Integration or Cooperation? ASEAN and the Region-Building in Southeast Asia

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This paper focuses on the unique physiognomy of the regional integration in Southeast Asia, with its own set of dynamics different from the European experience. By taking a sociological approach in the International Relations, this paper tries to assess the region-building of ASEAN with the comprehensive framework in studying institutions proposed by Richard Scott. Subsequently, the paper concludes that ASEAN remains an institution with close cooperation at national level, though the will of further integration among regional political leaders is well evident. Succeeding to this argument, this paper also connotes that ASEAN and the regional integration apparatus in Southeast Asia in general have been very much developed by the great powers outside of the region. For the regulative pillar to perform more effectively, the leaders of the Southeast Asian region need to work more on the cultural-cognitive dimension of the regional institution, and also on creating a new regional norm promoting community values over the "ASEAN Way".

Introduction

Regional integration is no longer an uncommon phenomenon or a singular European development in our days. At the end of the Cold War, the nationalism has seen a renaissance with the last wave of nation-state independence. Meanwhile, another movement could also be discerned in international relations at the same time with the grouping of states into another level of political community. Since then, more and more regional constructions are formed which go beyond states' borders in order to face economic or security issues of the new international conjuncture. This international movement of integration, however, is not a new and recent development. Europe has been the origin of this trend and therefore, it has been the object of study – the archetype – that has been the most analyzed among all similar constructions. On the other hand, Southeast Asia has also seen a vibrant development in region-building plans.

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During the ASEAN and APEC meetings in 2009, various versions of the Asian community were proposed by assorted countries. Although none of the proposition was able to form a consensus among the actors in the region, a strong will of regional integration was well presented in Southeast Asia.

And yet, this regionalist fever has encountered probably the most serious hit, also in 2009, with the outbreak of the sovereign debt crisis in Greece. Since then, this singular economic malfunction has spread over to the entire euro zone and the ongoing euro zone crisis has been making a momentous demonstration of doubt on the course of European integration (Pisani-Ferry, 2011). At this time, we can finally see the first sign of good news reported from the analytical agencies[1], and Mario Draghi, the President of the ECB, also stated that a "positive contagion" is sweeping through Europe. All these developments lead us to an extensive work on regional integration and also, bring us to a new reflection on the International Relations (IR) studies. On one hand, the classical theories had faced a serious challenge at the time of the end of Cold War since they failed to foresee and struggled to explain the fall of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the multiplication of actors other than the nation-states on the world stage forms another reason for the researchers of the discipline to resort to a new thought that sees outside of the nation-state framework. This era of neo-realism and neo-liberalism debate has decidedly been outstripped with the crossing over of the states' frontiers in the real world. The conventional notions need to be adjusted to correspond to the present conjuncture, such as the notion of the sovereignty. Thereby, Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, esteemed that "we need to show that the sovereignty languishes when we congeal it in the past forms. In order to make it live, it is necessary to transfer it in a greater space where it merges with other called in the same evolution. Nothing would be lost in this transfer, on the contrary, all would find itself more strengthened" (Sabourin, 1994).

Here is the starting point of this study. The traverse of the scheme of nation-states opens the door for other possible political constructions in the international relations. The post-Westpalian thinking has indeed arrived in the field. Methodologically, we then bring a sociological approach into the IR studies as now the rule of game is changing with new dynamics other than the pursuit of power or the calculation of interests coming into scene. Following this track, we should understand the regional integration as a dynamic process of identity formation. Taking Frank Petiteville's definition, regional integration should be conceived as "a grouping of several States, more or less formalized in institutional term, belonging to a geographical area, for the purpose of

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[1] "The euro-zone crisis: Time to celebrate ?", *The Economist*, 19/01/2013.

economic and/or political cooperation in the long run" (Petiteville, 1997. The region, therefore, is neither a nascent state nor a simple international regime. It implies little by little a special regional dynamic, characterized by principles, objectives and generally accepted practices (Ponjaert, 2008). More precisely, a regional integration should also require something more than a mere institutional construction. As described by Walter Mattli, the signing of an integration treaty does not establish integration. The real integration is attained through the execution of this promise, which comprises a long process of setting rules, regulations and politics, either based on the disposition of the treaty or derived from the general principles and objectives of the treaty over the time being that transform the aspiration for regional prosperity into reality (Mattli, 2005).

