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Interpreting ASEAN Developmental Regionalism through Discursive Institutionalism

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ABSTRACT. While literature abound on the history and current state of regionalism in Southeast Asia in the form of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), much still needs to be done on explaining the dynamics of institutional change and continuity in the organization. One of the approaches that has the potential for reframing the existing empirical research is discursive institutionalism. Defined as a new variant of the institutionalist framework, discursive institutionalism emphasizes the importance of "the substantive content of ideas and the interactive processes of discourse in institutional contexts" (Schmidt 2010, 3). This paper is an attempt to apply discursive institutionalism to explain developmental regionalism in ASEAN. In view of competing discourses about regionalism, a more coherent narrative of the ASEAN that highlights critical junctures and incremental change in its conceptualization and communication shall be presented. A discursive institutionalist reading is expected to yield insights on the restraining and enabling contexts of ASEAN itself—an exercise in retrospective interpretation that could aid academic discussions and policy debates on the present direction of regional community-building.

KEYWORDS. discursive institutionalism · ASEAN · developmental regionalism

Introduction

One driving force in the contemporary landscape of international relations is regionalism. Regionalization, the empirical and interactive process compelling it (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003, 6; Hettne and Söderbaum 1998, 3), straddles both the phenomenon of rapid globalization and the traditional adherence to the Westphalian notion of nation-states. As a political middle ground, this "urge to merge" (Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001, 17) is motivated further by a range of concerns, such as securitization, peace building, transborder biological and ecological problems, human movement across state boundaries, and formation of economies of scale based on trade and monetary integration (Gavin and De Lombaerde 2005, 69).

In conjunction with this, academic interest over the subject has risen since the 1990s (Basedau and Köllner 2007, 111). The so-called new regionalism, in opposition to what has been referred to as the old regionalism of the immediate postwar context, has altered the principal focus of creating regions for geostrategic reasons. Caused by structural transformations in the global system, which include, among others, the economic interdependence of nations (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998, 2), the new regionalism has now dominated most of scholarly and policy debates in explaining the formation and transformation of regions. In particular, as in the case of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), this translates to discussions on how the envisioned regional market can effectively and efficiently work. A recent report published by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Chia 2013) affirms this state of inquiry on the subject in light of the progress of ASEAN relative to its self-imposed targets and deliverables on economic integration.

This article specifically probes into the notion of developmental regionalism. Just as regionalism is not entirely a new phenomenon in the international system, the application of development principles has also been a long-standing regional practice—evolving across time and within particular contexts (Doidge 2007, 3). ASEAN, dubbed as one of the most successful regional organizations today (Caballero-Anthony 2005, 19; Beeson 2013, 303), serves as a case where the notion of developmental regionalism can be foregrounded. This is generally significant in making sense of Southeast Asian regionalism retrospectively and in reflecting about the possibilities and limits of the ASEAN Community prospectively.

To demonstrate the dynamics of institutional change and continuity in ASEAN developmental regionalism, this paper will utilize the framework of discursive institutionalism. Recognized as the fourth new institutionalism, discursive institutionalism concerns itself with both the "substantive content of ideas and the interactive process of discourse in institutional contexts" (Schmidt 2010, 3). A recontextualized narrative on the formation and transformation of developmental regionalism, based on the conceptualization and communication of the idea, will be provided to highlight critical junctures and reveal the process of incremental changes through time. The use of discursive institutionalism, with its inclination toward explaining "actual preferences, strategies, and normative orientations of actors" (Schmidt 2010, 21), is considered as a potential framework

for wading through the "eclectic theorization of ASEAN economic integration" (Kosandi 2012), in particular, and of developmental regionalism, in general.

Discursive Institutionalism

Institutionalism, or institutional analysis, has been one of the most enduring analytical approaches in the study of politics. Its hegemony has taken much of the earlier years of the discipline "that its assumptions and practices were rarely specified, let alone subject to sustained critique. . . . Institutionalism *was* political science" (Lowndes 2002, 90). With the changing theoretical currents and methodological adjustments through time, the logic of institutionalism has become obsolete, especially with the rise of competing approaches like behavioralism and neo-Marxism. This competition in discourse forced institutionalism to shift its terms of engagement with the political and social realities it seeks to describe. Whereas its old version was simply defined and studied as formal organizations with particular rules and administrative arrangements (Bell 2002, 3), its new variant has turned to the "stable, recurring pattern of behavior of institutions" (Lowndes 2002, 90) within the contexts of interests, history, and culture (Schmidt 2010, 21). Not surprisingly, new institutionalism has attracted multiple articulations from across the social science disciplines (Bell 2002, 5).

Three new conceptualizations of institutionalisms have emerged out of these attempts at theory building. These include rational-choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism. Vivien Schmidt, credited for coining another institutionalism—discursive institutionalism (DI)—clarifies that what bind the three mentioned institutionalisms are their capacity to explain better continuity than change, proclivity toward overemphasizing exogenous factors, and consistently pessimistic view of institutions as constraints (2010, 2). This is the space where discursive institutionalism puts itself in. It addresses the imperative to see institutions as dynamic, capable of enabling and restricting change through the conceptualization and communication of its discourses. The following categorical distinction and conceptual elaboration of Schmidt (2010, 2) is instructive:

> [A]ll those who have come to take ideas and discourse seriously have broken with some of the fundamental presuppositions of their own

> institutionalist tradition at the same time that they have come to share enough in common to be identifiable as part of a fourth new institutionalism. And what they share includes not only an analytic framework but also a commitment to go beyond 'politics as usual' to explain the politics of change, whether this means the role of ideas in constituting political action, the power of persuasion in political debate, the centrality of deliberation for democratic legitimation, the (re) construction of political interests and values, or the dynamics of change in history and culture.

