ASEAN Way and New Way to Thinking or Decline

The idea of ASEAN is not new. There have been several "pre ASEAN" organizations before the creation of ASEAN. First was the creation of The Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in July 1961. It included Thailand, Malaya (renamed Malaysia two years later) and the Philippines. Later,in 1963, it incorporated Singapore and the British Borneo territories and became operative in September 1963. The approaches to co-operation immediately divided the development of the ASA. The Philippines and Malaya sought to create a European Economic Community-style organization, with Thailand seeing it as an association with a looser structure, and Indonesia not wishing to join the organization. Indonesia found the political stance of the organization too politically aligned to the west. In addition, Indonesia felt that they didn't have a role in creating the ASA, so a new organization was needed (Lee, 2006).

The answer to that demand was the creation of *Maphilindo* between Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia in July 1963. Lee (2006)[1] observed the reason why *Maphilindo* also failed was it being "...[o]riginally an attempt to draw together the Malay people who had been blocked communication during colonial era, Maphilindo could not work well due to different interests of the participating nations". The Philippines and Indonesia were to put off or even check the formation of a Federation of Malaysia. They each had territorial disagreements with Malaya. Consequently, "Maphilindo had to walk down the hill mainly because of military disputes" following Lee's definition about Maphilindo (2006). The collapse of these two organizations led to the demand for the creation of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in1967.

Despite the short history of the organization, there has been significant research on the ASA and *Maphilindo*. Gordon (1964), for example, wrote an article in World Politics, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Jan., 1964), pp. 222-253, entitled *"Problems of Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia"*. The article is still relevant today. He noted that there is an "*assumption that politics in Southeast Asia is too burdened with tension and suspicion to allow any hope for regional collaboration*" (p. 222). Later, he noted other factors which are more dividing than constructive for regional co-operation. "The list could be expanded without difficulty, but the major sources and manifestations of tension in Southeast Asia seem to fall roughly into six categories. Four are mentioned most often by qualified observers and deserve major attention here: (1) territorial conflicts; (2) irredentist and minority problems; (3) personal disputes among leaders; and (4) conflicts that can be traced to Cold War alignment." (Gordon, 1964, p.223)

These quotations were taken at the beginning of South East Asian co-operation a half century ago. Now, in 2015, the same problems of incoherence still occur and are still obstacles for closer co-operation, so it is nothing new. The same territorial conflicts still occur between Thailand and Cambodia or the Philippines and Indonesia, or minority problems. Personal disputes between leaders occur as Malaysia and Indonesia attest. Conflicts related to the cold war are solved, but that was not resolved by, or the achievement of, ASEAN, but by the collapse of the Soviet Union and external reasons. *This leads to the question: will ASEAN develop, thus enabling it to change into a more coherent organization?*

Despite the limited development and effectiveness of ASEAN since its appearance in 1967, it has been the most significant multilateral organization in Asia in recent history (Goh, 2003; Fall, 2006; Kurlanzick, 2012). ASEAN is largely an arena for intergovernmental meetings and

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[1] http://www.zum.de/whkmla/sp/0607/seongmin/seongmin.html

negotiations, rather than a forum for the design and implementation of action plans. The informal structures, harmony and consensus-oriented principles unfortunately impede the association's capacity to be a global-level player[2] and leave it far behind its full potential and capacity. The structure of ASEAN is different from other regional organizations and institutions. It cannot force member countries to comply because of the absence of steering mechanisms and the absence of sanction clauses, political power or authority. It has no peace keeping forces. It does not have the authority to enforce human rights, lacks the capability to manage natural disasters, has no mechanisms for conflict resolution, and it is these structural weaknesses that generate lack of trust. Most Western leaders, and even many of Southeast Asia's top officials, do not consider the organization capable of handling serious economic or security challenges (Kurlantzick, 2012), and there seems no evidence that it can handle internal political issues. Of central importance for regional cooperation and integration following Mattli (1999) is leadership. Unlike the European Union (EU), ASEAN countries have a lack of leadership and a leading country[3], while the EU has both of these important factors.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand (City of Bangsaen) on 8 August, 1967. Brunei Darussalam then joined on 8 January, 1984; Vietnam on 28 July, 1995; the Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July, 1997; and Cambodia on 30 April, 1999, making up what is today the ten member states of ASEAN.

The Association of South East Nations (ASEAN) now has 10 countries with more than 600 million people covering a total land area of 4.5 million km^2. ASEAN can be divided geographically into two different zones; maritime ASEAN and mainland ASEAN. The ASEAN economy generated 3.62 trillion US$ in 2012 (ASEAN, 2014), which means that ASEAN's GDP per capita amounted to PPP$5,869. ASEAN's GDP is growing strongly and this lures foreign direct investment and which increased by 114, 111 million $US in the year 2011 with around 26% being intra-ASEAN investment following Central Bank of Thailand (BOT) statistics in 2014.