However, the region-building in Southeast Asia shows a more complex physiognomy. The flaming development of economic integration in Southeast Asia for more than a decade is exhibited more by the proliferation of the bilateral free-trade agreements (FTA) signed between the Southeast Asian economies. The integration projects at the regional level, on one hand, show the specific dynamics of the region that are distinct from others, and on the other hand, reveal the wavering political stand in Southeast Asia. In this article we will thus tackle the region-building in Southeast Asia with a more critical regard. First of all, we are going to assess ASEAN, the first and most advanced regional institution in the zone, with the comprehensive framework in studying institutions proposed by Richard Scott. Scott assorts three elements of institutions – regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive – and claims that together they constitute the institution and provide stability and meaning to life. By examining closely the constituent parts of the institution, we reverse the premise of the regional integration development of ASEAN and claim that the association still remains an institution of cooperation between nation-state. The political integration on a regional level has not yet been seen.

Institutional theory of Richard Scott and ASEAN

In order to tackle this characteristic regional bloc, we call upon the sociological approach in the IR studies. This relatively new dimension in IR theories places the role of actors in center, consequently, swifts the research angle from a positivist perspective to a postpositivist in social science. Rejecting a radical materialist view that espouses that the only reality is a physical one and also the idealist view that the only reality exists in the human mind, a postpositivist perspective views science as operating along a continuum stretching from the empirical environment to the metaphysical environment (Scott, 2008: 63-64). It was not until late twentieth century that the sociological approach began to apply to the IR studies and to a variety of

political systems, including international organizations or other monetary and trade agreements. The scholars of this approach argue that a sociological perspective could provide a framing for IR that is more general and integrative than narrower theories derived from economic or political science (Buzan and Albert, 2010: 315).

In the study of regional integration, the social constructivism that came on stage of the IR theoretical debates at the end of the 1980s has given a powerful discourse on the identity formation of the collective community. Many rigorous studies on the Southeast Asian regional integration have also been made by the constructivists (Acharya, 2012; Rüland, 2011; Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002), but in this article, we take the institutional theory of Richard Scott as the analytical approach to examine the ASEAN in order to challenge the conventional analytical framework of fixed identity, and to welcome the studies of all sorts of collective identity formations. Assorting three composing elements of the institution, Scott claims that institutions could be identified by three pillars: rules, norms, and cultural-cognitive beliefs. Using the phrasing of the author himself, the omnibus concept of institutions could be summarized as followed: "Institutions are comprised of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott, 2008: 48).

Scott has then elaborated more in detail the three pillars with the motivation for compliance, enforcement mechanisms, logic, types of indicators, affect, and bases of legitimacy and social order. To summarize, the regulative pillar refers to what we recognize most commonly as the function of institutions, that is to say, the rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning activities. For the regulatory process to work, theorists associated with this pillar, mostly rational choice political scientists and economists such as Douglass North (1990), call forth coercion as the primary mechanism of control. Therefore, force, sanctions, and expedience responses are viewed as central ingredients of creating social order.

The second pillar points to the normative systems which include some basic elements, such as values, norms, and roles. In a general way, values constitute the conception of the preferred and the desirable in a collectivity, norms specify how things should be done and define legitimate means to pursue valued ends, and roles designate the conceptions of appropriate goals and activities for particular individual or specified social positions. In this way, the normative systems succeed in imposing constraints on people's social behavior without deploying coercive enforcements.

This normative conception of institutions was thus mostly advocated by sociologists and political scientists on organizations such as James March and Johan Olsen (1989). They emphasize the stabilizing influence of social beliefs and norms that are both internalized and imposed by others. As the third set of institutionalists, the cultural-cognitive pillar focuses on the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made (Scott, 2008: 57). Supported mostly by anthropologists, sociologists, and organizational scholars, they believe that people's internal interpretive processes are shaped by external cultural frameworks. The theorists of this branch are numerous, namely Clifford Geertz (1973), John Meyer and Richard Scott (1994), Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell (1991). They emphasize the importance of symbols and meanings, the semiotic facets of culture, and they turn to the power of templates for particular types of actors and scripts for action when it comes to institutions. On a more global level, they see culture exist in the form of collective symbols like flags, anthems, prevailing ideologies…