From the foregoing, it is clear that DI situates itself within the discursive field of the existing new institutionalisms. While this presents a normative case for approaches seeking to legitimize its existence, one could also look at this as an invitation for eclecticism in the use of frameworks. Even in methodological terms, DI finds itself in between the continuum of positivism and constructivism (Schmidt 2010, 20). Following this, DI can also be used in explaining the array of theories about the international system, provided that such explanations are within ideational and institutional contexts. This is consistent with the other new institutionalisms as they are more "explicit in theory-building" than the "theoretically anaemic" old institutionalism (Bell 2002, 13).

Explaining change in the DI framework emphasizes both the substantive content of ideas and the interactive process through which these ideas are discoursed (Schmidt 2010, 3). The first component of the definition refers to the range of conceptualization of an idea while the second concerns itself with its communication. Schmidt (2010, 3–4), however, rightly distinguishes layers of communication between policy and public spheres. This is important in accounting for discursive anomalies among those who produce and reproduce the ideas. What is communicated, for instance, in a public sphere may deviate from what is communicated at the policy level.

In DI's attempt to map out the trail of particular ideas, discourse analysis, which is considered one of the qualitative methods in international relations, is of utmost significance. Iver B. Neumann (2008, 61–77) offers a methodological algorithm on how to proceed with research that seeks to unpack discourses. Step one, he says, is to delimit texts. Delimiting involves, among others, singling out a relation and locating its nodal points. Step two, on the other hand, deals with mapping representations. It looks at the dominating, and even the marginalizing features of reality derived from an inventory of representations. Finally, step three requires layering of discourses.

According to him, this means recognition of the variations in representations, answering the all-too-important questions such as what exactly changes, what does not, and how. This is very much consistent with the framework as proposed by Schmidt above.

Applying DI to ASEAN developmental regionalism means an analysis of its conceptualization and communication. In this regard, two presuppositions have to be clarified. First is that developmental regionalism is a term introduced not by ASEAN but by epistemic actors engaging the regional organization (Nesadurai 2003; Dent and Richter 2011). Epistemic actors, or communities, are producers and distributors of knowledge informing and at times influencing deliberation and enforcement of policies into programmatic actions (Haas 1992). Developmental regionalism hence may have gained currency not only from intellectuals who have articulated it but also from the regional organization that expresses and practices the idea itself. Second is that despite this lack of explicit reference, ASEAN has consistently deployed principles of developmental regionalism through an assortment of articulations from economic cooperation to regional integration. These are, by themselves, empirical bases for the ideational composition of developmental regionalism. An inquiry like this where a discourse is forwarded despite the problematic character of the reality under scrutiny is also not new in the social sciences (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999, 218). Institutional facts conceptualized and communicated through ideas and discourse can therefore interpret ASEAN's developmental regionalism.

A discourse analysis set in various historical times will show the incremental changes that the regional organization has undergone since its formation and the continuity that has endured despite incentives and pressures for transformation. Through DI, this recontextualization can point to the enabling and restricting contexts of ASEAN in its pursuit of development.

Developmental Regionalism

Regionalism has dealt with competing developmental discourses across time. As regionalism pertains to ideas informing a regional project (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003, 6) or an ideology steering a regional order (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998, 3), it is theoretically and practically possible for it to accommodate some more ideas that could enhance political formations beyond the limits of nation-states. Not to be confused with regionalization, which refers to the actual empirical

process or strategy toward the formation of a regional project (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998, 3), regionalism represents the ideational or the discursive. As such, regionalism might result in regionalization, but it also might "fail to produce the results it intends" (Hveem 2003, 82–91). Regionalist historian Nicholas Tarling (2006, 13) also affirms the value of this categorization from a historiographical view wherein competing regional projects have been executed and understood according to certain ideas. Regionalism, therefore, can serve as an analytical category through which developmental discourses can be examined.

Various regionalisms have sought to advance the ideas of economic growth and development in the context of interstate relations within a specific area. The distinction between old and new regionalisms, in this regard, is particularly useful. The old regionalism of the 1950s to 1970s, which was rooted in the Cold War ideological context, enlists free trade arrangement (FTA) as one of its principal foci (the other being security alliance) (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998, 3). By reducing barriers to trade, it is generally understood—although not without contention—that FTAs can attract more investments to a particular region and thus trigger growth and development. Regional trade arrangements (RTAs), like the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), which was formed only in 1992, are expressions of this idea. On the other hand, new regionalism, which is articulated as a comprehensive and multifaceted idea for changing a region from "relative heterogeneity to increased homogeneity with regard to a number of dimensions" (Hettne and Söderbaum 1998, 3), includes economic interdependence as among its cornerstones. Economic integration within the framework of ASEAN Community is a manifestation of this shifting sense of regionalism.

This tendency toward the economic side of regionalism is, however, not specific to the case of ASEAN alone. The present international economic system appears to be driven by the need to forge trade blocs where over a third of the volume of the entire world trade takes place (Schiff and Winters 2003, 1). Setting up economies of scale is thus the target with regions acting as its main agents. Some regionalist experiments have explicitly captured this essence through their nomenclatures—North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mercado Común del Sur or Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), and even broad, cross-geographical regional arrangements, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP).

What explains this trend is the discursive nexus between regionalism and globalization. Two ideal-type models characterize the approach taken by regions in responding to the pressures and incentives of the expanding global economy: one is through open regionalism, which aims at achieving economic growth by participating in the extant processes of the world market, and the other is through the so-called resistance projects, which sees regionalism as a platform to offset globalization and push for particular advocacies like wealth redistribution (Mittelman 2000, 116–30). Through this framing, the economics of new regionalism can be interpreted as either supportive or defiant of globalization.