The covert reason for the creation of ASEAN was an *external reason* and the threat of communism both from China and the Soviet Union during the Vietnam War and with communist expansion in the region. ASEAN was founded with a limited charter and goals with a pure decentralized system, even compared to many other regional organizations, in for example, Africa or South America. The goal of ASEAN was to preserve long-term peace based on inter governmental talks, without formal regional institutions, preferring a pure decentralized system. ASEAN members agreed to a set of procedural norms which have become the principles of the "*ASEAN way*" (Goh, 2003). These norms are a set of working guidelines for the management of conflicts in ASEAN."That norms rather lead cooperation among states rather than the establishment of institutions and follow the basic idea of mercantilism with its own institutions and power which can call regionalization." As Koga (2010) has well described "...if the institution does not figure out issue areas where cooperation is possible, it does not do any harm."In other words, this means slow

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[2] For example, all ASEAN countries don't have diplomatic relation with Israel. That creates difficulties for ASEAN to make any statement on the Middle –East situation and limits ASEAN's role in the international arena.

[3] When I ask my ASEAN course students, both European and Asian students, there is no doubt, which is the leading country in the European Union or leadership. Both European and Asian student state that Germany is the leading countryin Europe, and Angela Merkel is the most powerful figure in the EU. Both Asian and European students were unable to mention which is the leading country of ASEAN or who is the real leader of ASEAN.

development with static stability rather than development and dynamic stability.Public policy reflects regimes' values to commitment of relevant institutions and views of the whole society and in this article,"society" means ASEAN society. Public policy embraces objective participants in its formulation and employs its resources for achieving objectives of policy, to compound managerial action, and in policies and administration in the public sector (Lane, 2000). The challenge of ASEAN countries was and still in its concepts and how the application was integrated with all functions in setting policy goals, implementing and assigning rules for monitoring, regulating and controlling these roles. Efficacy of Governance[4] (Yolles&Fink, 2011) plays an integral role in achieving these goals and created dynamic stability.

Different levels and stages of development and modernization, both economic and socio-economic, were responsible for the creation of different kinds of interest in meaning of goals. Koga (2010, p 89) mentions the "collective action problem", where some member countries focus on their national development and interest, and some other members seek to develop institutional functions, which eventually makes it ever more difficult to reach consensus and consensus is the basic principle of ASEAN. Currently, ASEAN integration is more economic integration than security and political integration, but still the level of economic integration is low in terms of intraregional trade or investment. Intra-regional trade, for example, is still around 25% and has not increased significantly over the past 25 years.

ASEAN member countries are heterogeneous in almost every aspect of life. ASEAN countries don't share a common culture; they have different religions, legacies of colonialism, ideas of society as a political system, and government regimes. In addition, the levels of development (social, political and economic) are different and this effects the performance and efficacy of ASEAN. The Economist (2003)[5] described the problem eloquently as: "ASEAN leaders seem positively proud of their organization's ability to accommodate dictators, democrats, capitalist and communist. No wonder, then, that they have difficulty agreeing on anything."

In effect, ASEAN was constructed as a diplomatic community and was never intended to be a body for functional integration (Smith, 2004) and even less for structural integration and institutionalization. However, if one focuses and measures on the number of meetings it has had over the years it can be seen that ASEAN is a highly institutionalized organization the outcomes and efficacy of which are poor.

The new form of ASEAN had its origins in the ninth ASEAN summit held in Bali in 2003. The summit announced the Bali II Concord which was meant to establish the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), and ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC). As with the ASEAN way, these agreements are largely statements or declarations of aspiration with high-flying words rather than comprehensive agreements. In fact, the policy details and implementation plan will occur later in the future (Smith 2004; Koga 2010).

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[5] "A Holiday in Bali", Economist, 11 October, 2003, p.46

As we can see the ASEAN three pillar structures is similar to the European Union (EU) three pillar system in the Treaty of Rome, 1957. While ASEAN's organization is a pure decentralized system with intergovernmental principles, the EU has both intergovernmental as supranational methods and structure. The first pillar is the strongest with supranational methods in the EU, while ASEAN's first and most important pillar is the political and security pillar based in fact on recommendations rather than orders and agreements.

The ASEAN Way

To understand ASEAN cooperation and development processes, one should first understand the basic concept of ASEAN and how and why it affects ASEAN's future. It is the philosophy of ASEAN. It is an excuse quite often when ASEAN has a problem to create future opinions, it varies by time and situation, and its meaning is flexible.

