the establishment of economic regional mechanisms that promoted an open economy and export-led integration into the global economy.[1] Although this approach captures an important factor associated with a generic trend toward export-led liberalization of the regional economy, this theory seems insufficient for discussing the designs of institutional frameworks. For example, this explanation does not explain why leaders of certain countries, such as Malaysia, advocated for a mechanism that did not include the US since early 1990s when their internationalist constituencies were more dependent on the US market than the internationalist groups of neighboring countries such as Indonesia, which advocated inclusion of the US. Moreover, it remains debatable that such a clear-cut division between nationalist and internationalist coalitions existed in Southeast Asia.[2] With a blurred dividing line, it is less likely that domestic struggles among distinct interest groups

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[1] Etel Solingen, "ASEAN, Quo Vadis? Domestic Coalitions and Regional Cooperation," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 21:1(1999), pp.30-53.

[2] For example, Kanishka Jayasuriya, "Southeast Asia's Embedded Mercantilism in Crisis: International Strategies and Domestic Coalitions," in Andres T.H. Tan and J.D. Kenneth Boutin, eds. *Non-traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2001), pp.26-29.

were decisive forces linked to the rise and decline of regional cooperative arrangements.

A realist instrumental perspective employs useful concepts such as 'institutional balancing' to explain the changing patterns of economic regional cooperation institutions.[3] For example, Kai He argues that East Asia-centered regionalism with the exclusion of the US was the outcome of balancing strategies of Southeast Asian leaders against the US when they realized that they were under Washington's uniploar leadership in an economically interdependent world. However, the theory does not explain why some of these ASEAN elites enthusiastically supported the inclusion of these Western countries within an East Asian framework during a similar time period. Also, the institutional balancing approach does not consider intramural difference of views across ASEAN members. For example, Indonesia and Singapore are the members that supported America's inclusion while Malaysia did not like the inclusion of Western countries as well as the US. The institutional balancing against China would have been desirable for some member states, but not for others.

To add value to literature, this paper discusses a relatively unaddressed source of ASEAN elites' positions by highlighting the importance of the relational structure between ASEAN countries and major industrialized states in East Asia as a central factor shaping their decisions in East Asian multilateralism. Specifically, it employs 'the concept of the dual-deficit dilemma' to identify the individual and collective positions of ASEAN elites regarding how to design international institutions in East Asia. The hierarchical relations between ASEAN states and major industrialized powers in terms of the distribution of power give rise to distinct concerns about marginalization of the former. Concerns can be twofold. First, as many ASEAN states are incapable of providing sufficient territorial and economic security for their citizens, sudden disengagement of major powers acting as security providers would disrupt their political survival. This makes the ASEAN elites anxious about attraction-deficits, particularly when their countries' strategic value to the major powers shrinks. Second, ASEAN elites are more likely to be concerned about a possibility the major powers can meddle in their internal affairs than other states who are not in the hierarchical relations with the neighbors. The major countries have tangible and intangible power to influence weaker partners and push their ideas for a preferred system or policy on the weak targets that do not have the capacity to resist thoroughly. They can put them into action when they have political will to do so. This can lead to high level of concerns about autonomy deficits among ASEAN elites vis-à-vis the major external

[3] He 2008; For a study of institutional-balancing approach to ASEAN as a whole, see Ruland 2011

powers.[4]

Although reducing concerns over these dual deficits could become a key foreign policy goal for weaker states, implementing this objective is not an easy task because of their inversely related nature. For example, when an actual or perceived decrease in existing sponsorship triggers ASEAN elites' concerns over attraction deficits, one of the measures they can use is ideational or institutional engagement with major powers, which draws ASEAN states' potential sponsors into regional affairs and thus reduces their concerns about being sidelined. However, a full pledge of ideational convergence may raise a possibility that the major powers can have a more legitimate room in the future to push for further ideational or institutional reforms to an undesirable extent; thus, the elites' autonomy concerns may rise. If their autonomy were perceived as weakened, they would want to buffer their independence by withdrawing from institutional rules or norms that support major powers' preferences. However, any distinctly divergent moves may cause disappointed major powers to disengage from ASEAN-related affairs by gradually reducing their security provisions or economic support. This action could trigger the weaker side's concerns about becoming irrelevant (attraction deficit). As major powers' support assists ASEAN elites in providing their citizens with territorial and economic security, disengagement of major powers negatively influences their political survival. Thus, elites would want to ensure the major powers' commitment to the region by accepting their demands or preferences. However, a possibility still exists that such engagement may increase demands from these bigger neighbors to accommodate their needs or interests. In other words, concerns over autonomy deficit still lingers and may rise with the major powers' increasing demands.[5]

A cyclic chain of actions presents ASEAN members with the dilemma of dual deficits where disproportionate emphasis on one side of concerns would aggravate concerns about the other deficit. Therefore, balanced management of dual deficit concerns becomes a desirable goal. In other words, ASEAN elites may want to bond institutionally with the major sponsors only to the extent that ASEAN's concerns over autonomy deficits will be mitigated or at least not rise substantially. If sponsors are willing to accommodate ASEAN's concerns over autonomy in the institutional

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[4] Ki-Hyun Bae, "Neither Left-out nor Pushed-over: Anxious ASEAN and its 4C Practices," The Pacific Review 28:5 (2015), pp. 703-729.

