

SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONALISM: THEORETICAL SYSTEMIC OBLIGINGNESS IN DISARRAY

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Abstract:

*The Association of Southeast Asian Nations - ASEAN was born in 1967, in the breastplate of the strategic comotions of the Cold War. Originally, there were five founding members: Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines. Vietnam joined the ranks in 1995, after the ultimate reverberations of the Last Indochin War. In 1997, Laos and Myanmar followed Vietnam. In 1999, Cambodia decided to make its partaking in ASEAN a fact, especially after its political domestic situation received much needed handling. As important as these guidebooks are, they are involved in the scope of this article only secondarily. Thi article reports the fact that the meekness of three important theoretical anchors – **the security complex theory, the security regime theory, the collective security theory, the community security theory and ASEANology**–instaurations utilized to explain ASEAN's birth and predict its development, are tailored in half-abidince. Ever since its derivation, ASEAN became able-bodied to furnish one of the most successful forms of **regionalism**, after the global high-ranking position of **European Regionalism**.*

*Southeast Asian New Security Regionalism has plenty of theoretical orthodoxies to apply or to commence applying. The aftermath of their empirical workings can sometimes be unconfident of the very ideas it implemented. The approach of this article is to review some of the major theoretical conceptual contributions utilized to describe findings about **Southeast Asian New Security Regionalism's** connotations. While supporting the idea that neither one of the research programs mentioned is grounded enough in **Southeast Asian security dynamics**, the last part of the article claims that a rediscovery of **Southeast Asian Regionalism**, under the **New Regionalism** framework, is very likely to underplay its distinctiveness.*

Keywords: ASEAN; Regionalism; Southeast Asian New Security Regionalism.

1. Elucidation of theoretical use

Regionalism is a concept that tightly operates faddishness especially because the major signature tone of regional identifications is not the one of full agreement. For many years Southeast Asia was not identified as a region, or a sub-region. It bore the terminology associations that were given to it by extra-regional actors. From immemorial times, the Chinese have used the appellation of *the South Ocean* to

delineate the vassal theories that were neighboring its Southern-most extremities. Gradually, Southeast Asia became known as the compilation of states North of Australia, East of India and South of China. As time passed by, Southeast Asia lost the initial attrition. Succeeding, different and sometimes altering recognition phases passed before Southeast Asia could be identified with *ASEAN*.

This article does not actuate a mere geographic interpretation of *Southeast Asian regionalism*. It ranks records of its formation, compiling ideas of its history, culture and politics. It starts by amounting and discussing several theories that relegated Southeast Asian *regionalism*'s evolution and finishes with an attempt to tease out its distinctiveness by paralleling it to other forms of *regionalism*. The term *regionalism* has been utilized in this section within a conceptual toolbox: a process-tracing regional project, encompassing mutually-shared ideas by regional actors.

2. The lack of compliance of systemic theories in Southeast Asia

If theory is an appendix of reality, then the transition between reality and theory might not be so inexorable. If theory is the exemplar reflection of reality, then how can a theory reasoning different fallacies, scrutinizing understandings and fallacies that find their omniscency unscattered proved only in the space that gave them birth, claim universality? How can the orthodoxy of Western theories be implemented into areas that bear little resemblance to the security opportunities and to the security environment into which those theories were built? Theory is the product of reality or theory is the product of reality and also produces reality? The present thesis argues that, without invoking any possible disfigurements, theory is the product of reality and produces reality. Thus, theory can cluster around a certain spread of responses that can help shape reality. If this is an accepted claim, then how can a theoretical system perceive the trends and patterns in regional affairs and attach straightforward definitions to them, if it was meant to spread ideas of a different reality? It could only underpin a systematic misreading of another reality. Cultural linkages, common historical experiences, a different intellectual setting and hubris - are evidences that theory is not monosymtomatic. Associating terms of reference that can only incompletely deliniate explanatory tools that can only half way yield un falsifiable answers. This point is also made by Amitav Acharya when it suggests that: „There is a possibility for progress in West and in non-West” (A.Acharya, B. Barry:2010).