Thus, the three pillars represent three different tracks of approaching the studies of institutions, each with its own system of understanding and determination. The three also elicit three distinct bases of legitimacy for institutions, which is one important feature of any given institution for it to survive and thrive in its social environment. While the regulative pillar concerns about whether the institution is legally established, the normative view stresses on normative standards that go beyond mere rule-based requirements, and the cultural-cognitive branch ascertains the culturally constituted mode of organization as the base of legitimacy. The three tracks actually project distinct sets of assumptions of social reality and of the ways in which actors make choices in social situations, while Scott tries to contain the three into one comprehensive analytical framework. He points out that in most empirically observed institutional forms, it is not one singular pillar at work but the varying combinations of the three. He also states that when the three pillars are aligned, formidable forces could be created; on the other hand, if they are misaligned, it may create confusion and conflict that result in social instability and accordingly, institutional change. Strang and Sine also point out in their studies of enterprises that "where cognitive, normative, and regulative supports are not well aligned, they provide resources that different actors can employ for different ends" (Strang and Sine, 2002:49). After presenting the lucid analysis of Scott on institutions, we are now going to examine the ASEAN with each of the three pillars and its combinations. Established in 1967, ASEAN is the first temptation of regional organization, with founding members of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Philippines. Forming at the peak of the Cold War and during the American military invention in Indochina, the non-communist countries of Southeast Asia have gathered to keep the north of

Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union at the bay, and to maintain the security links between the United States and the British alliances (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Philippines). At the infra-regional level, after the fall from power of Sukarno in 1966, the founding fathers of the ASEAN have seen the opportunity to integrate the Indonesia in a bigger political enterprise of the Southeast Asia that could engage the Indonesia in pacific relations with its neighbors (Simon, 2008). Brunei has joined the Association in 1984, while the Vietnam joined in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.

The most significant development of the ASEAN has arrived in 2007 with the composition of the ASEAN Charter, the first institutional text of the Association designated for the construction of the three communities – political-security community, economic community, and socio-cultural community. The Charter engages for the first time its signatories to the norms of democracy, good governance, and human rights. Looking closely to the Charter, we can perceive a strong will to construct a community of destiny in the Southeast Asian region, rather than a mere international organization. However, the spirit of pragmatism is also present in the Charter. The character of intergovenmentalism has been underlined during the process of consultation for the writing. When we examine the plan for the dispute settlement mechanisms, we can still mark the lack of trust among members States in supra-national institutions.

The regulative instruments of ASEAN

ASEAN is distinctive in the regional building in Asia for its global nature. It is the only institution in the region that addresses the transnational questions raised in the domains of politics, security, environment, and social issues that need collaborative solutions (Nesadurai, 2005). In their article on the typology of regional process, Figuière and Guilhot therefore call ASEAN the "institutional cradle of East Asia" (Figuière and Guilhot, 2007). And yet, this comprehensive nature of the institution does not necessarily imply effective regulative instruments. As a matter of fact, the Association is often accused of its inefficiency and its inactive role in the inter-state conflict resolution in the region (McDougall, 2008). If rules are to be effective, they must be backed with sanctioning power. However, when we look into the ASEAN Charter, the most concrete exhibition that makes ASEAN a ruled-base legal body, we can perceive that the Charter is still very much characterized by political utterance which is based on the principle of consultation and consensus, without much statement on the implementation. In other words, the Charter still leaves large space for member states to participate flexibly in the regional affairs and the coercive power of the institution is weak if not completely nonentity. Most evidently with the dispute settlement mechanism, the Association is obviously not yet ready for a formal regional Court for

arbitration. In Chapter III of the Charter, it has indicated that in case of conflict, the affair should be resolved peacefully in accordance to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, or, in the case of disputes with economic agreements, to the ASEAN Protocol on Enhanced Dispute Settlement Mechanism. And in the former treaty ASEAN has launched the idea of creating a "High Council", designated to be a higher organ than the state level and to "take cognizance of the existence of disputes or situations likely to disturb regional peace and harmony"[2]. However, not only does the procedure remain undetermined, this regulative instrument has never been appealed to since its establishment.