[5] Ki-Hyun Bae, "The Dilemma of Attraction-Autonomy Deficits: The Institutionalization of Human Rights in ASEAN," The Korean Journal of International Studies 12:2(2014), pp.353-377.

development, ASEAN states' commitment to the new institutions will probably increase. However, if autonomy concerns are not acknowledged, ASEAN elites will be less likely to increase their institutional commitment.[6]

The concept of the dilemma of attraction and autonomy deficits highlights that the timing and pattern of ASEAN's decisions on the direction of extended regional architecture reflected ASEAN elites' collective attempts to balance the inversely related concerns of dual deficit stemming from relations with major neighbors. Until the late 1990s, ASEAN elites resisted the idea of belonging to expanded regional mechanisms. However, despite years of skepticism, ASEAN elites agreed to establish the ARF and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) when their concerns about weakening sponsorship from major advanced countries increased, but they negotiated the terms of regional cooperation in a way that ensured their rights to autonomous decision-making. As time went by, however, ASEAN elites increasingly felt that the expected sponsorship from the major economies that promoted APEC did not materialize. Further, they perceived the promoters of the Asia-Pacific grouping as increasingly intrusive toward APEC, which raised further skepticism about APEC's value in managing their dual concerns. In this context, the level of commitment from ASEAN elites to Asia-Pacific regionalism weakened. Their participation in alternative economic cooperation arrangements has been increasing instead. In contrast, ARF, in spite of consistent criticism of being all talk and no action, has remained intact by continuing to assist in managing the dual deficit dilemma. The following sections discuss this in detail by providing a chronological comparison of ASEAN's decisions pertaining to the institutional development of ARF and APEC.

The Rise and Decline of Regional Arrangements in East Asia

Ideas of expanded or multilateral regional arrangements not supported for decades

The idea of establishing regional mechanisms in East Asia has a long history. The first major initiative for Asia-Pacific regionalism was a proposal in 1965 for the Pacific Free Trade Area (PFTA), composed of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the US as full members and

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[6] Ibid.

developing nations in the region as associate members. Though the concept was not realized, it laid the foundation for Pacific Trade and Development (PAFTAD), originating in 1968; it worked as an epistemic community of local economists under Japanese sponsorship. At the first PAFTAD conference, the establishment of the Organization for Pacific Trade and Development (OPTAD), an Asian version of the OECD, was proposed. However, it was met with a cool response from many governments.[7] With the support of Japanese and Australian economists, the idea of OPTAD was revived in 1979. The goals remained the same but the proposal called for expanding full membership to include countries in Southeast Asia and South America.

Again, responses from ASEAN countries were lukewarm. The idea did not fit well with their foreign policy concerns or existing practices, and the concept of economic regionalism made little sense to them at that time. As Miles Kahler notes, the export strategies of ASEAN countries during the Cold War were geared toward the US market. Thus, bilateral bargaining with the US and membership in a global trade regime such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) guaranteed their market access.[8] Proponents of OPTAD and ASEAN elites compromised by establishing the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC), a tripartite organization consisting of academic, business, and governmental representatives; their objective was to study the proposed concept further. However, ASEAN leaders did not adopt the idea of building Track I institutions for regional economic integration until Australian Prime Minister Hawke officially proposed the APEC in January 1989.

ASEAN members originally responded to Hawke's proposal with careful reservations. ASEAN foreign ministers produced a communiqué six months after the Hawke proposal, taking note of the external demand for an economic cooperative mechanism among Pacific Rim countries in the region. However, ministers of Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand asserted that they "would not be tempted to take part in the setting up of a fresh mechanism which would only overlap with the existing mechanism for cooperation between the group and its dialogue partners in the Pacific."[9]

Likewise, the expanded multilateral regional mechanism for security issues, proposed by

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[7] John Ravenhill, J. *APEC and the Construction of Pacific Rim Regionalism,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.51-52

[8] Cited in Yoichi Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion: Japan's Role in APEC* (Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 1995) p.178.

[9] Cited in "ASEAN ended its two-day AMM," *Jakarta Post,* July 5 1989.

Canada, Australia and Japan, drew initial skepticism. According to Raul Manglapus, Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the proposal for multilateral security arrangements in ASEAN was a "tremendous breakthrough," as "nobody even wanted to mention the word 'security' in ASEAN discussions."[10] Until that point, ASEAN countries approached security matters was only on an ad hoc basis for specific situations, such as the situation in Cambodia, or in bilateral relations. Security, or military cooperation, had increased since the early 1980s. However, all forms of exchange among ASEAN members were bilateral or trilateral; they had not evolved into a formal pan-ASEAN arrangement.[11]

With the end of the Cold War, leverage of Southeast Asia vis-a-vis the US and major European powers decreased and ASEAN elites were worried

Early skepticism was finally replaced with a positive answer from ASEAN. After two decades of external efforts to sell the idea, extended economic regionalism was beginning to be institutionalized. The idea of multilateral security arrangements was also received more positively, breaking the taboo regarding security discussions among ASEAN members; the theory of dual deficits can explain the more favorable mindset.