There certainly exists a non-West reality that defies a perfect fit in reinforcing belief systems, under a Western thinking scrutiny. *ASEAN* was targeted by many Western discourses, some ascribing to partially applied Western investigatory methods, some ascribing to imputations of the Western theoretical backgrounds¹. As it will be shown, non-West theories have a contestes nature, as applied to *ASEAN*.

¹ In our opinion, obviously abusive in means;

One of the most appraised theoretical patterns of the study of regions is the *regional security complex theory*. As one of the most viable studies of the regional security level, the *regional security complex theory* can be with total accuracy applied to *ASEAN's institutional functionalism*. There are some considered assessments of evidencing some correlations. The fact that „the security dynamics is based on territoriality [...] and that it contradicts the de-territorialisation promoted by globalization” (B. Bary, O Weaver:2003) cannot completely be indifferent of *ASEAN*. *ASEAN's* close geographic design made the processes of interaction and of cooperation to be more expeditious in nature. *ASEAN* – as a regional grouping – was built and oriented to being in full grasp of the regional reality of all the eleven Southeast Asian states. It was not its founding aim to connect and reconnect the region, in geographic terms. Despite this, *ASEAN* was able to have a geographic patronage of Southeast Asia: especially with the current talks regarding East Timor admission in *ASEAN*. Regional growth, economic interdependencies, norms-sharing under the umbrella of cooperative management – could have had their practical and smooth development and operations, if it hadn't been for the geographic proximity of *ASEAN* states. The four essential variables of security complexes – *border, anarchic structure, polarity, social construction* – cannot stand a total association with *ASEAN*. Combating regional anarchy was not the impending rationale of the founding fathers of *ASEAN*. There were, of course, apprehensions regarding Indonesia's dealings and regional ambitions. Nonetheless, Indonesian subliminal diplomacy and anti-Malaysia campaign did not escalate into regional conflicts. *ASEAN*, unlike the European Concert or the United Nations, did not elbow room for cooperation and mutual understanding among Southeast Asian states, after a period of violence and offensiveness – as it was the case for Europe, after the Second World War. Concealing the fundamental differences between Southeast Asian States played into *ASEAN's* striking and self-perpetuating consensus-type decision-making. Polarity is not a sub-systemic trait in Southeast Asia. Hegemonic regional players do not exist in Southeast Asia, as opposed to other sub-regions of Asia. *The Asian Financial Crisis* proved the assertion that no Southeast Asian state the inexorable discrepancies of regional cooperation. No Southeast Asian state could have provided a lifeboat for the others or resolve socialization problems. Ralf Emmers argues that Indonesia and Vietnam are regional hegemonies in Southeast Asia – one of them exercising dominance in the maritime territorial portion of Southeast Asia, and the other in the sub-continental area. It is unarguable the fact that Indonesia had for a long time high hopes for the regional order of Southeast Asia (apud R. Emmers:2005, pag. 645-655).

It condoned a regional behavior of a tough player. Indonesia even utilized its recourses to invade East Timor in 1975. Even if it was not a rule-bending circumstance, as East Timor was not an *ASEAN* member, but a Portuguese extension into the

Indonesian mainland, Indonesia's exposure as military power defending its periphery disclosed its immanent objectives – of securing domestic order in the homeland and of eliminating external influence on its territory. It was highly improbable that Indonesia could have conducted military-like incursions into the rest of Southeast Asia. Indonesia's coercion potential could only be propagated domestically. Recollections of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia can be explained with other ends in view. Vietnam performed a protracted war with a considerable Soviet help. Cambodia, on the other side, was under the Chinese protection shield. Vietnam did not have the resources necessary to invest into such a military spree! Vietnam's status in Indochina cannot be undermined, especially after the reunification. Vietnam's status as a hegemonic presence in sub-continental Southeast Asia can flare up other discussions. This thesis does not steadily encourage any of these positions. Launching brutal assaults with foreign aid and assistance does entangle great power status for an actor. Furthermore, Vietnam's economy, even though successful in comparison to the economies of other Southeast Asian states, cannot overarch an economic ownership over a meteoritic economic rise. Indonesia could not overcome the upshots of the Asian Financial Crisis. The adjustment to the post-Crisis economic environment was painful to Indonesian ambitions.