Other political instruments, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), have also little regulative power. Created in 1994, the ARF is above all an organization for security issues, with the objective to "foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern, and to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region"[3]. Besides the ten member States of the ASEAN, the ARF comprises also the countries of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), of Northeast Asia (China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea), of Asia-Pacific (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, East Timor), and also Canada, Russia, EU, and the United States. The analysts agree that the ARF is not supposed to be a collective security agreement. It is not conceived either to resolve specific regional disputes, such as the Spratly Islands conflicts. It is more designated to bring peace in the region in the long term by fostering a sense of mutual trust. And thus, neither arbitrary mechanism on the regional level nor coercing tools has been perceived within the framework.

Taking a more concrete example, Ralf Emmers has showed in his studies on ASEAN and the securitization of transnational crime in Southeast Asia that despite the constant rhetorical claims of its anti-crime position, ASEAN has failed to produce effective regional policy outcome on the matter (Emmers, 2003). With the ASEAN declarations and communiqués, we can see that the heads of states and governments of the region have well labeled transnational crime as an existential threat to security. As the ASEAN leaders have adopted the notion of "comprehensive security" since the 1970s, they take a multi-sectoral approach in perceiving security, making reference to the dangers of transnational crime to the welfare of regional populations, to the social and moral fabrics of societies and to economic prosperity. Therefore, the consciousness to deal with the dangers of transnational crime has emerged at an early stage of ASEAN's institutional evolution, although the focus was limited only to the abuse and illegal trafficking of

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[2] The article 14 of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.
[3] See the official website of ASEAN, retrieved from *http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/about.html*

drugs for the first three decades. More concretely, the question of drug trafficking was mentioned in the ASEAN Concord in 1976, calling for "Intensification of cooperation among member states as well as with the relevant international bodies in the prevention and eradication of the abuse of narcotics and the illegal trafficking of drugs"[4]. In the same year, the ASEAN Declaration of Principles to Combat the Abuses of Narcotics Drugs has led to the start of an institutional process against transnational crime.

Other forms of transnational crimes, such as human smuggling, money laundering, terrorism, etc., had been recognized as serious threat to regional development and stability by the mid-1990s. The 1997 ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime broadened and intensified regional cooperation against crime, and the elites of the region also began to express the need for strong actions. In 1999, on the occasion of the second ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, the Association adopted the Plan of Action and formed an institutional structure against transnational crime. The Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime was created with the objective to develop a work program to carry out the plan of action, including mostly work lines to enhance the exchange of information, legal coordination, law enforcement, training, institutional capacity-building and extra-regional cooperation.

However, among all these declarations and accords made by ASEAN countries, the intent for cooperation is still bigger than common policy responses. Most of the declarations are non-binding agreements, the rhetorical proclamation seems to still be the preferred way for decision-makers of the region than forming concrete regulative measures. Many factors should be taken into account here when reasoning the phenomenon, especially the domestic ones. The fragile domestic institutions, the corruption problems and poverty very often cause ineffective law-enforcement agencies in the countries that are supposed to combat organized crimes. Besides the domestic impediments, Emmers also points out two factors that have undermined ASEAN's collective response. First of all, the consensus model of the Association certainly limits the possibility for the member countries to establish more effective regional measures which might be imposed on state. Secondly, the resistance to institutional reforms is also observed in the Association. Due to the cardinal principle of the respect of state sovereignty, effective law-enforcement cooperation at the regional level is still not yet in view.

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[4] ASEAN (1976), Declaration of ASEAN Concord, Bali, Indonesia, 24 February.

The norms of ASEAN – the "ASEAN Way"

The examination of the regulative pillar of the ASEAN leads us to the normative perspective of the Association. As pointed out in the last section, ever since its establishment, ASEAN has asserted the preeminent principle of the respect of state sovereignty. After decades of practices, this principle has gradually become the paradigm and an implicit way of thinking and behavior inner of the association, with the term of the "ASEAN Way". This is characterized by the accent put on the consensus, the non-interference of the internal affairs of its member states, and the voluntary execution of the regional decisions (Simon, 2008 : 285). Boisseau du Rocher thus wrote, "never the ASEAN constraints, it convinces" (Boisseau du Rocher, 1998 : 139).