One of the consequences of the decline of the Cold War was the increase in leverage that major powers had over their smaller allies, including members of ASEAN. The expected downfall of the Communist bloc meant a drastic change in regional threats. The US Congress began to question its costly global defense burdens and the free-riding behavior of its allies. Beginning in 1989, the US Defense Department dropped several new weapons programs and reduced the number of naval vessels and aircrafts deployed in Southeast Asia. Congress also forced large spending cuts on Pentagon projects overseas, approving only US $22 million of the requested US $99 million for projects in the Philippines.[12] According to the 1990 US Defense Department's East Asian Strategy Initiative, the overall force of 135,000 personnel deployed in Asia would decrease by up to 15,000 during the first phase (1990-1992), and the second and third phases would see further reductions in

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[10] Cited in Rodolfo Severino, *The ASEAN Regional Forum* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009) p.4.

[11] Mochtar Kusuma-Atmadja, "Some Thoughts on ASEAN Security Cooperation: An Indonesian Perspective," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 12:3 (1990), pp.161-162.

[12] Nayan Chanda, "US Congress attacks defense 'free-riders,'" *Far Eastern Economic Review* (April 21 1988), pp.24-25.

US forces.[13] In practice, security assistance provided to Thailand by the US gradually decreased from US $92.2 million in 1986 to US $29.2 million in 1989. Moreover, the existing base agreement between the Philippines and the US was about to expire in 1991, increasing discomfort in the region. Though many foreign policy officials in the newly established Aquino administration were concerned about the abrupt withdrawal of the US military from their country, negotiating a new base agreement was necessary to soothe political sensitivities and attain the Philippine Senate's approval.

Moreover, even if the US did not withdraw from East Asia, it was expected to concentrate more on Northeast Asia. Major US military bases would remain in Japan and South Korea. Japan and China were regional powers, and Korea and Taiwan (in Northeast Asia) were viewed as potential conflict points. According to Robert McMahon, the Southeast Asian region "seemed about to be relegated once again to its pre-Cold War status: essentially, as a peripheral area of interest to a superpower with more fundamental interests in Europe, the Middle East, Northeast Asia, and elsewhere."[14] The region's importance did not lie any more in "the lofty geopolitical calculations that had driven past policy" of the US.[15]

In the economic realm, Washington focused more on reshaping the global economic structure using common institutions and rules that required stricter compliance, calling for more aggressive trade policies based on the principle of specific reciprocity.[16] Super 301 provisions in the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act authorized retaliations against countries that limited US market interests. As Washington announced that the Generalized System of Preferences would be withdrawn from the four newly industrialized countries in East Asia (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) in early 1989, it also warned other ASEAN countries that their privileges could be lost.

ASEAN elites were increasingly concerned about such shifts. They were concerned that

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[13] Susumu Awanohara, "Flurry of signals," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (May 3 1990).

[14] Robert J. McMahon, *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp.184-185.

[15] Ibid., pp.184-185.

[16] Bob Catley, "Hegemonic America: The Arrogance of Power," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 21:2 (1999), p.168.

their region, which consisted of weaker states, would be at the mercy of major powers.[17] Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore noted, "Unless the ASEAN can match the other regions in attractiveness, both as a base for investments as well as a market for their products, investments […] are likely to flow away from our part of the world to the single European market and NAFTA."[18] In a speech at the Indonesia Forum in 1990, Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's Foreign Minister for Trade and Industry, expressed apprehension about ASEAN marginalization: "ASEAN [countries] may no longer weigh as heavily in the calculations of these major players. With the end of the Cold War, they will now feel less need to woo small countries and regional grouping."[19] In his speech to the US Council of Foreign Relations, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir also noted, "If the privileges of the NAFTA are extended to all the Central and South American countries, not only will the Americas be self-contained and independent of all resources and products from the rest of the world, but the bloc can use its economic strength to bludgeon the non-EC countries into economic submission."[20] These leaders shared a common economic goal that investment diversion to other parts of the world should be avoided.[21]

Of particular importance was the relative decrease in ASEAN's leverage and the perceived reduction in sponsorship from more advanced partners in the West. As the Communist bloc declined, existing patrons had fewer reasons to provide ASEAN countries with sponsorship funding for strategic purposes. If weaker partners could not enjoy the same commitment levels from sponsors, they would have more difficulty providing territorial and economic security in a sustainable, predictable way. In other words, what concerned ASEAN leaders was not whether major powers actually disengaged from the region, but whether and to what extent sponsorship from existing patrons would decline. The latter triggered fears of marginalization, which was tamed previously by the extraordinary level of security and economic sponsorship provided during the Cold War.

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[17] Ravenhill, Ibid., pp. 81-82.

[18] Nicholas Tarling, *Regionalism in Southeast Asia: To Foster the Political Will* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p.201.

[19] Lee Hsien Loong, speech delivered at Indonesia Forum meeting, Jakarta (11 July 1990).