However, not all regionalisms can be neatly categorized accordingly. The interface of regionalism and globalization provides a rather complex picture, especially if a distinction is made between foreign and domestic capital. This is because open regionalism is consistent with the principles of unilateral liberalization and nondiscrimination of tariff preferences between insiders and outsiders of a given trade arrangement (Drysdale and Garnaut 1993, 187–88). ASEAN is a strange case in this regard. While globalization has permeated the discourses and actions of the regional organization particularly in its establishment AFTA, domestic capital (of economic elites within the region) has been nurtured and promoted in the evolving regional market. Providing an alternative construct to explain this seeming anomaly, Helen Nesadurai (2003) conceptualizes the notion of "developmental regionalism" as a third approach between open regionalism and resistance model. She explains:

> Developmental regionalism is, therefore, not about resisting globalisation completely, but neither is it about acquiescence to global market forces. Instead, it encompasses a period of temporary and limited resistance to aspects of globalisation through which attempts are made to build capabilities that will enable domestic businesses eventually to participate in global market activities. This model of regionalism, therefore, allows us to consider departures from open regionalism as representing a distinct approach to regionalism rather than merely as inconsistencies in open regionalism or as instances of protectionism. (Nesadurai 2003, 238)

Two instruments are at the disposal of this approach: one is through the expansion of market involving joint economic activities among states, and two is the enforcement of provisions on temporary protection or privileges to domestic capital in the expanding market (Nesadurai 2003, 238). ASEAN's economic regionalism of late,

Nesadurai argues, exhibits developmental regionalism in its attempt to form a regional market and provides leverage for domestic capitalists.

Christopher Dent and Peter Richter (2011) employ a related yet different conceptualization of developmental regionalism. Their discourse on how subregional units, like the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), commit to developmental principles and induce aspects of regional coherence in ASEAN offers additional insights into the idea first proposed by Nesadurai. In this particular definition, developmental regionalism is understood as development-enhancing activities aimed at incorporating less-developed countries into the regional economy (Dent and Richter 2011, 34). This is akin to Nesadurai's input in the emerging discourse of developmental regionalism where the "global" is reappropriated to suit the demands and the pressures of the "domestic." In an almost similar vein, the promotion of subregional economic zones is seen as "complementary accelerator" for ASEAN economic integration (Dent and Richter 2011, 37), thereby privileging anew domestic capital in specific and strategic transborder spaces.

While Nesadurai's notion of developmental regionalism emphasizes distinction between foreign and domestic capital against the backdrop of free trade arrangements (i.e., AFTA), Dent and Richter for their part highlight the attainment of development capacity from within the region itself, specifically in its subregional scale (i.e., BIMP-EAGA). Six types of capacity inform this process: (1) technocratic capacity, which is the ability of state technocrats for good economic governance; (2) institutional capacity, defined as frameworks for accommodating development-oriented goals; (3) industrial capacity, or the competitiveness of local entrepreneurs to participate in international markets; (4) infrastructural capacity, which pertains to both the physical and social infrastructures conducive to development; (5) human capacity, referred to as the actual and potential capacity of the population; and (6) sustainable capacity, or the development-oriented processes in line with ecologically sustainable practices (Dent and Richter 2011, 34–35).

The present article proceeds from these conceptualizations. It is contended that ASEAN developmental regionalism transcends particular "moments," such as the institution of AFTA and BIMP-EAGA, both established during the watershed period of the '90s in the history of the regional organization. These seemingly disparate yet connected ideas of developmental regionalism can be appreciated as

well in their totality—that is, in their institutional embeddedness across time. A recontextualization of discourses, projected retrospectively, will yield explanations regarding the "moments" studied by Nesadurai and Dent and Richter. Moreover, interpreting developmental regionalism through discursive institutionalism can also help account for the dynamics of continuity and change in ASEAN itself.

Adjusting the frame of reference from the previously mentioned discourses, this article furthers a broader conceptualization of developmental regionalism—that is, as strategic and progressive ideas aimed at the economic convergence of member-states. It is strategic in the sense that it straddles open regionalism and resistance to unilateral demands of liberalization in the global market. It is also deemed progressive with its rhetoric of inclusive growth, redistributive economy, and narrowing of the development gap in the region. Finally, by economic convergence, what is meant is regional coherence in terms of member countries attempting to reach a similar level of development (Barrientos 2007, 12). The definitional take of Björn Hettne and Frederik Söderbaum (1998) is particularly instructive and fairly consistent with the above formulation:

> By development regionalism we refer to concerted efforts from actors (that is, state, market and civil society) within a geographical area to increase the economic development of the region as a whole and to improve its position in the world economy. Development regionalism is a relatively new phenomenon. It contains the traditional arguments for regional cooperation of various relevance for different actors, such as territorial size, population size, and economies of scale, but, more significantly, also adds some which express new concerns and uncertainties in the current transformation of the world order and world economy, such as resource management, peace dividend, social security, investment and finance, stability and credibility.

In the case of this article, however, developmental regionalism is expressly situated within a discursive field of composite ideas rather than as concerted efforts in regionalization. Also, it is posited that its characteristics have long been deployed in the discourses of ASEAN, albeit in varying degrees of substantiveness in conceptualization and explicitness in communication.

ASEAN Developmental Regionalism

Existing since 1967, ASEAN has been invariably described as ambitious in its goals but weak in the implementation of its plans (Narine 2008, 426). Similar invectives such as "shallow multilateralism" (Rüland 2011, 106) and "imitation community" (Jones and Smith 2006, 44)—both of which generally pertain to the low-level institutionalization of the regional organization resulting in minimal action or none at all—present a caricature of ASEAN diplomacy that values more "talking" than "doing."