Noordin Sopiee of the Malaysian Institute of Strategic and International Studies has provided an elaborate list of thirteen principles[5] which he claims to be the core of the "ASEAN Way", including the principle of seeking agreement and harmony, the principle of sensitivity, politeness, non-confrontation and agreeability… Other than these implicit guidelines, the ASEAN member states have also adopted formally four principles in the article 2 of the Association's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation – respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, non-interference in the internal affairs of one another, settlement of disputes by peaceful means, and renunciation of the threat or the use of force (Goh, 2003: 114).

Discrete diplomacy and informality are therefore important means to avoid legal procedures and public examinations (Katsumata, 2003). The decisions are basically based on informal and elite-oriented deliberations. Many believe that the "ASEAN Way" is possible because of the elitist nature of the Asian politics. Nischalke uses the term "a myth" to describe the "ASEAN Way", and he specifies that the collaboration is founded on the functionality rather than shared visions. He took the example that according to a high-ranked Malaysian diplomat, 80 % of the important decisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been made at informal meetings (Nischalke,

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[5] The thirteen principles identified by Dr. Sopiee: 1) rejection of internal and external collective military pacts; 2) rejection of emphasis on peace through military deterrence; 3) the advocacy and practice of "true peace" measures: the building of confidence, trust, predictability, goodwill and friendship, national resilience, a rich web of productive and warm bilateral relations; 4) the principle of actively seeking and maximizing solidarity, common ground, agreement and harmony; 5) the principle of sensitivity; politeness, non-confrontation and agreeability, emphasizing "the ability to agree to disagree without being disagreeable"; 6) the principle of decision making by consensus; 7) the principle of mutual caring; 8) the principle of respect for territorial integrity; 9) the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs; 10) preference for quiet diplomacy and aversion to excessive public washing of dirty linen and diplomacy through the media and mass mobilization; 11) the principle of pragmatism; 12) the preference for content rather than form, substance rather than process, non-addiction to Cartesian approaches and to legalism; 13) the principle of egalitarianism. See, Sopiee N., "ASEAN Towards 2020: Strategic Goals and Critical Pathways", paper presented to the Second ASEAN Congress, Kuala Lumpur, 20-23 July, 1997.

2000). Nikolas Busse observed that even after the process of decolonization at the second half of the twentieth century, most of the states in the region are still ruled by small elite circles operating on the basis of patronage networks (Busse, 1999: 48). Goh thus remarked the political norm in Southeast Asia as personalistic, informal and non-contractual, and that the legalistic systemization of the Western politics, like the Roman law, has never appeared in Southeast Asia (Goh, 2003).

A series of politics transformation could be detected since the establishment of the ASEAN, nevertheless, the principle of non-interference remains preeminent in the community. We have seen that at the turn of the century, this norm has faced great challenge with the situational change of the international relations – the diverse regional frames and several new transnational issues emerged since the 1990s such as the human rights violations or the fight against terrorism that acquire a closer cooperation of the countries in the region and a rapprochement of juristic systems and other mechanisms of law enforcement, all points to diminishing the absolute respect of state sovereignty. An evolution of the community culture could be expected in the coming decade, but still, the "ASEAN Way" is prevailing in the political rhetoric in the region.

The cultural-cognitive dimension of ASEAN

Coming to the most abstract dimension of institutions, we are now going to examine the cultural-cognitive pillar of the ASEAN. Many believe that the Southeast Asian region was grouped out of pure economic and political calculations, however, scholars have noted that at the dawn of the creation of the ASEAN, the leaders of the region had actually, vaguely, the concept of shared values and culture and of one collective identity in Southeast Asia in their mind. The proponents of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), a regional establishment earlier than the ASEAN, saw themselves not only as Southeast Asian, but also as part of an Asian cultural, political, and economic context (Narine, 1997). Rhetorical proclamation could be found in political discourses at the time, for example, Thai Foreign Minister and key architect of ASA, Thanat Khoman, had declared that ASA was rooted in "Asian culture and traditions"[6] (Goh, 2003: 113).