The purported resistance to regional conflict is not an *ASEAN* feature that *the regional security complex theory* evaluates. From this theoretical angle: “*Security dilemmas are much harsher in the case of actors engaged in a relationship of territorial proximity; regions are mini-anarchies; Regions can enrich, but not revolutionize International Relations Studies; Regions composed of weak states characterize proto-security complexes*” (E. R. Kelly:2007, pages:197-229). *The regional security complex theory* is obviously inspired by European experience and theory. There is an almost unchallenged popular appeal of considering European feedback an all-resolving panacea. The centuries' old Eurocentric tradition of the world order entitles such enuancements. The decolonization process and the separatism it brought between the European history, the Western history and the non-West history are poorly receives by this theory. The arguments according to which the West creates order and the non-West disorder generate sources of lingering tension between the view from without and the efforts to normalize intra-regional security environments across the globe and particularly in Southeast Asia.

The security regime theory can also be used to assess *ASEAN Regionalism*. *The security regime theory* is, likewise, European-inspired. The lack of confidence between members of a security regime clarifies the fact that an equilibrium of power can exist between its members. The members of a security regime can use deterrence methods to avoid the emmergence of conflict, other than the normative ones. The process of reciprocal interaction is not meant to produce integrationist frameworks. There are principles that have to be respected, but if these principles cannot surpass

certain incongruities between its members, then its members can use intimidating factors in order to drive out a possible unwillingness. Stability is modulated by these inflexions. In a *security regime*, members are less available to socialise². Peace can only gain a widespread acceptance if the military insecurities are so high that they can best be appeased through cooperation. Peace is not a supreme goal in security regimes. Cooperation in security regimes is only a more honourable way to habituate destabilizing tendencies with norm-production actions. Cooperation is a lesser evil. If balance of power policies will cause visceral harms to the states' interests, then cooperation in the form of a security regime will be the most appropriate available option. Military rivalries might emerge. Collocations of fragile states or of powerful states might also emerge within a security regime. This security formula does not necessarily entail integration or interdependence. In this article's point of view, security regimes are a quick fix to very complex security problems. Security regimes exclude *deeper multilateralism*. They can sometimes represent a back-up plan when *multilateralism* fails. *The Concert of Europe* was a security regime that served as a security order for Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. Before the outburst of the First World War, *the Concert of Europe* was the prevailing order in the system. In this instance, security regimes are systemic theories. Their derivative use in *Southeast Asian sub-systemic regionalism* is adumbrated by *ASEAN* normative edifice. *The Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality* and the *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation*³ bridge the gap between war-like manifestations and mistrust between *ASEAN* members. Conflict avoidance and the *community-type regionalism* indicate that *ASEAN* is enthused over integration processes and normative proliferation. Unlike the European security setting of the XIX century, Southeast Asia was not constantly embroiled in regional wars. Local conflicts afflicting the region happened whether between non-*ASEAN* members⁴, between regional elements and extra-regional elements⁵ or within the area of a regional country's domestic affairs. The rivalries of the colonial era made way for a cycle of extra-regional ignited conflicts. Even when considering the recent Thai-Cambodian conflict⁶, the regional conflicts in Southeast Asia did not have the salience of the European ones. The global scale of the latter is only one thing to consider.