The ASEAN way states that "the principle of non-interference is the original core foundation upon which regional relations between ASEAN member-states are based" (Keling*et al*. 2011). Biziouras (2009) described the ASEAN way as meaning informal, consensus-oriented decision-making processes. "This level of decision-making flexibility has been deemed as necessary in creating a regional structure that has not assumed initiatives that are not fully and wholly supported by its members, thus increasing the chances for survival of the regional organization" (Antolik 1990), while Loke (2006) states that the "ASEAN Way, is frequently referred to as the defining principle of ASEAN diplomacy."The ASEAN way seeks effectiveness in that it is able to create mechanisms for the survival of ASEAN as an organization rather than to create efficacy of the organization, which in turn produces static stability instead of dynamic stability. It is important for ASEAN to carry out actions rather than aim at ends – to keep moving, but move where? There are many definitions of the ASEAN way, depending on the author's perspective and context. This lack of coherence in definition also currently provides a good excuse when ASEAN and its leaders are unable to create favourable outcomes and/or cannot explain (or not willing to explain) some specific issue(s). Koga (2010, p. 91) made a strong statement about the ASEAN way when he said it promotes an excuse for relegating ASEAN to being nothing more than a "talk shop" or as Webber (2003) wrote "…high-flying rhetoric…", or Smith (2004) who made similar claims.

Koga (2010) notes aptly that, "the ASEAN Way, nevertheless, began to be utilized for different purposes over time". Despite the main common slogan of the ASEAN way, it comes under criticism because ASEAN and ASEAN member countries violated their basic principles as scholars often mention (Wain, 1998; Hiebert, 1998; Goh, 2003; Smith 2004), like border conflicts, even war between Thailand and Cambodia in 2008-2011, The Philippines and Malaysia Sabah State conflicts 2013, and so on. Unsolved border issues and only around 60 kilometres to 170 kilometres[6] from 2,170 kilometres are demarcated and that may cause problems between neighbouring countries as in 2012 and March 2015 (Bangkok post, 2015)[7]. It is not only violence and military problems, it also includes diplomatic and foreign relations problems between member countries as direct interference in other domestic issues as in the problem between Malaysia, The Philippines and Indonesia at the end of the 1990's. When Malaysia arrested former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, both The

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[6] Depending on source

[7] http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/529439/marchers-demand-thai-village-back-from-myanmar

Philippines and Indonesia strongly criticizedthe action. Indonesia went so far as to give open support for Anwar Ibrahim, which led to diplomatic problems between Indonesia and Malaysia. Smith (2004, pp.419-420) described aptly "Malaysia also protested the decision by members of the Indonesian political elite, including President Wahid, to meet with Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Anwar's wife and leader of the opposition.The official Indonesian response was that in Indonesia's political leaders were free to meet with whomever they wanted" while other ASEAN countries were quiet in that case. That also indicates different interpretations about what constitutes "interference" in domestic affairs. This example shows clearly that ASEAN countries easily break their basic principles. It also shows the level of coherence between the "ASEAN family".

The problem of ASEAN's deeper integration is the forms and principles of ASEAN. The harmony orientation as non-interference can delay almost everything. As described before, ASEAN is a diplomatic community with private and informal procedures with principles of harmony and non-interference where actions are more important than the ends, which does not create a dynamic platform for organizational efficacy and development. As social agency theory and socio cognitive theory explains, harmony organization, following Yolles and Fink (2013), is pluralistic in nature and promotes the view that the world should be accepted as it is, with attempts to understand and appreciate rather than to change, direct, or exploit. Kemp's research "Cultural Implicit Conflict" 1997 notes that this kind of organization is harmony- and idea-centered, and tends to embrace the *creation* of ideas. He continues that "idea creators often tend to be unable to apply their ideas and may lack the practical capabilities or material governing controls necessary to manifest the ideas as behavioural aspects of the system" (Kemp, 1997; 24). Good examples of the creation of ideas was the announcement to create an ASEAN community or Bali Concord II which is to establish an economic community, social community and security and political community. These agreements are more statements about what shall be done without policy and implementation details and the details will be delivered later, asa result of the informality of meetings, lack of functional details of policy or specific information worked out later without specific times and dates.

Most recent evidence of this is the Bali III Concord of May 2011, where political development is of central importance with the principles of democracy and constitutional government as human rights, but no definition of what those principles mean and what is the meaning of democracy, good governance, human rights mechanisms, social justice and so on, are given. Also, the efforts of those principles are at a low level, as a high-ranking official said: "That is only collections of ideas, nothing else". The economic field shows similar results in many sectors, even though it is the most successful part of ASEAN co-operation. Intra-ASEAN trade[8] is still at a relatively low level (around 25%) and extra-ASEAN trade is around 75 percent, compared tothe European Union (EU) where internal trade is around 70 percent (ADP, 2012, ASEAN secretariat 2014). The intra-FDI shows even lower results, despite the ASEAN aspiration to create higher interdependence between ASEAN countries and less dependent situation from the West[9], the result is also low. Intra-ASEAN FDI inflows count for only 16% and the rest of FDI inflow (76%)

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[8] 25 years ago, the value of Intra ASEAN trade was around 20 present, so there has been little increase within the last 25 years.