The same can be said of developmental regionalism, according to Alexander Chandra (2009). In particular, he problematizes the previous discourses about the said idea (i.e., Nesadurai 2003; Dent and Richter 2011) that tend to set aside the specific actions of the regional organization in addressing economic disparities among its member-states (Chandra 2009, 6). For him, ASEAN has failed in the implementation of its own development initiatives specifically in the context of the '90s and the present regional integration process. Among his policy recommendations are the provision of necessary political and economic commitments to the full implementation of development initiatives and the reform of the organization's principle of non-interference, which is deemed counterproductive to the progress of the region (Chandra 2009, 15).

Notwithstanding all these critical analyses and well-meaning proposals, there is a need to examine not only the actions of the regional organization but also the very conceptualization and communication of the ideas that enabled or restricted them. From the standpoint of discursive institutionalism, the "talking" ASEAN presents itself as a valid site of introspection. In the interpretation of its developmental regionalism, the following questions are in order: What were the discourses produced by ASEAN through time? What defines their substantive content? How are these ideas disseminated and understood in both policy and public spheres? More importantly, how does developmental regionalism fit into the dynamics of institutional continuity and change in ASEAN? In order to demonstrate the complexity of discourse of ASEAN developmental regionalism, a recontextualization of its narrative is necessary based on specific nodal points or critical junctures. The three phases, layered according to the development of developmental regionalism itself, are (1) cooperation, 1967–1992; (2) transition, 1992–2003; and (3) integration, 2003–present. Representations of specific ideas in the form of policy

statements from these periods are assumed to reveal incremental changes over time, a possibility mostly unseen by blanket interpretations about the regional organization. Nuancing the discourse in its institutional context is, therefore, a step toward the direction of theorizing about ASEAN.

Cooperation, 1967–1992

This period spans the historical development of ASEAN from its establishment to the formation of AFTA and the creation of subregional arrangements. While Nesadurai (2003) and Dent and Richter (2011), even Chandra (2009), trace developmental regionalism only in the '90s, it appears that the idea was already historically embedded in the founding document of the organization.

The Bangkok Declaration lists as one of its aims and purposes the acceleration of "economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations." Further, the framers of ASEAN, composed of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, also advocated more effective collaboration for the "greater utilisation of their agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade, including the study of the problems of international commodity trade, the improvement of their transportation and communication facilities and the raising of the living standards of their peoples" (ASEAN 1967).

Utterances in this founding document, which include calls for joint undertaking of endeavors and effective collaboration, reflect a discourse of cooperation on a regional scale. Generally, this is significant in view of mutual suspicion and escalating animosity among the member-states back then. Territorial conflicts and existing ideological commitments of countries around that time could have impeded the process of creating and maintaining an institution for the imagined region. Similarly, this new expression of cooperation is a step forward from the failed experience with regional organizations that preceded ASEAN—namely, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), and Malaysia-Philippines-Indonesia (MAPHILINDO). But how is this discourse on cooperation relevant to developmental regionalism?

The sentient agents, defined by Schmidt (2010, 4) as the consciously thinking and speaking institutional actors who established ASEAN,

are presumed to be aware of the political overtones of Southeast Asian regionalist projects in the past. The rethinking of regionalism, as embodied by the ideas expressed in the Bangkok Declaration, led to the pronounced focus on economic cooperation (Caballero-Anthony 2005, 19–20). There is historical and institutional consistency with this in ASEAN's emphasis on the economic side of regionalism. Recent milestones, such as the formation of AFTA and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), both ahead of political cooperation ideas like the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Political-Security Community, confirm this.

The discursive emphasis on cooperation among the national economies of the region during this phase hinges well on the notion of developmental regionalism. This makes sense theoretically as succeeding regionalist projects like AFTA and AEC could not have emerged without a "cognitive prior" or an existing normative framework (Acharya 2009, 21)—in short, a foundational idea that would allow for the articulation and actualization of more complex ideas. The substantive features of the aims of the Bangkok Declaration, while not explicitly referring to leveraging of domestic capital and advancing equitable growth nor achieving of economic convergence, do point to extant developmentalist principles. A synthesis of these representations, expressed as the regional goals of "social progress" and "raising of the living standards of their peoples" achieved through "joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership" and "active collaboration and mutual assistance" toward a "prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations," highlights the developmental regionalist orientation of ASEAN in its conception.

This discourse, however, cannot be divorced from institutional and historical contexts. Interpreting the orientation of ASEAN en route to economic and developmental regionalism is a function of understanding the conditions that enabled (or restricted the full articulation of) the idea. In the case of its establishment, some epistemic actors note (Tarling 2006, 186; Acharya 2012, 162–64) that addressing the ideological and political rifts in the international system and the intramural conflicts in the region became secondary to the goal of economic development. Carlos Romulo, former president of the United Nations General Assembly, was once quoted as saying that "[t]he main enemy we [i.e., in Southeast Asia] have is subversion, and the only way to counteract subversion is to improve the lot of the masses, to give them social justice, to have economic development.

That is why the main thrust of ASEAN is economic development" (quoted in Acharya 2012, 163–64) [emphasis added]. In other words, although politics appeared as the primary concern of the period, the turn to economic development was seen as a strategic and selective discourse not only to eliminate possible uneasiness for a blatantly political orientation but also as a means to achieving peace and security in the region.

The idea for economic collaboration is historically appropriate for the framers of ASEAN. The noncomplementarity of the main articles of trade and the preexisting extraregional markets of the ASEAN member-states then do not necessitate any form of integration. In addition to this, one has to account for the diversity that attends the member-states' economic development. Singapore and Malaysia were slightly ahead of their neighbors, Philippines and Thailand were considered "very poor," while Indonesia was categorized as among the "poorest" nations of the global system during this time. This grouping also reflected the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) then, with Philippines taking Indonesia's spot as the lowest receiver of FDI in the region (Acharya 2012, 170).