What are the common cultural traits we can discern among the people in Southeast Asia? If we look into the Southeast Asian region, we could actually perceive some substantial cultural ties that link the peoples in the region besides the dense economic web. First of all, the Buddhism and Islamism have constructed substantial mental and religious connections among the Buddhists and Muslims in the region. As the largest religion in Southeast Asia, Islamists comprise about 40 % of

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[6] Association of Southeast Asia, *Report of the Special Session of Foreign Ministers of ASA* (Kuala Lumpur/Cameron Highlands/Federation of Malaya, April 1962), Annex B, p. 27-28, *in* Acharya A., *The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 81.

the entire population in the region. There was even a circulated speech that advocated an Islamic State, which appeared to be an imaginary place created by mutual fantasies. Buddhism is relatively loosely organized, as the second most practiced religion in Southeast Asia, it counts for around 35 % of the population. Besides, the overseas Chinese exiled for centuries in the region have not only created a strong network but also maintained sentimental and material bonds between them (Bolt, 2000; Zheng, 1999). This kind of special relationship inner in the Chinese culture has brought along supports, information, credits, and a sense of belonging in the Chinese ethnic group across the region, many studies show that this feature the vital motor of economic integration in Southeast Asia. As for the more recent development, it is well noted that since 1990s, the state borders have been penetrated little by little in the sphere of pop culture. With the development of a pan-Asia cosmopolitanism, we have witnessed a cultural transmutation in Southeast Asia that actually forms a pan-Asian, middle-class way of life.

As a matter of fact, a collective regional consciousness waits to be awaken by political leaders. According to Katzenstein, the regional identities in Southeast Asia are rather complementing than replacing the generally stronger national, sub-national, or local identities. He has also noted that in Southeast Asia, the cultural and civilization substance of the regional identity is less important than a combination of universal and local referents that is widely developed by political elites for clear political ends (Katzenstein, 2005: 76). Before everything else, the process of this consciousness revelation in Southeast Asia is about a negative identification. It was not until the 19th century when the European imperialism arrived in Asia that a sense of regional solidarity could have emerged by the encounter with the West. It was during the first congress of the League Against Imperialism in Brussels in 1927 where we can perceive the first Sino-Indian expression of a Asian solidarity. More recently, the Asian civilization discourse has been retaken by several politicians, in particular former President of Philippines Fidel Ramos and former Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew. With their usage of term always very vague, the "Asian values" begin to be addressed as the base of one Asian identity (Hoon, 2004). And yet, if we examine more closely these values we can conceive that they are actually built up upon a cultural relativism. In other words, they are only comprehensible with others' existence, and in this case, the West.

Furthermore, in reaction with the international conjuncture, the dialogues with its partners on the international stage, either individual countries or regional institutions, its own identity as a unified region is more and more enhanced in this process of social interaction (Smith, 2007). The first ministerial conference between ASEAN and the European community of twelve in 1978 has often been referred to as the beginning of the inter-regional dialogue (Regelsberger, 1990: 5). The

interregionalism between the two blocks has officially come into force in 1996 with the establishment of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Julie Gilson even argues that one of the most important reasons that the Southeast Asian regional autonomy has been able to work on its own is because of the acceptation by the EU as a region (Preston and Gilson, 2002). Consequently, ASEM has served as a platform for auto-identification of the Southeast Asian region, by providing a functional structure and a cognitive background for new forms of collective behaviors.

The Unique Physiognomy of the Southeast Asian Integration

As elaborated earlier, while we examine the institutions with the three-pillar framework of Richard Scott, empirically, in most institutional forms, it is not one singular pillar at work but the varying combinations of the three. This is well affirmed by the ASEAN case. By our previous analysis, we can sum up with one unique physiognomy of the Association with an institutionalized body comprised of little real regulative power, a strong normative system that sets the actual guidelines for members to act upon, and a rather weak cultural-cognitive element unifying the members conceptually. Even though the Southeast Asian leaders have been making efforts on intensifying the strength of institutionalization for both the regulative and cultural-cognitive pillars, nowadays, the effects are still limited, and the normative force is still sweeping through every decision-making of the institution.