The Thai-Cambodian conflict was subservient to *Southeast Asian regionalism*. Member states assiduously cultivated an approach to that had to be taken immediately. The general feeling was that the conflict be terminated as soon as possible. In the

² Like in the *security communities*;

³ Adopted in 1971 in order to keep Southeast Asia away from the disservice of extra-regional influence and interference;

⁴ *Exempli gratia* – The Third Indochina War;

⁵ *Exempli gratia* – The First Indochina War; the post-war Dutch- Indonesian clashes;

⁶ Which emerged over the Preah Vihear Temple in 2008, with violent encounters in 2011;

Thai-Cambodian conflict, the aggressor was hard to identify. On the forefront of events, regional states wanted a fast ending to the issue, thinking that the supervening economic cooperation would also become strained. *Southeast Asian regionalism* had a more lucrative effect, in this respect, than security regimes. There was no *regional coalition of the fittest* against one or the other of the belligerent parties. There were no – registered or unregistered – disrespect towards a belligerent party. All of the regional approaches were sanction-free. *Southeast Asian regionalism missed the opportunity to use balance of power in the Thai-Cambodian conflict.* As far as the economic facet of security regimes is concerned, the main assumptions rest untouched – as Steven Krasner suggests that „principles, norms, rules and decision making around which actor expectations converge in a given-issue area” (S.D. Krasner:1982) sum up the main aspects of security regimes. Norm convergence matches *Southeast Asian Regionalism* in economic terms. Regulating economic *Southeast Asian Regionalism* involves more than a normative examination. Well-informed contributions of consensus-reaching procedures, sectoral cooperation, standardized cooperation, prohibitive norms of behavior - estimate how far Southeast Asia has come in creating an *ASEAN Economic Community*.

Collective security theory sometimes intersects with scholar evaluations of *ASEAN*. In *collective security theory*, pledging allegiance to a common cause is what is required of the member states. Member states share the same security DNA – they can resort to violence if one of them is attacked. Responsibilizing the attacker is the common denominator for collective action. The attacker is recognized under this quality by all the member states of this kind of security arrangement. The member states’ cooperative disposition is activated during imperative circumstances. Thus, cooperation is circumstantial! The evolution of new functions for the member states is not compulsory. The enemy and its aggressive actions are not seized in advance. Agresiveness emits from attitude and behavior. There are many cons to these claims. First of all, *ASEAN Regionalism* was not dismissive of external influences, but they did not amount for all of *ASEAN*’s security positions. If was *ASEAN*’s security objective was only to avoid communist disturbances in Southeast Asia, then the end of the Cold War would have made its presence retrograde. Second, *ASEAN*’s military profile was not conceptualized in the beginning⁷. Its echoes are of a very and undeveloped recent nature. *ASEAN* finds it difficult to find culprits for the small-scale, regional conflicts it has to manage. Launching a punitive attack against an aggressor would mean that *ASEAN* is equipped with needful and substantial capabilities alongside. *ASEAN*’s founding fathers moved, at first, to the creation of joint-economic issue areas. Economy was the layer that thickened multilateral cooperation in other areas,

⁷ Even with the advent of *ASEAN Security Community*, things do not seem to run into the direction of ever being properly conceptualized;

even when *ASEAN* was moderately institutionalized. Even if state-centrism cannot be overlooked in Southeast Asian *regionalism*, *ASEAN* remains the dominant supplier for *ASEAN regionalism*. This is explanatory for the fact that the sphere of economic - cooperation as the primordial premises for *ASEAN regionalism* – was not exchanged with other premises, but was amplified into them!

Security communities theory is also given a theoretical dimension when discussing *ASEAN regionalism*. *Security communities* emerge on a synthesis of interests. Linkages increase the prospects for peace and for frameworks' predictions. Conflict avoidance is replaced by a peace-seeking structure. Peace and conflict avoidance are not synonyms. Conflict-avoidance is only a stage in the peace-making process. The convergence of interests is what secured the region against outsiders. A climate of trust, of amity and of welfare is revealed by a security community. The absence of war does not mean that states always agree on every issues. In *a security community*, states agree to have the possibility to sometimes disagree, without disengaging from the common perspective. The sense of solidarity between the members of *a security community* is very important in war-prevention actions. States rely on each other to protect and convey each other's interests. In *security communities*, there is no interest balancing. States do not balance against each other and are not virtually open to outer interventions. Their actions inside *the security community* are value-based. Value-sharing is not the same thing as norm-sharing. Norms enshrine a behavior under a constraining emulation. Values imply a cultural liaison between the members of *a security community*. Security relationships inside a security community are more likely to accelerate transition and security dynamics if they are value-oriented. One of the many virtues of *security communities* is that the level of trust is so high that values overrun norms.