The history of postcolonial adjustments immediately after the Second World War explains this divergence and, later on, convergence, which would lead to the decision in favor of a preferential trade arrangement by the 1970s. Norman Owen (1992, 497) outlines that countries in Southeast Asia have taken three general paths during their respective transition periods to decolonization. From being tied up by colonial masters to markets outside the region, countries began replacing their imports through the economic nationalism-styled import-substitution industrialization (ISI). This somehow secluded national economies from the region and the rest of the word. With ISI "falling into disgrace" despite its potential as an investment strategy (Rodrik 2000, 13), countries in the region, with the exception of Singapore, which started with the reverse strategy ahead of its neighbors, joined the bandwagon for export-oriented industrialization. This serves as the converging background in the 1970s for the "modest programme" on trade liberalization (Acharya 2012, 171).

Giving a boost to the initial conceptualization and communication of ASEAN cooperation is the 1976 ASEAN Concord I. This is especially significant as it expresses the notion of regional community, which would become more explicit and substantive in the 1997 ASEAN Vision 2020 and in the stipulations of the 2003 ASEAN

Concord II. As similarly noted above, an existing cognitive prior could explain, at least in theory, the desire for integration articulated in the late 1990s (the culmination of which is the adjustment of ASEAN Vision 2020 to ASEAN Community 2015 in 2007). In ASEAN Concord I, the discourse of cooperation consolidated around a framework of collaboration in political, economic, social, cultural and information, and security areas. Of relevance to the narrative of developmental regionalism are the elaborations in the domains of economic and social development.

As regionalism is primarily an idea or set of ideas for regional formation (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003; Hettne and Söderbaum 1998)—different from the views of Nesadurai (2003), who sees it as *ways* of fitting in domestic-owned capital to global-regional nexus, and Dent and Richter (2011), who appreciate it as *activities* enhancing regional coherence through the incorporation of less developed member-states—the discourse of cooperation set in ASEAN Concord I can be said to have articulated developmental regionalism with referents pointing to strategic and progressive initiatives aimed at the economic convergence of member-states then. Constituting the subpillars of its economic section are three layers of cooperation (basic commodities, particularly food and energy; industry; and trade) and two cooperative strategies (joint approach to international commodity problems and other world economic problems, and machinery for economic cooperation) (ASEAN 1976). The social cooperation section, meanwhile, substantively defined the thrust of development toward low-income group and the rural population (ASEAN 1976). With the entry of new ASEAN members by the '90s, the emphasis of this feature of developmental regionalism would shift from sectoral to national. The idea of "development gap" focuses on how the economic disparity between the ASEAN-6 (the five founding members plus Brunei) and the CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) can be adequately addressed (McGillivray, Feeny, and Iamsiraroj 2013, 26–27).

One crucial institutional context defining the substance of the cooperation discourse was the consistent allusion to the economic welfare of individual countries—for instance, in increasing the foreign exchange earnings of its members. Shaun Narine (2008, 413) explains this policy direction for strengthening the political and economic security of member-states as the "single most important factor both driving and limiting ASEAN." This simultaneously affirms and negates the idea of economic convergence in the regional scale. On the one

hand, enhancing individual national economies was projected as a collective goal with particular strategies for cooperation, such as prioritizing joint approaches to international commodity problems and regularizing ministerial meetings "as a step towards harmonizing regional development" (ASEAN 1976). However, the overemphasis on national contexts without a clearer regional developmental strategy does seem antithetical to the economic convergence of ASEAN. This makes sense, Amitav Acharya (2012, 171) argues, as member-countries then were heavily dependent on the global market, and an inward regional approach could have done more harm than good to their respective developmental schemes.

In order to proceed with the cooperation framework, certain institutional drivers were developed subsequently. Dubbed as "ASEAN machinery," Concord I affirmed the formation of ASEAN Secretariat, one of the earliest attempts at institution building following the establishment of the regional organization itself. The ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements (PTA) was also put in place a year after Concord I. It generally aimed at liberalizing and increasing intra-ASEAN trade through a number of measures, such as provision of preferences for ASEAN products in government procurements and financing of imports from within the region. While its impact was severely limited in that most of the internal trade was bilateral in nature, and that fuel trade was only its productive sector (Acharya 2012, 171), in terms of evolutionary process, the PTA is considered the first step toward regional economic integration (Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001, 10). However, decades after this, much of what was considered problems in the implementation of the PTA, like bilateral arrangements, priority sectors, and the uneven development among member-states, would still haunt the regional organization in its attempt to advance further the regional economic integration process. Be that as it may, the idea pursued by PTA serves as the discursive link with the present goal of achieving ASEAN Economic Community.

However, the "institutional significance" (Severino 2006, 214) that drove ASEAN in the late 1970s took a backseat as most of the 1980s were "preoccupied with the usual developing-country concerns," rendering any "[t]alk of regional economic integration . . . taboo" (Severino 2006, 220). The next conjuncture to ASEAN developmental regionalism (and in fact, to the regional organization as a whole) happened in the succeeding decade.

Transition, 1992–2003

Two explicit projects of developmental regionalism will be highlighted in this section—namely, AFTA and BIMP-EAGA—to lay bare the institutional continuity and change on the part of ASEAN. Using the very discourses that created these regional approaches, an interpretation of the transition period bridging the cooperation and integration phases of ASEAN developmental regionalism could shed light on the dynamics of normative orientations, preferences, and strategies of ASEAN actors, whether as formal agents within the regional organization or as epistemic actors trying to influence the formation of the region.