[20] Mahathir, speech titled 'ASEAN in the 1990s and beyond' at the US Council of Foreign Relations, New York (26 September 1991).

[21] Also, see Paul Bowles, "ASEAN, AFTA, and the "New Regionalism," Pacific Affairs 70:2 (1997) p.224.

ASEAN elites began discussing expanded regional mechanisms

In the uncertain environment described in the previous section, the idea of new regional arrangements to attract external players began receiving a positive response from a group of ASEAN elites. By the time the Singapore Summit was held in January 1992, several ASEAN leaders—notably from Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines—were supportive of inviting major outside powers to the ASEAN framework as a step toward implementing new cooperative measures regarding security. For example, Manglapus, Foreign Secretary of the Philippines, suggested that ASEAN members should begin a dialogue on security that included allies from the Asia Pacific and other continents. He argued that "ASEAN must view the long term, including the vision of ZOPFAN [i.e., regional autonomy]. But ASEAN must also appreciate the short term, immediate requirements of regional security."[22] The high-level officials argued further that new security cooperation should incorporate a military dimension, including confidence-building measures, which could eventually prevent participants from taking military initiatives against their counterparts.[23]

The idea of attracting external players gained momentum in the economic realm as well. Historically, ASEAN elites had reservations regarding invitations to expanded regional arrangements, but they began to realize that Asia-Pacific economic cooperation could be a useful mechanism to keep the major powers focused on ASEAN countries. Lee Hsien Loong suggested that "at a time when Eastern Europe is attracting more attention from the developed countries, APEC will provide an extra incentive for the US, Japan, and the other major regional economies to strengthen their ties with ASEAN."[24] Philippine Finance Minister Jesus Estanislao argued that Asia-Pacific cooperation would create a middle layer between ASEAN at the sub-regional level and GATT at the global level, thereby helping ASEAN finalize the Uruguay Round.[25] Thai elites thought an Asia-Pacific grouping under Japan's leadership could enhance its bargaining power vis-

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[22] Raul Manglapus, Philippine Foreign Secretary, address at the seminar titled 'ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Region: Prospects for Cooperation in the 1990s', Manila (6 June 1991).

[23] For example, see the views of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and Philippine Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Rodolfo Severino cited in "The first step," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (3 June 1993), p. 18.

[24] Lee, Ibid.

[25] Funabashi, Ibid., p.67.

à-vis emerging integrated markets in Europe and North America.[26] Director Jusuf Wanandi of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia advocated rethinking the underlying assumptions for local principles that described ASEAN as "a self-contained sub-region" so that it would move forward as "an integral part of the wider Asia Pacific region."[27]

Concerns by ASEAN elites regarding more inclusive regional arrangements and a rise in autonomy deficits

Although accepting proposals for more inclusive regional arrangements might have helped ASEAN engage external regional powers, several ASEAN foreign policy elites resisted adopting them because of the potential of a more institutionalized influence from the larger external powers. The ASEAN elites were reserved because they wanted to make sure the group's identity would not disintegrate with the acceptance of the expanded regional arrangements. The former Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mochtar Kusuma-Atmadja, noted in a speech at the workshop on South China Sea in Bali that any profitable discussion on regional security issues, such as South China Sea disputes, must exclude outside involvement.[28] Singapore's diplomats also opposed the idea and advocated that "discussions of security" should remain "within ASEAN's orbit."[29] An Indonesian diplomat confirmed this view: "We don't want to see the region amalgamated."[30]

In the economic arena as well, the idea of integrating with [the] North was difficult for ASEAN leaders to accept. As Ba notes, the intra-regional debates regarding APEC focused less on the economic benefits of cooperation and more on whether such a mechanism would marginalize Southeast Asian countries and existing ASEAN processes.[31] Among others, the Malaysian

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[26] Peter Drysdale, "Growing Pains," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (18 May 1989), p.32.

[27] Jusuf Wanandi, address at the seminar on ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Region: Prospects for Security Cooperation in the 1990s, Manila (6-7 June 1991).

[28] Kusuma-Atmadja, Ibid.

[29] Quoted in Michael Vatikiotis, "A bit more backbone," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (1 August 1991), p.11

[30] Quoted in Michael Vatikiotis, "The first step," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (3 June 1993), p.18.

[31] Alice Ba, *(Re)Negotiating East and Southeast Asia: Regions, Regionalism, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p.142.

government was the staunchest critic of the idea. Many Indonesian elites were also concerned that "disparities in income, technology, and skill level among APEC economies could lead to asymmetrical dependence, heightened tension, and North-South polarization in APEC."[32] Philippine Trade and Industry Secretary Jose Conception, Jr. also expressed concerns that these big external powers would become intrusive patrons trying to fix the internal problems of their weaker partners, including ASEAN countries.[33]

ASEAN elites' call for the design of expanded regionalism to help balance dual deficit concerns

Both concerns had to be accommodated at the ASEAN level. Elites agreed to the establishment of new regional mechanisms that would help mitigate their concerns over attraction deficits. However, they expended considerable diplomatic energy to design them in a way that would secure ASEAN's voice and not aggravate their autonomy deficits.