This could also partly explain one of the most interesting features of the integration phenomenon in the region, that is, the discordance between the social reality and the political construction. Philippe Hugon has called it "a non-overlapping of the institutionalized space and the economic integration space" (Hugon, 2002: 21). Some scholars thus tackle the Southeast Asian integration with its two fronts – the regionalization *de facto* and the regionalism *de jure* (Dent, 2004). The former refers to a social process which could be developed with the embodiment of political projects, but could also occur independently from the politics. The latter, on the other hand, emphasizes on the institutional designs, with programs and ideologies, that aim at transform a geographical space into a regional political space.

Concerning the regionalization, the most manifest domain of the movement in Southeast Asia is beyond all doubt the domain of economics. The regional economic development in the 1980s and 1990s, mostly spurred by foreign direct investment (FDI) from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the overseas Chinese, has changed fundamentally the physiognomy of Southeast Asia. It is recognized that in Southeast Asia, "the economic integration is not driven by the states, but by the regional business communities which work in a more informal ways" (Dieckhoff and

Jaffrelot, 2004). Besides the trade activities that can be dated for a long time in the region, the ample economic exchanges begin mainly in 1986. From 1986-1989, the exportation inside of the region has had a growth of 23 %, which counted for nearly 39 % of the total exportation of the region. On the other hand, the transnational investments inside of the region have reached 60 % of the total FDI since 1989 (Huang, 2005). The economic development has thus served as the social foundation for new types of national politics, emerging consumer markets, and regionalism-oriented market. This trend has also given birth to new urban middle class everywhere in the region, who constitutes the main driving motor of the Southeast Asian regional construction (Katzenstein and Shiraishi, 2006). The growing importance of the natural economic territories (NETS) is also one of the determined characteristics of the Southeast Asian regionalism (Katzenstein, 2000). Driven by the private investment, facilitated by the common cultural practices, and supported by the government policies that eliminate barriers, the NETS form a patchwork of smaller sub-regional groups that covers the territories of several countries. Compared to North-east Asia, the sub-regional cooperation in Southeast Asia has received more government assistance. The growth triangle linking Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore is one of the oldest sub-region that assembles the resources of Riau Islands (Indonesia), peninsula of Johor (Malaysia), and Singapore. Targeting on the market and helped by state governments, these sub-regional arrangements are informal and marked by weak institutionalization. In Southeast Asia, the sub-regions are a key figure for the diffusion of the production chains between countries. They establish indispensable networks that intersect in the Southeast Asian region.

As for the political construction in the Southeast Asia, by all means, ASEAN plays the most eminent role. And yet, this regional integration *de jure* is not in accord with the feverish regionalization since the past three decades. With the analysis of this study, we could understand that not only the three pillars of ASEAN are not aligned, they are misaligned in a way that the regulative instruments are weak in establishing regional authority, while the normative pillar affirms the stand of respect for state sovereignty and the cultural-cognitive pillar is formed outside of the ASEAN framework by differing sub-regional communities.

Generally, with the composition of the ASEAN Charter in 2007 and the establishment of the three ASEAN communities in 2015, the regular pillar of the ASEAN is going towards a supra-nationalism direction, while the normative pillar always clings firmly to the intergovernmentalism and the cultural-cognitive pillar built upon several sub-regional groupings. The three are not equal in force, and neither are they supporting one another.

The institutional space created by ASEAN therefore demonstrates a curious physiognomy and is in an unstable social order. Scholars believe that such situations exhibit both confusion and conflict, which might result in institutional change (Scott, 2008; Caronna, 2004; Hoffman, 1997).

Conclusion

After nearly five decades of formation, ASEAN has worked into the leading feature of the regional integration in not only the Southeast Asian region, but in the whole East Asia. Many of the East Asian regional projects proposed today are constructed on the ASEAN basis, such as the ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3 or the ASEAN+6. Notably with the arrival of the ASEAN Charter in 2007, a basic institutional framework resembling the EU has been put in place. And yet, the international society still casts doubt on the "regionness" of the Association, and the Association has been criticized constantly for its lack of actual effects in constraining the member states and in having real influence in regional affairs. What the region-building has reflected in Southeast Asia is indeed a complex physiognomy with varying and incoherent political, economic, and cultural spaces.