Toward the beginning of the '90s, developments reached in various regional platforms, like the signing of the Treaty of Asunción creating MERCOSUR in 1991, the Treaty of Maastricht establishing European Union in 1992, and the negotiating of NAFTA also in 1992, provided a normative sense of the global system as comprised of regions. ASEAN, which has existed since 1967, adjusted accordingly with its formation of AFTA in an attempt to further the principles of economic cooperation. This demonstrates continuity and change on the part of the institution both at the same time. On the one hand, amid the apparent lack in the "actuals" or the deliverables achieved by ASEAN, perceived "potentials" were already identified in the regional organization's discourses even before the '90s. What happened, therefore, in this decade may be construed as a continuation of the behavior of ASEAN in so far as its desire for economic cooperation is concerned. On the other hand, it is also clear that the conceptualization and operationalization of AFTA resemble a departure from mere collaboration among member-states. This apparently makes sense in the theory of market integration where the logical next step to preferential trading is a free trade arrangement (Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001, 10). ASEAN's FTA of 1992 is thus theoretically linked to its PTA of 1977. Defined by the ASEAN Secretariat itself, AFTA should increase "ASEAN's competitive edge as a production base geared for the world market" (Chavez and Chandra 2008, 5). The common effective preferential tariff (CEPT) was identified as the main instrument for this shift to greater trade liberalization.

The Framework Agreement on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation, signed in 1992, contains the preferences and strategies of ASEAN in its desire to participate in a world of regional economic blocs. As expressed in the framework, the renewed vigor for enhanced economic cooperation was a response to the view that "tariff and non-

tariff barriers are impediments to intra-ASEAN trade and investment flows" (ASEAN 1992). The conceptualization of AFTA is therefore principally an attempt to reduce or eliminate these barriers within the region. In order to achieve this, several measures were undertaken, which included the setting up of CEPT as AFTA's main mechanism (ASEAN 1992), the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) to enhance FDI flows in the region, and the Growth Triangles (i.e., subregional arrangements; ASEAN 1992) for microregional ventures on developing infrastructures and markets in specific areas in the region (Chavez and Chandra 2008, 5–12).

Although this series of institutional upgrading may be interpreted as a result of exogenous factors, primarily the series of rethinking in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade leading to the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1994 (Shukla 2000, 22–24) and the regionalization trend in the international political economy (Severino 2006, 222) following the end of the Cold War era, certain approaches of the regional organization can also be contextualized endogenously. In other words, ASEAN was not merely participating in the externally produced rules of the game but was also at the same time expressing its agency or relative institutional capacity in so far as liberalization is concerned. These seemingly disparate modes of interpretation can be explained through the conceptual link that is developmental regionalism.

In the case of AFTA, which has been commonly described as an attempt to attract FDI through the incentive of a single market, developmental regionalism was evident in the way domestic firms were privileged amid the pressures for global free investment regime (Nesadurai 2003, 240–42). Although the earlier framework agreement called for the establishment of AFTA (ASEAN 1992), it was only in 1995 that a public announcement was made clear in the form of the AIA. However, it still took three more years to produce in the policy sphere a framework for the achievement of this. Of specific interest in this document is its stipulation of a "most favoured nation treatment," which provides preferential market access for "ASEAN investors," defined by the framework itself as "a national or a juridical person of a Member State" (ASEAN 1998). The discourse here contrasts with non-ASEAN investors who are not accorded with the same privilege, despite AFTA's explicit goal of attracting FDIs and increasing economic competitiveness in the region. The liberalization strategy, as a matter of fact, privileges ASEAN investors by ten years over foreign investors

(ASEAN 1998) (reversed, however, in 2001 for the nonmanufacturing sector). Nesadurai (2003, 243) is therefore correct in stating that AIA was a "developmental tool to nurture domestic capital." For her, FDI is simply not the only factor for explaining AFTA; it is also the domestic political dynamics that serve as the driver for regional cooperation. Developmental regionalism, from this fact and sense, demonstrates both exogenous and endogenous factors in the conduct of ASEAN affairs.

If the momentum of the earlier PTA was cut short because of the divergent national development strategies, the momentum for AFTA was severed with the weakening impact of the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Institutional ineptness was among the perceived reasons for this lack of a regional response prior to and after the financial collapse. Notes Christopher Roberts (2012, 90): "The devastating effects were such that ASEAN lacked the institutional mechanisms and capacity necessary to provide tangible assistance for the purpose of either the recovery of its member economies or the prevention of political instability." Rodolfo Severino (2006, 226–27), who was ASEAN secretary-general immediately following the height of the crisis, has a rather defensive stance to this, invoking that the ASEAN leaders have done the necessary to lure back investments and prevent capital flight through the strengthening of AFTA deadlines. This reaffirmation for AFTA, both as an idea and practice, confirms the consistency of ASEAN's discursive action as to this mode of developmental regionalism. Along with this seeming regularity, however, is a change in pace for AFTA commitments, ultimately paving the way for a new feature of economic regionalism via the discourse of ASEAN Community.

With the exception of Singapore and to a certain extent the Philippines, "tiger economies" of the region did slide down the expected path to economic growth, developing strategies of their own to cope with the situation in the late '90s. At around this time, new member-states also joined the regional organization. While this hastened the sense of a "One Southeast Asia," a new regional economic profile was also beginning to take shape with the entry of less developed countries. All these events ultimately forced ASEAN to initiate the regional economic integration process through the articulation of ASEAN Vision 2020, also in 1997. This historic document stipulated the creation of an ASEAN Community, which was to be enhanced discursively via the Bali Concord II six years later. This ASEAN Community would be composed of three "closely intertwined and

mutually reinforcing" (ASEAN 2003) pillars of political security community, economic community, and socio-cultural community. In the end, the financial crisis served a dual purpose in the narrative of ASEAN: it became an impediment to AFTA, and at the same time, it functioned as an impetus for the regional organization to discursively and institutionally reinvent itself.