In the security area, ASEAN leaders finally encouraged the creation of a new security forum for the broader region in 1992, but they also suggested the role of ASEAN as its pivot by extending the existing ASEAN dialogue for this role. According to Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Badawi, ASEAN leaders must "remain resolute and steadfast in defending ASEAN positions and interests lest the ARF process moves irreversibly [….] [Leaders] must not allow ASEAN to be taken for granted by others, or worse, be used by others to secure their own interests."[34] Surin Pitsuwan also observed ASEAN's "fiercely protective" position regarding its leading role in the new security framework.[35] The elites realized that to achieve its goals, it was essential for ASEAN to steer this broader regional arrangement.

ARF, created in 1993, ensured ASEAN's prominent status; ARF members agreed that ASEAN would host the former's annual meetings and set the agenda. Also, it was agreed that

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[32] Hadi Soesastro, "The Institutional Framework for APEC: An ASEAN Perspective," in Chia Seow Yue (ed.) *APEC: Challenges and Opportunities*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), p.49.

[33] Lim, Kian Tick, "Competing Regionalism: APEC and EAEG, 1989-1990," in Andres T.H. Tan, and J.D. Kenneth Boutin, eds. *Non-traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2001), p.64.

[34] S. Perera, "Malaysia laments ASEAN's lack of revolve," *Straits Times* (30 July 1995).

[35] Ba, Ibid., pp.181-182, 280.

ASEAN members would always take one of co-chairship of ARF's inter-sessional study groups.[36] Besides, the emerging arrangement should not pursue premature institutionalization. As former ASEAN Secretary-General Rodolfo Severino, Jr. noted, placing informal, consensus-based dialogue as a primary rule of the forum was reassuring in that "nobody would railroad or ram through measures that others might deem to be threatening to them."[37]

Regarding economic cooperation, the elites could have rejected APEC just as they vetoed similar proposals in the past. However, under the increasingly less lenient position of the major states, if they had not bought into the idea, they might have been pushed aside. Therefore, they decided to join the Asia-Pacific grouping in 1989, but in a way that would prevent a substantial rise in autonomy deficits. Thus, acceptance was granted based on several conditions.[38] First, ASEAN elites decided to take a collective position within APEC.[39] Noting that ASEAN had been the only provider of a platform for intergovernmental cooperation in the Asia-Pacific since 1984, Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas argued in the first APEC ministerial meeting in 1989 that ASEAN's identity and cohesion should not be diluted in any enhanced format.[40] For further reassurance of ASEAN as a group, ASEAN Secretariat officials were asked to participate in meetings of APEC senior officials; further, ASEAN elites wanted at least every other ministerial meeting to be held in an ASEAN member country. Second, ASEAN elites favored the consensus principle as APEC's decision-making rule in order to reassure that outside powers could not force liberalization on weak states and that weak states would be allowed to determine their own pace for liberalization. Third, ASEAN opposed hasty institutionalization of APEC. Calling attention to Malaysia's reservations regarding participation in APEC, ASEAN pressured APEC advocates to ensure that APEC would remain an informal consultative group dedicated to assisting advancing nations in upgrading their performances.[41]

Governments of Australia, Japan, and the US, the most active promoters of APEC, were

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[36] Sheldon Simon, "Security Prospects in Southeast Asia: Collaborative Efforts and the ASEAN Regional Forum," *The Pacific Review* 11:2(1998) p. 205.

[37] Rodolfo Severino, *The ASEAN Regional Forum* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), p.17.

[38] ASEAN's Kuching Consensus in February 1990 summarizes their input on how they wanted to approach the concept of Asia-Pacific regionalism.

[39] "Interview with Lee Kuan Yew," *Bangkok Post* (18 September 1989).

[40] Ali Alatas, Statement at the initial exploratory meeting on Asia-Pacific cooperation, Canberra (6-7 November 1989).

[41] Mohamad Mahathir, *Mahathir: The Awakening* (Kuala Lumpur: Uni-Strength, 1994), p.96.

attentive to ASEAN's concerns over losing control of members' economies. They agreed that APEC would be developed on the condition that the specific principles of participation demanded by ASEAN members were met. They did not want to scare away ASEAN countries from the start and add another failure to their persistent efforts over the past 10 years to launch an Asia-Pacific economic region.[42] Consequently, the Chair's report from APEC's first meeting identified APEC as "a non-formal forum for consultation among high-level representatives of significant economies in the Asia-Pacific region" and acknowledged ASEAN's concerns that APEC "should complement and draw upon, rather than detract from, existing organizations in the region."[43]

APEC's evolution contradicted expectation of ASEAN elites regarding management of the dual deficit dilemma