Karl Deutsch was the patriarch of *the theory of security communities*. His theory helped provide an exemplification of the difference between *peace as a process, and not as an ultimate aim* and *peace as a product and as an ultimate aim* (K. Deutsch:1957). Transnational cooperation appears when states trust each other so much that greater inter-state interdependence comes naturally. The most important pillars of a security community are: *the absence of war* and the *absence of preparations for war* (A. Acharya:2010). Karl Deutsch inferred also a theoretical division of security communities: *amalgamated security communities* – created through the fusion of different states and *pluralistic communities* – in which interdependence and sovereignty are portioned equally. *ASEAN* takes after the deutschian interpretation of security arrangements. The absence of war in regional negotiations is not only instrumental, but also empirical. *ASEAN* consensual bone structure embodies the desire that even a conflict of interests has to be avoided if regional peace is craved for. *ASEAN's* inclusion in the second category of *security communities* – *the pluralistic communities* - stresses *ASEAN's* background expectations: *bilateral*

security arrangements are a wide acceptable assumption like *multilateral security arrangements*. ASEAN's vision of *regionalism* is, by this fact, very pragmatic. The security arrangements are interchangeable, even if, as regional experience unfolds, *multilateralism* is the preferable selection. If this selection mode happens to not work properly, then bilateral security arrangements would make for their seizure. Karl Deutsch's approach is *transactionalist*: "the guiding hypothesis of transactionalist work on integration was that a sense of community among states would be a function of the level of communication between states" (B. Rosamod:2000) *ASEAN Regionalism* did not attain such a progress. ASEAN's decisions have an informal precursor and the mutual constitution that sovereignty is a liability that cannot be renounced at. The dominant belief system that communication is the critical attribute of *security communities* is not coordinated with ASEAN's closed undisclosed communication processes⁸.

ASEAN's demise as *a security community*, in a deutschan sense, happened when the Thailand-Cambodia conflict was unleashed. Under no circumstances can two states that prepare for war⁹ and declare war to each other, call themselves pertaining members of *a security community*. Subtleties of this theoretical approach can be deciphered. Karl Deutsch used the *transactionalist security model* to explain how North Atlantic institutional devices were gaining momentum. Events in the North Atlantic security environment spiralled in a way contrary to Deutschian prophecies. The French withdrawal from NATO in 1959 tainted what seemed to be the perfect image of solidarity. The Thai-Cambodian conflict tainted an almost accomplished dream!

Another worthwhile theorizing attempt of ASEAN is made by David Martin Jones. The scholar depicts *ASEAN Regionalism* under the terminology of *ASEANology* (J.D. Martin:2006). Like the aforementioned authors, David Martin Jones compares ASEAN paradigm with a systemic theoretical counterpart. This time a comparison is drawn between ASEAN and the USSR. David Martin Jones observes that ASEAN's worshippers failed to predict the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-1998. In the same line of argument, supporters of *Sovietology* failed to prevent USSR's global downfall and moments of crisis that superseded the superpower¹⁰. To his mind, a theory has to have the ability to act in a prophylactic manner and be able to warn the political elites of major turning points that are about to happen. ASEAN's propaganda in the pre-crisis period is contested in the same degree like the Soviet propaganda. The theoretical mainstream's emulation fueled positive outcomes in both cases. No single theoretical key had the courage to predict the disaster. David Martin Jones' formulations are too far-fetched! Compared to the USSR, ASEAN did

⁸ Secret diplomacy disables clearer explanations of decision-making;

⁹ Even if at a very small scale;