From the macrolevel of regional economic cooperation through AFTA, another ideational manifestation for developmental regionalism are the microlevel regional formations referred to in other literature as "subregional economic zones," "growth polygons," or "growth triangles." These arrangements among participating nations aim to optimize complementary assets in particular strategic locations (Basu Das 2013, 3). In Southeast Asia, the existing microlevel formations are the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle (IMS-GT) (1989 but with formal launch only in 1994), Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) (1992), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) (1993), and BIMP-EAGA (1992 but formally launched in 1994). By emphasizing smaller-scale formations, this subregionalist approach effectively provides an alternate frame through which regionalism can be understood beyond the "Eurocentric focus on the stages of economic integration" (e.g., Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001; Dent and Richter 2011, 30) and the "regional integration process that usually occurs at state-level" (Basu Das 2013, 3). The dynamic interaction occurring within these strategic economic zones demonstrates the possibility of more complex economic activities from the interstices of the region, highlighting in the process the nonlinearity of developmental paths and the significant role of locales (subnational or local governments) in pushing for specific economic agenda. While some argue that this subregionalism is antithetical to regionalism, the reality is that these ideas are fundamentally the same and multiple memberships to economic arrangements, in fact, offer more benefits to participating countries (Ooi 1995, 338–39; Basu Das 2013, 3).

The Framework Agreements on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation stipulated the formation of subregional arrangements as among the regional organization's principles for achieving growth and development. Specifically, its article 4 declares that "Member States acknowledge that subregional arrangements among themselves, or between ASEAN Member States and non-ASEAN economies, could complement overall ASEAN economic cooperation" (ASEAN 1992). Two key points from here could clarify ASEAN's conceptualization of

subregionalism. One is that even formations beyond the strict spatial confines of ASEAN are considered subregional arrangements. This makes historical sense as the '90s and the succeeding years of the organization have seen its member-states forging economic alliances outside its imagined boundaries of Southeast Asia. As to why this is communicated within the ambit of subregionalism is the second point: these formations, whether small (within the ASEAN) or large scale (involving extra-ASEAN countries), are driven by the goal to enhance regional economic cooperation. Thus, any analysis focusing on these forms of subregionalism must situate the discourse in terms of its consistency, or inconsistency, with this raison d'être.

Dent and Richter (2011, 3) capture this point via their analysis of BIMP-EAGA, one of the least studied microlevel formations in the region. Previous discourses have been dominated by narratives on IMS-GT, either through highlighting the dominance of Singapore in the said arrangement (Ooi 1995) or the overall success in the application of this growth triangle model (Majid 2010). Some have taken the broader approach of examining the general patterns of ASEAN's subregions (Weatherbee 2009; Basu Das 2013). By framing BIMP-EAGA according to developmental regionalism, Dent and Richter's discourse recontextualizes the narrative of an oft-ignored subregion within the larger rubric of ASEAN regionalism. Initially described as an "association of neglected regions" (Luhulima 1996, 65), BIMP-EAGA has ably shown particular developmental capacities over the course of years. Its approach on subregionalism is one that hinges on proactive integration (e.g., policy cooperation, harmonization) rather than passive integration (e.g., liberalization and deregulation) (Dent and Richter 2011, 52).

BIMP-EAGA (2010) envisions to "realize socially acceptable and sustainable economic development and the full participation of the subregion in the ASEAN development process," especially in the sectors of agro-industry, natural resource–based manufacturing, ecotourism, and other non-resource-based industries. From the idea alone, this growth triangle commits itself to the developmental principle of sustainability and enhancement of regional and global competitiveness through economic complementarities or mutual exploitation of resources. While the ideational force that drove this (and other "Mini-ASEANs") was commonly attributed to the active promotion of the Asian Development Bank before the financial crisis of 1997 (Weatherbee 2009, 118), another historical fact that can level

the narrative was the context of instability in Southern Philippines, its potential spillover to neighboring countries, and the transnational criminal activities recurrent in the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea. Thus the initiative proceeds from, albeit theoretically, the earlier strategic template of addressing political flashpoints through the deepening of economic ties. What changed, however, is the minimalist framework introduced to address both challenges.

This has been no easy task. Donald Weatherbee (2009, 124) believes that the gains are more political than economic as governments have now been more seriously involved in habituated patterns of discussion instead of seeking economic complementarities in the subregion and providing public investments to attract capital. One apparent area of concern is its weak institutional capacity, which impedes the realization of developmental goals, especially in the case of BIMP-EAGA (Dent and Richter 2011, 52). This is notwithstanding the fact that the subregional group has defined as early as 2003 its institutional drivers, which include a strong link to the private (through BIMP-EAGA Business Council) and public sectors (through BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Center) (BIMP-EAGA 2010). This organizational structure, however, does not seem to reflect the discursive foundation upon which ASEAN's idea of subregionalism was built. A growth triangle requires a secretariat of its own, which would in turn coordinate with the regional secretariat to ensure the synchronization of principles and functions between the two. Instructive in this regard are the two policy recommendations of Dent and Richter (2011, 52–54) for the formation of a full-fledged secretariat for BIMP-EAGA and the closer coordination of this with the ASEAN Secretariat and other related regional platforms.

While gaining momentum in its initial phases, institutional contexts have hampered BIMP-EAGA's developmental capacities. It comes as no surprise that, similar to the fate of AFTA, its progress as a grouping was severely compromised by the 1997 Asian financial crisis—its weak institutionalization among the perceived culprits. This historical experience also explains the disconnection between ASEAN and its growth triangles in the succeeding years following the crisis, BIMP-EAGA included (Dent and Richter 2011, 37). While the early 2000s has seen a revivalist tendency for subregionalism, one enormous challenge aside from continuously seeking economic complementarity is that of ensuring complementarity as well in discourse and institution building.