Though APEC began with rules aimed to accommodate the autonomy concerns of ASEAN elites, the rules soon became a topic of contention as APEC members gradually disagreed over whether these rules were worth maintaining. For example, many ASEAN leaders were concerned about APEC's rapid institutionalization. Washington's increasing emphasis on a reciprocal and binding approach contradicted the voluntary approach agreed on prior to the launch of APEC. From 1994 onward, APEC's Eminent Persons Group advocated specific commercial liberalization, and ASEAN leaders were increasingly concerned that the epistemic community's recommendations would become APEC's core agenda. With ASEAN's strong support, APEC members agreed at the 1995 Osaka Summit to allow each economy to determine the content of Individual Action Plans (IAPs) on trade and investment liberalization and undertake these Action Plans on a non-binding basis. However, in the wake of limited progress with IAPs, the US proposed an alternative initiative called Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization (EVSL) at the 1997 Vancouver Summit. This initiative targeted 15 specific industry sectors for fast-track liberalization.[44] The EVSL concept was based on the recognition that GATT-type concession trading and issue linkage was necessary to achieve a balance between sectors. Furthermore, the voting process involved choosing 15 of 41 sectors for the

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[42] Funabashi, Ibid., p.66; Ravenhill, Ibid., p.84.

[43] APEC Chairman Summary Statement, 7 November 1989, http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/APEC/19891107.O1J.html (accessed 20 May 2015)

[44] Christopher Dent, *Organizing the Wider East Asian Region*, Mid-term Review Workshop on Evolution of Institutions for Regionalism in Asia and the Pacific. Asian Development Bank Headquarter, Manila, the Philippines (10-11 September 2009), pp. 29-30.

package, which concerned ASEAN leaders in favor of consensus-based decisions.[45] According to these leaders, wide economic disparity across member economies required the Asia-Pacific grouping to give them more flexibility, not less, as suggested by those who argued that legal rules and binding contracts were the only effective means.

Not only did APEC fail to alleviate the autonomy concerns of ASEAN leaders, it also made ASEAN leaders grow skeptical of the possibility that their engagement in the Asia-Pacific mechanism could assist them in drawing adequate sponsorship from industrialized countries. First, as years went by, developing ASEAN nations had to lower their expectations for development assistance within the APEC mechanism. Washington wanted to strengthen APEC as a regional arrangement for trade and investment liberalization, whereas most ASEAN economies wanted to balance the agenda for liberalization with that regarding development assistance. Japan was the only advanced economy that actively initiated projects for development assistance with developing partners. However, some US officials thought Japan's approach was diversionary, worrying that it might be a reflection of Japan's attempt to buy APEC through its Official Development Assistance (ODA).[46] In addition, and more importantly, major economies within APEC failed to provide active assistance to their APEC partners during the 1997 East Asian financial crisis. According to John Funston, the US promised at APEC meetings in 1997 to organize a meeting of financial ministers and central bankers to discuss the crisis, but there were no signs of urgency.[47] This inaction remained the same when the crisis spread to Indonesia. Only later when the problems spread to Korea did Washington begin to show some urgency in addressing the issue.[48] Major economies such as the US, New Zealand, and Australia, from which ASEAN leaders had expected more reliable sponsorship, did little more than call for strict compliance of the crisis-hit Southeast Asian countries with IMF prescriptions (Miller, 1997). According to an Indonesian official, "APEC was not there. It responded *slowly"* [emphasis added].[49]

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[45] Michael Wesley, 'APEC's Mid-life Crisis? The Rise and Fall of Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization', *Pacific Affairs* 74:2 (2001) pp.200-201.

[46] Funabashi, Ibid., p.99.

[47] John Funston, "ASEAN: Out of its Depth?," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20:1 (1998), p.31.

[48] Kim Kihwan, presentation at the 29th Pacific Economic Community Seminar, Taipei (28 November 2005).

[49] Ba, Ibid., p.210.

APEC's evolution as such led ASEAN leaders to see that the expected sponsorship from APEC promoters would not be achievable through institutional bonding.[50] In particular, a sense of disappointment increased among ASEAN elites because of a lack of extended assistance from the US, a major economic sponsor for most original ASEAN member states. According to Ann Marie Murphy, ASEAN elites expressed a rising sense of betrayal when the Clinton administration declined to make additional contributions to the IMF bailout.[51] They also resented Washington's decision not to aid Thailand or any other ASEAN countries, though the US actively supported Mexico during a similar crisis four years before.

As a Vietnamese diplomat put it, many ASEAN elites perceived that ASEAN had become diluted in the APEC process.[52] Suharto complained about the attitudes of advanced countries toward the financial upheavals. He called for more contributions from these advanced APEC members to ensure currency stability.[53] Mahathir also complained, "APEC has come to dominate the East Asian economy, but was either unwilling or powerless to help the East Asian countries during the economic and financial turmoil."[54] A prominent Malaysian expert similarly wrote that, "the grouping [APEC] is impotent and unable to rise to the occasion. It is not designed, nor will its most powerful member allow it to come to the 'aid' of developing countries… Some of its members are focused more on 'pricing open' markets in the name of 'trade liberalization' and 'globalization' than to pay attention to the needs of the poorer members."[55] Several scholars also expressed concerns. For example, American Eminent Persons Group (EPG) member Fred Bergsten noted, "most East Asians feel that they were both let down and put upon by the West" during the crisis.[56]

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[50] For commentaries about APEC's lack of response to the Asian crisis, see Matt Miller, "APEC: Where's plan B?," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (4 December 1997); Mark Beeson, "Reshaping Regional Institution: APEC and the IMF in East Asia," *The Pacific Review* 12:1(1999), pp.1-24.