¹⁰ David Martin Jones utilizes the Popperian algorithm for empirical testing of a theory: *Explain/Predict/Test*;

not vanquish in the post-Cold War Era. The crisis that deviated *ASEAN Regionalism* involved regional and extra-regional components. The responsibility to predict had to do with both of these auspices. *ASEAN* is the epitome of Southeast Asia, with a strict geographic delimitation. The USSR had no geographic delimitations in projecting its influence and power. A large-scale downfall cannot hold comparison to a sub-systemic downfall. *ASEAN* specialists did not predict the forthcoming crisis, but they did not deny such an occurrence. Compared to the USSR, *ASEAN* did not overstretch its means and resources. *ASEAN* employed its resources strictly for the regional build-up. USSR employed its resources globally and made the mistake of contingently preserving them at the widest of scales. The mirroring of the two experiences is discontinuous.

The systemic theories outlined in this sub-section sketch out a series of misgivings when channeled to explain the on-goings of *ASEAN's* security reality. Amitav Acharya also incorporates the first of them in his book: *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia- ASEAN and the problems of regional order*. The reason behind their meltdown in Southeast Asia is that they uncomfortably ignore the distinctiveness of *Southeast Asian Security Regionalism*.

3. The Distinctiveness of Southeast Asian New Security Regionalism

Research conducted on regional security dynamics in Southeast Asia has found new sources of inspiration. The uni-polar momentum has faded and the regional security level is no longer an available place for testing extra-regional involvement (apud B.Buzan, A.Amitav:2010). The theories of the precedent sub-section imprint additional references of systemic thinking – a surging tide of European, American and Soviet theorizing contexts. The familiarity of these writings to Southeast Asian political development is diffusely verified. Southeast Asian social dynamics, security evolution and regional security shifts were arbitrated in a different manner than the theories that envisioned the security policies and behaviors of the actors that assigned a recognizable security pattern to the international system.

At a certain moment in time, extra-regional actors – systemic forces or plainly extra-regional actors whose spheres of interest were visible in Southeast Asia – used sheer power projection to inflate regional affairs. It was the period of the Cold-War – when peripheries were centrally-managed and coordinated. Global interventions were the main modifiers of the regional security dynamics and a self-propelled regional order was, by all means, an unthinkable hypothesis. The main argument was, that, ever since Westphalia, the systemic level has exerted a strategic dominance over the sub-systemic level. The relationship between the primary system and the regional subsystems was a relationship of *subordination*. *Southeast Asian Regionalism* had to pay homage to *ASEAN*. The ascending *ASEAN Regionalism* began its journey to maturity during the Cold War's security twist and turns. It did not receive

help from the outer-regional circle, even if the outer-regional circle purposefully influenced regional politics. Even when *ASEAN* auto-declared its anti-communist foundational prescriptions, *Southeast Asian regionalism* maintained its validity even if could not profit from extra-regional financial help, like *European Regionalism* did. *Southeast Asian Regionalism* had to rise on its own and permit the transition to a new security role for Southeast Asia. Even in the Cold War Era, *ASEAN*'s zeal mobilized its leverages to enrich the regional establishment and support new expansions. In the Cold War Era, *ASEAN* had to survive three Cold Wars: a systemic one – between US and USSR, and other two involving a regional power and a systemic force: the Cold War between US and China and the Cold War between USSR and China. The unpredictable security environment of Northeast Asia and the intimated hesitancy of its southern extremity lay little room for questioning. Although *ASEAN* delayed normative-building deeds, autonomy-generated regional dynamics had come eventually into being.

In *the post-Cold War Era*, the systemic level is no longer viewed as the chief catalyst of regional order and *ASEAN Regionalism* has developed strategic capabilities to resist extra-regional pressures. Discharging a central political role in the region, *ASEAN* is currently trying to force upon itself a transition to a security community. The *great power retrenchment* (apud E.R. Kelly:2007, pag.197-229) from the regions is energizing community building measures. *ASEAN* has to be prepared to reassess its norms and provide stronger reassurances measures for erasing inter-state tensions.