The political leaders of the region have been more and more conscious of the importance of the region-building in Southeast Asia especially since 1990s; however, these efforts made have not resulted in the creation of one region in a unified sense. In spite of the interwoven economic and social connections, the political vocation for integration more and more emphatic, and the pro-regionalism international environment, a collective identity in Southeast Asia is still out of sight. The questions are raised: in what way the new political economy can be extended to the dimension of regional governance? What possible identification can be generated between the people who have animosity towards each other deeply rooted in the history but also have socio-cultural traits in common?

With the study of this article, we approach the questions with an institutional aspect and argue that the institution should not be contemplated merely as rule-based instrument but with three sets of systems combining altogether. In the case of regional integration, when the three pillars are aligning with one another, the combined force could be formidable as demonstrated by the EU, which has successfully created a new form of political entity. However, in ASEAN, despite the more and more mature organizational body developed by the states of the region, they have never forged aptly a common regional culture and therefore, no consensus has yet been reached on the cultural-cognitive dimension of the ASEAN as in the European Union[7]. Different from

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[7] During the drafting of the constitutional treaty of the EU, Valérie Giscard d'Estaing, former French President

the European experience, the skepticism was not the only obstacle in the regional construction in Southest Asia. In this part of the world, strong dividing forces for the integration exist both inside and outside of the region (Webber, 2008). On the inside, the most prominent obstacle for generating a collective identity lies in the huge heterogeneity between the countries in the region. Besides the limit of lack of regionalist experience in the history and the geographical fragmentation that do not favor for integration, the cultural and political diversions in the region constitute discrepancy even more striking (Liow and Emmers, 2006). As noted by Sung-Hoon Park and Heungchong Kim, the opportunities for creating a financial integration in Southeast Asia have been hindered by the huge gap in development between the countries in the region (Park and Kim, 2008). The Southeast Asian countries feature a great diversity in term of size and economy, and also their stage of development. There is not only a great difference between the capitalist and socialist system, but also the differences between the political regimes of constitutional monarchy, parliamentary democracy and popular democracy. On the economic system, there exists socialist or capitalist market economy. The diversity in the domain of ethnicity, religion, culture, and language is also striking (Yang, 2005: 89). Not to mention that something close to a common citizenship could not be pictured since the political system in each country also varies greatly.

On the outside, we can perceive that it is still the logic of *realpolitik* that prevails in the region and that countries are always playing the game of balance of power, only that this relation is now measured in the conceptual sphere. The way that actors interact to influence each other is no longer exclusively by the logic of military or economic forces. They now seek to create a norm that would comprise a determined political space and a series of codes of conduct inside of this space. Eventually, they would seek to contractualize this norm as a system of meaning. This is considered as particularly powerful in our days because it is supposed to be able to act upon the thinking and the behavior of the individuals who would identify themselves with this certain kind of norm and comply with this norm without the presence threats or incentives. In other words, the reason why great powers compete with each other for implementing their norms is to justify the sustainability of their domination in the long run.

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and the chairman of the constitutional convention, has worked on adding explicit reference to Europe's Christian heritage in the preamble. Even though the idea was not accepted and the constitutional treaty was rejected, the conception that EU is a community of values has been well recognized. Other than the Christianity, President Giscard d'Estaing also explicitly referred to the continent's Greco-Roman and Enlightenment heritage as EU's common cultural identity.

Therefore, in East Asia, all political frameworks, such as ASEAN, ASEAN+3, ASEAN+6, Asia-Pacific, etc., are proposed by great powers today, mainly the United States, EU, China and Japan. The specific dynamics inside of the Southeast Asian region and the regional political scheme are yet to be discovered. What we could retrieve from this study is an understanding of ASEAN with the three constituting pillars of its institution. The result of the analysis exhibits a misalignment of the three pillars, which hinders the Association from going into the direction of regional integration and remains on the level of states cooperation. A new political community has been pictured and launched in Southeast Asia; however, the leaders in the region might need to work more on the cultural-cognitive dimension of the Southeast Asian institution, and also on creating a new regional norm promoting community values over the "ASEAN Way". The region-building by the ASEAN bureaucrats do not necessarily mean the regional governments' determinations in the same pace, nor a collective identity formed in the same direction among the citizens in the region. The author believes that the region-building in Southeast Asia would stand on a more solid ground when the governments of the region could talk on more plain terms about their common goal for the region in the long run, and when one Southeast Asian community could be imagined collectively by the people of the region.

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