[51] Ann Marie Murphy, "United States Relations with Southeast Asia: The Legacy of Policy Changes," in Ann Marie Murphy, and Bridget Welsh, eds. *Legacy of Engagement in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), p.268. Murphy also quotes Thai journalist Kavi Chongkittavorn: "[Thai Prime Minister and his government] would have assumed that the US is interested to see Thailand survive the financial turbulence intact given its credentials as a developing country that has a democratic political system. They would have thought that US assistance would be automatic without making [a] request."

[52] A Vietnamese diplomat, interview with author, Kuala Lumpur, May 30, 2012.

[53] "IMF slow in aiding ASEAN to deal with currency crisis," *Jakarta Post* (17 September 1997).

[54] Quoted in Chin, Kin Wah, "ASEAN's Engagement with the US in the 21st Century," in Sharon Siddique, and Sree Kumar, compiled, *The 2nd ASEAN Reader* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), p.407.

[55] "Crisis shows region must take care of itself," *New Straits Times* (13 September 1999).

[56] Quoted in David Capie, "Rival Regions? East Asian Regionalism and its Challenge to the Asia-Pacific," in Jim Rolfe (ed.) *The Asia-Pacific: A Region in Rransition* (online publication, 2004), p.155

Japanese expert Tsutomu Kikuchi expressed a sense of shared humiliation in post-crisis East Asia, which triggered Asian leaders' desires to be more autonomous from "the IFIs [International Financial Institutions] based in Washington, the authorities of the United States, and the private (predominantly Anglo-Saxon) markets that took their cues from both."[57]

On the contrary, ARF's evolution was orbited around ASEAN's centrality. The ARF's position as an outer layer of ASEAN-led institutions helped secure ASEAN's central role in setting the pace and agenda of the Forum. In spite of external and internal skepticism of ARF's relevance in achieving common security and building confidence of the region and its capacity to implement practical joint activities in the prioritized non-traditional security issues, ARF remained important to ASEAN elites in terms of its utility in managing the elites' concerns over dual deficits in relations with major external partners. ASEAN's centrality was persistently acknowledged; soft institutionalization and consensus-based decision making rules were respected; any substantial cooperative initiatives can be proposed when at least one ASEAN country participated them as a co-proponent. In other words, ASEAN was able to have major partners engaged in the region, but in a way to ensure its steering role that would help abate ASEAN elites' autonomy concerns.

ASEAN elites' attention redirected from APEC to other schemes

Unlike ARF's development, APEC's (perceived) failure throughout the 1990s to check advanced nations' unilateral approach toward trade frictions and support during the financial crisis led ASEAN elites to wonder if the idea of an Asia-Pacific economic region should still be cultivated. Southeast Asian member economies gradually turned their attention from Asia Pacific-driven liberalization to other schemes.

Revival of East Asia-centered regionalism

ASEAN elites started to turn their focus toward alternative methods for attracting more reliable sponsorships from major economic powers as well as abating their autonomy concerns. Among

<http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/RegionalFinal%20chapters/RegionalFinal.html>, accessed 15 March 2012.

[57] Ibid., p.155.

others, the idea of East Asia regionalism, which had been suppressed and put aside with the establishment of APEC in the early 1990s, re-emerged in late 1990s and received renewed attention. Malaysia strongly advocated this idea. The country's leaders believed that if Japan had led a certain type of East Asian arrangement, it would not have delayed in assisting crisis-hit countries in Asia; consequently, the crisis-afflicted countries would not have resorted solely to the prescriptions of IMF and other US-led institutions.[58] Elites of other ASEAN states were also supportive. For example, Thailand's Special Advisor to the Minister of Commerce, Sura Sanittanont, advocated a revival of the idea of East Asia processes. He pointed out that as the developed world continued to preach to crisis-hit countries about the need for domestic reforms, it did not see the urgency to reform global financial institutions. Furthermore, Japan, which had previously been a skeptic of the East Asian Economic Group/Community concept, which Mahathir promoted, turned more favorable to East-Asia centered regional arrangements by proposing the Asian Monetary Fund; therefore, ASEAN elites were able to push further for concrete implementation of these arrangements.

In December 1997, endorsement of the first ASEAN Plus Three (APT) arrangement engendered economic cooperation among 10 ASEAN states and China, Japan, and South Korea. The APT framework has grown rapidly since 1999 when the leaders issued a joint statement on building what Philippine President Joseph Estrada called "a family from the happy union of the north and the south." It addressed eight fields of functional cooperation under "East Asian" cooperation.[59] Abdullah Badawi described the APT as "the best vehicle for Asian community building" and noted that "only the ASEAN Plus Three process seeks to build an Asian community, or to be more exact, an East Asian community."[60] The APT framework also created another East Asia-centered arrangement. At the 1998 APT meeting, the leaders agreed to set up the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) to study effective cooperation in the region. At the 2000 APT meeting, with EAVG's proposal, the East Asia Study Group (EASG) was established and the creation of the East Asian Summit (EAS) was proposed as a separate regional framework. During the 2004 APT Summit, member countries agreed to hold an EAS in 2005 as a strategic forum in which leaders could discuss emerging challenges and adjust to changes in the international environment. In spite

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[58] Stephen Leong, "The East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC): 'Formalized' Regionalism Being Denied," in Bjorn Hettne, Andras Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel, eds. *National Perspectives on the New Regionalism in the South* (Helsinki: UNU/WIDER Study, 2000), p.90.