Southeast Asian Regionalism is an innovation for security theories. *ASEAN* is a building block for a distinctive form of *regionalism* – stronger than most forms of *regionalism* in the developing world¹¹ and weaker than those of the Western world – especially the one accounted for by the European Union¹². *ASEAN* proves the fact that traces of *regionalism*, different from the European approach can also be found. *ASEAN regionalism* has a justifiable existence of its own. The coverage of its distinctive and self-reliant nature can be summarized with the following specifications:

- *The state-centrism of regional security dealings*: in *ASEAN Regionalism*, states have the primary and the most active involvement in regional security issues; *ASEAN Regionalism* is respectful of a relatively recent acquired independence of the regional states and seeks not to erode it;
- *An inductive trajectory of regional order*: *ASEAN* was created as a means to protect national identities and not to overlook their insights;
- The national level does not partially dissolve into *ASEAN Regionalism*, like in the *EU regionalism*; Nationhood engenders decision-making; The

¹¹ For instance, it created a more binding security pattern than the ones that can be investigated in South America or in Africa;

¹² In terms of promoting a process of integration;

final decision is the by-product of the national and regional interests' intersections;

- The three “c”s of the regional security management: *consultations, consensualism* and *cooperation*;
- *ASEAN* stands for *a heterogeneous region* – disparate historical backgrounds, different interactions with extra-regional actors, different linguistic families, different religious intromissions; The *striking heterogeneity* seems troubling for the purposes of creating a major regional project like *ASEAN*; *ASEAN*'s unity lies in the sober and negative antecedents that were endured by all of the regional states¹³; Concerted action was required to enable the regional states to confront extra-regional interference;
- *ASEAN*'s collective energy lies in the support it gathered for the informal style of its functionality, denoting an enormous amount of trust between its member states – the lack of more law-abiding norms means that the regional states do not feel threatened by each other and that material threats are likely to emerge from extra-regional surroundings; *ASEAN*'s collective capacity for generating consensus rests on the style and manner non-regulated initiatives are triggered and negotiated; A greater sense of morality can also be discerned: *ASEAN Regionalism* does not limit an ethical behavior, but rather it considers it immanent in regional interactions: the false panaceas of normative embellishments can breed resentment amongst states and reasons for distrust¹⁴;
- *ASEAN*'s normative export into regional states is very modest compared to the European Union; *ASEAN* is currently under a trial phase: the Thai-Cambodian conflict will not drain out of its own initiative and *ASEAN* has to exercise a strong stirring of the situation so as to treat the deleterious effect that the conflict had upon its *Regionalism*;
- *European Regionalism* was molded to put an end to the passing on of balance of power policies from a security arrangement to another; *Southeast Asian Regionalism* was molded to provide an alternative of the balance of power policies of extra-regional actors;
- European over-utilized formalism is harshly criticized; Southeast Asian innate informal manner is also very harshly criticized – this common point between the two types of *regionalism* brings into relief their most important dissimilarities: Southeast Asian socio-cultural norms of *Musyawahab – Consultation* and *Mufakat – Consensus* stridently proclaim

¹³ Except for Thailand – a regional state that was never colonized;

¹⁴ If a conflict of interests could appear, then the introduction of a particular norm may be used to benefit one or more states and to disadvantage others;

a common regional tradition in Southeast Asia from the pre-colonial era, co-shared by all regional states; Regional interactions before the arrival of the colonial powers, under the pattern of commercial relations, evidences the fact Southeast Asian regionalism had a less unconventional view, down sided by extra-regional elements;