[9] "West" means North America and Europe in this context.

comesfrom outside of ASEAN despite most ASEAN member countries having huge amount of foreign receivers, compared with the EU, where the intra-FDI inflow is around 70% (ASEAN secretariat, 2014).

ASEAN strategy under harmony principles may not create favourable results and it is difficult for ASEAN to achieve its own aspirations and goals if it does not change its paradigm. Despite high aspirations and incentives, it is difficult to do anything. Yolles and Fink (2013: 37) described the problem of harmony orientation, where "excessive harmony may abolish all incentives to do anything. Thus, nothing would be achieved, no response is sought to survival challenges, and the delight in nature itself may also find its limits when the threats of nature are not mastered. Harmony ensures coherence of the social fabric because it makes social life enjoyable, in particular if something is collectively achieved" and the collectively achieved goal is a formal agreement between member states, even if it is not legally-based, it is more in form like a Mutual Agreement of Understanding (MOU).

Together with a state-centric approach, Collins (2008) explains that most ASEAN member-states have been characterised as a countries with a traditional state-centric approach or even state fetishism. A state-centric approach means the state is of central importance and state sovereignty is undisputed. A state-centric approach together with harmony organization and non-interference principles are a weak basis and platform for the creation of ASEAN as a strong and coherent unit between member countries and far more so as being a global player in the international arena. That combination can also be calledthe ASEAN way.

ASEAN was constructed as a diplomatic community with the ASEAN way and the principle of non-intervention with the following principles: (A) respect of member state sovereignty and territorial integrity; (B) non-interference in the internal and domestic issues and politics; (C) settlement of disputes by peaceful means, and renunciation of the threat or use of force. When focusing on these principles of ASEAN, it can be shown that ASEAN has violated all its own basic principles.

If focussing on the success of the political aspects and focus on diplomacy, ASEAN has been unable to solve conflicts between member states using non-intervention. Inside ASEAN, unsolved border problems still occur and lead even to war between members. Diplomacy and the ASEAN diplomatic community fails in its conflict management between members which leadsto breaking their principles. There is no stronger form of interference in other states' domestic issues than the army and army-based violence against each other. This also means that no respect is given to state sovereignty. War is the result of misleading diplomacy.

The principle of non-interference affects the level of co-operation at the level of ASEAN collective action. It is hard to increase the example level of human right issues in ASEAN level as long as ASEAN members see that human right issuesare their own domestic issues rather than an ASEAN issue, despite Bali Concorde III. That principle leads to a low level of human rights development in ASEAN and even conflicts between some ASEAN member countries' human rights commissions and Asian human right commissions.

Even in some of the most terrible human catastrophes and human or natural disasters, ASEAN was unable to do almost anything, just high rhetoric about unity, coherence and solidarity.

ASEAN was unable to manage Indonesia's forest fires, border wars[10] between member countries and so on, or take serious collective action when typhoon Haiyan hit The Philippines[11]. The missing Malaysian airplane MH370 in March 2014 is a good example of the shared values of ASEAN. Despite terrible human catastrophe, where around 250 people died, Thailand still failed to quickly share possibly important information. (Thailand was not willing to share information and show how far their military can monitor air space). If ASEAN countries are not willing to share information even in terrible crises; then arises the question of whether ASEAN can share information and co-operate on less important issues.

ASEAN appears to be an ideological organization that is orientated towards possible theoretical futures rather than more pragmatic urgencies. This is illustrated by its recurrent adhesion to statements that centre on the word "shall," and supported by an analysis of de facto outcomes which show little achievement. "Shall" is the most common word in Bali Concord II, where it is mentionedforty times. This may be due to ASEAN's cultural condition where ideology is more important and outcome (Sorokin, 1962), though against this view, ASEAN statements tend to be directed towards the potential for action. Alternatively, it could be an indication that ASEAN suffers from cognitive dissidence where words and deeds are unconnected. In the long run, so long as rhetoric and actions are disjointed, in the modern world ASEAN cannot maintain credibility as a useful or an effective organization, which means that ASEAN shows shallow integration or even proportional integration which indicates ASEAN is a proportional organization.

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[10] War is the strongest level of interference in other states' sovereignty.

[11] The United States and Europe were able to assist The Philippines more effectively than the ASEAN community despite the long distance.

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