[59] Quoted in Barry Wain, "ASEAN aims for an East Asian community," *The Wall Street Journal* (3 December 1999), <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB944175694653267314> (accessed 20 July 2014).

[60] Quoted in "ASEAN plus 3 best avenue for Asian community building," *New Straits Times* (25 May 2007).

of objections from China and Malaysia, India, Australia, and New Zealand were invited as new members in an inaugural summit.

For many ASEAN elites, developing East Asia-centered mechanisms through APT or EAS schemes was a proper transition from the Asia-Pacific framework, as the latter was failing to manage the dual concerns of ASEAN leaders. East Asia-centered regionalism could cope with their concerns over attraction deficits by securing stable interactions with potential sponsors. ASEAN leaders were also able to secure room for their opinions about the development of the idea by sitting in "a control tower" and steering the direction of regional cooperation, as a Vietnamese diplomat put it.[61] Non-ASEAN governments also agreed with ASEAN's central position on how to operate within the framework. Moreover, they decided that the membership of EAS would be granted to applicant countries that were full dialogue partners with ASEAN; further, they agreed to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), one of ASEAN's cardinal norms. In other words, with the development of East Asian regionalism, ASEAN countries were able to manage their dual concerns.

Increasing preferential trade agreements

Another indicator of ASEAN's shift of attention from APEC was its focus on preferential trade agreements, flourishing in the region since the late 1990s. This emphasis, however, conflicted with APEC's goal of region-wide unilateral liberalization. Until 1997, the Asia-Pacific region accounted for 10% of all free trade agreements (FTAs) throughout the world. But the number of agreements in the region increased at a faster rate than in any other part of the world. By the end of 2010, 44 FTAs were in effect; six were being signed; 48 were being negotiated; and 30 were being proposed.[62]

These bilateral or trilateral preferential arrangements were not only at odds with inclusive Asia-Pacific liberalization, but they also diverted the attention of ASEAN elites away from APEC processes. ASEAN elites attempted to move forward on economic integration first at the ASEAN level and to strengthen economic cooperation with their dialogue partners bilaterally or trilaterally.

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[61] A senior diplomat from an ASEAN country, confidential interview with the author, Kuala Lumpur, May 30, 2012.

[62] Kawai Masahiro and Ganesha Wignaraja, "Introduction," in Kawai Masahiro and Ganesha Wignaraja, eds. *Asia's Free Trade Agreements: How is Business Responding*?, (Cheltenham and Northampton: Asian Development Bank and Asian Development Bank Institute, 2011).

Additionally, some elites started to review the East Asian FTA (EAFTA) or the Comprehensive Economic Partnership for East Asia (CEPEA) model developed as an alternative East Asian framework for liberalization of the region. These new ideas were not always consistent with an 'Asia-Pacific-wide' FTA, which many APEC elites from Anglo-Pacific economies advocated. For example, Fred Bergsten, American EPG Representative to APEC, expressed a concern that EAFTA could "create a new Asian bloc that, along with the EU and NAFTA, would produce a tripolar world with all its inherent instabilities" (quoted in Dent, 2007, p. 466).[63] However, major ASEAN economies including Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand supported these East Asian arrangements. As an extended effort to strengthen the ASEAN-centered free-trade arrangements, ASEAN countries agreed to incorporate the major elements of EAFTA and CEPEA into a new framework of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and proactively facilitated the negotiations with external partners as a collective entity. Such collective attempts are better manifested in comparison with the membership of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), in which ASEAN countries' decisions are on an individual country basis.

Conclusion

This article provides a new explanation about ASEAN's efforts to take a leadership role in shaping institutional arrangements beyond itself. It identifies structural concerns among ASEAN elites by employing a new concept of the dual deficit dilemma and highlights them as strongly influencing their decisions and positions regarding the management of institutional arrangements in East Asia. This paper adds value to existing literature by introducing a new framework that promotes an understanding of the objectives of ASEAN states in developing these institutions. It does not claim that the dual deficit dilemma sufficiently explains the entire process of institutional development for ARF and APEC. Understanding the complete picture of how each of them was established and maintained (or not) requires a richer, more detailed analysis of the interactive effects of diverse factors. Many existing studies about ASEAN provide explanations about the contexts and complicated processes of change. As identified above, this paper attempts to discuss a source of ASEAN's decisions and behaviors in designing expanded cooperative mechanisms, and it

[63] Christopher Dent, "Full Circle? Ideas and Ordeals of Creating a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific," *The Pacific Review* 20:4 (2007), p.466.

suggests that the dual deficit dilemma strongly affected ASEAN elites' stances toward the rise and decline of ARF and APEC.

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