- *The security doctrine of non-interventionism*¹⁵ of *Southeast Asian Regionalism* is at variance with the *carrots and sticks mechanism* of the *European regionalism*; *The carrots and sticks mechanism* of the *European Regionalism* is used with prevalence in different sectors of European action and is not a norm in-sourced in security affairs; Even so, this norm is particularly important because it enables the *European Regionalism* to apply sanctions; *Southeast Asian Regionalism* cannot apply sanctions as this situation would be interpreted as a disrespectful deed towards others' sovereignty;
- *Southeast Asian Regionalism* is confronted with lengthening shadow of nationalism; *European Regionalism* has the supranational strategic reach, especially in areas where common action is embraced; *Southeast Asian Regionalism* is nationally inspired and managed within an inter-governmental forum;
- As its global diplomatic reach is expanding, *Southeast Asian Regionalism* needs to mend the flaws of regional interdependence by gradually annihilating the distorting factors of regional cooperation – *ASEAN* has to reinvent norms or to re-evaluate their applicability;
- The interpenetrating regional influences in *Southeast Asian Regionalism* attest to the fact that *ASEAN* needs to produce incremental improvements so that it can be associated with the whole Southeast Asian region and not withstand baggage of historical experiences¹⁶;
- The *ASEAN Way* is an extra-dimension of *ASEAN Regionalism*; It provides a lead into common security considerations, understated by regional norms, attitudes and behaviors;

¹⁵ This doctrine not only does not give way to constant leverage and maximum flexibility - hopes and aspirations that through *ASEAN* have come close to fruition, but also loses its utility in approaching the nearly – wrecked geopolitical realities of this region. The territorial disputes in this region – the Paracels Islands (claimed by Vietnam and China) and the Spratly Islands (claimed by China, the Philippines and Vietnam), the Mischief Reef (which was occupied in 1995 by China) – are sensitive issues of maritime security in the relationship with China, whose exploration is something of a minefield under the provisions of *the non-interference norm*. The non-interference norm virtually paralyzes *ASEAN's* freedom of action in these disputes;

¹⁶ With reference to East Timor's admission;

- If *ASEAN* is successful in quelling internal dissent by normative reinvention or normative production, then the qualitative improvement of *ASEAN Regionalism* will elevate its sense of morality;
- *ASEAN*'s norm-adherence is partially weak and partially weakly encouraged; This feature of *ASEAN Regionalism* can work both ways – it can represent an impulse for cooperation or an impulse for conflict; Even if the thrust of *ASEAN Regionalism* is to keep the security arrangements' formalism in a low key, the mutations that have taken place both regionally and inter-regionally does not recommend such a stagnant maintenance of the norm-reality hiatus;

In a final evaluation, *Southeast Asian New Security Regionalism* confirms both the blipping nature of regional security arrangements and the opportunities they present for the future of the regions experienced their rise. Institutional adroitness is missing in *ASEAN*. Future developments cannot outlast the institutional wreckagees that are repeatedly encountered due to the aimless use of the *non-interventionist doctrine*. *ASEAN* has the responsibility to reinvent!

4. Concluding Remarks

ASEAN Regionalism was not modeled in the culture of competitiveness. Acting like a resistive force to change can make the prospect of the preservation of the regional autonomy instinctively outrun by the soft covers of accommodating extra-regional actors. It has survived many *nuclear winters*¹⁷ when decision-making was at its hardest! It utilized normative dwelling as the formation of compounds of obvious significance, with no resort to imperative norms of behavior that would undermine national leverage. An institutional screening of *ASEAN*'s functioning would seem proper to recommend to *ASEAN* decision-makers that a more pragmatist regional approach be taken to fully fledge internal bickering and misunderstandings. *ASEAN* has to be prepared to use its norms wisely – for instance: for deterrence purposes. *ASEAN*'s lack of normative compliance needs to remain opaque in the process of inter-regional or global diplomatic bargaining. If not, at least *ASEAN* should refrain from using its convergent views as default mechanisms. If in the Cold War Era *ASEAN*'s main reasons for concern were extra-regional in nature, in the post-Cold War Era, *ASEAN* cast a long shadow over its credibility. *ASEAN* and its *regionalism* turned out to be seminal in accommodating extra-regional actors, but not systemic theories!

¹⁷ Metaphor utilized by the author in order to show the drudgery exertions that have enacted some clever ideas of surpassing, even if they were not the most clever or the most long-standing for its regional tenure.

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