Both developmental regionalisms in the macro (AFTA) and micro (subregional economic zones) senses demonstrate a degree of discursive maturity despite lack of institutional regularity in ASEAN during the 1990s. This transition historically links the periods of ASEAN's establishment to its recent decision to form a regional community. Theoretically, this also acts as a conjuncture for an integrational approach to developmental regionalism—a discourse that would ironically and symbolically be expressed in the same turbulent year as the Asian financial crisis. The ASEAN Vision 2020 (ASEAN 1997) and its Hanoi Plan of Action outline the desire of the regional organization to move beyond its usual cooperation framework and deepen member-states' "partnership in dynamic development which will forge closer economic integration within ASEAN." Specific to economic integration, which is referred to in the document as ASEAN Economic Region (to be called ASEAN Economic Community in succeeding communications), the envisioned order is characterized as particularly directed toward free flow of capital, goods, services, and investments, and equitable economic development among its member-states (ASEAN 1997). This would be substantively enhanced via the 2003 Bali Concord II and the 2007 ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint.

Integration, 2003–present

This section elaborates on the recent features of ASEAN developmental regionalism, specifically its resolve to achieve economic integration by the end of 2015 through the principles of single market and production base, and equitable economic development (the other two elements not covered in this part are the principles of highly competitive region and a region fully integrated to global economy). While the ASEAN Vision 2020 articulated in 1997 laid the foundations for an ASEAN Community, it was only through the Bali Concord II and the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint where development was substantively conceptualized and communicated both as a continuation of previous cooperation schemes and as a shift to broader and deeper ties for regional integration.

Of the five headings under the AEC of Bali Concord II (2003), what stood out as dominant themes are the ideas on liberalization and equitable development. Notably, the flow of capital was projected to be more liberalized, in addition to extending the principle of unimpeded movement within the region of other economic sectors as well, such

as goods, services, and investments. Narrowing the development gap in the region also became more pronounced with the view of integrating further the CLMV bloc to the notion of a "One Southeast Asia" (Acharya 2012, 213). New frameworks and action plans were generated or improved to rally behind these causes, such as the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) and Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). Generally, however, the ebb and flow of developmental regionalism coming from the critical yet innovative decade of the '90s would still characterize discourse- and institution-building in the regional organization as it entered the twenty-first century.

AEC is regarded as "the region's most ambitious vision to which all economic cooperation and integration efforts are directed" (Chavez and Chandra 2008, 17). Kneeling in the aftermath of the financial crisis, ASEAN, according to a commissioned study of McKinsey and Co. and the report of the ASEAN High Level Task Force, needed to act on the emergence of China as the new location for FDI (Hew 2007, 2; Chavez and Chandra 2008, 17). As FDI has played a major role in the region's economic development, ASEAN proceeded to accelerate economic integration (deadline of AEC was moved, albeit illusorily, from 2020 to 2015 along with other Community pillars) with the belief that "[a]n integrated market and production base would clearly boost intra-regional trade and investment flows across the region while ASEAN's consumer market of over half a billion would be a lucrative place for companies to do business" (Hew 2007, 3). Toward this end, ASEAN has imposed upon itself four characteristics for the AEC project: (1) single market and production base, (2) highly competitive economic region, (3) region of equitable economic development, and (4) region fully integrated into the world economy (ASEAN 2009, 21–66).

Questions, however, were raised about the institutional readiness and discursive maturity of ASEAN in achieving this. As early as the publicity about the AEC, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in 2004 laid down some salient critique, most notable of which is the view that "[f]rom the Bali Concord II, it was clearly evident that ASEAN leaders were not prepared to establish supranational institutions to coordinate economic activities in the region. ASEAN appeared to want the benefits of European-style economic integration without the concomitant commitments" (ISEAS 2004, 12–15). The ASEAN Secretariat could provide such institutional impetus but it remains "underfunded, understaffed and incapable of handling its

increased responsibilities" (Roberts 2012, 94). The recent ratification of the ASEAN Charter (ASEAN 2008) and the creation of the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (ASEAN 2009) were deemed lacking in priming up ASEAN's institutional leverage. As a case in point, ministers-in-charge of the various fields under the rubric of AEC Blueprint do not have the normative power of enforcement as their roles specified in Article 9 of the ASEAN Charter (2009, 13) simply involves monitoring, coordination, and submission of reports.

In the avowed goal of ASEAN to create a single market and production base, ISEAS (2004, 12) cautions: "ASEAN should not be using terms like a 'single market' without understanding its full economic implications." By far, four regional groups have styled themselves as a single market. These include the European Union, the Caribbean Community, the Closer Economic Relations Agreement (between Australia and New Zealand), and ASEAN (Lloyd 2007, 13–14). Single market and its close kin, common market, represent a distinct phase in the regional economic integration process (Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal 2001, 10). However, it is to be noted that common market implies "four freedoms" from border restrictions in terms of goods, services, capital, and labor while the single market, on the other hand, is an even larger concept that goes beyond addressing geographic segmentation (i.e., borders) (Lloyd 2007, 14–15). In a single market, harmonization of laws and regulations is of utmost significance, more than eliminating border controls and facilitating free flow of goods, services, capital, and labor (though already important as they are) (Lloyd 2007, 15–17). There appears, in this sense, a discursive anomaly in the articulation of ASEAN, an inconsistency between the idea as conceptualized (which resembles more a common market) and communicated (with ASEAN's constant reference to the goal of putting up a single market). While some forms of coordination have been in place for harmonization of laws and regulations among the economic systems of member-states, these seem marginal for the priority of ASEAN has always been on putting up border measures for the easier movement of goods, services, capital, and labor (Lloyd 2007, 30).

A single market is also realistically difficult to begin with as economies of member-states are always competing rather than complementing one another (Öjendal 2001, 156). Nevertheless, changes appear to be making headway in the first decade of the twenty-first century. It is observed, for instance, that though intra-ASEAN trade accounts for a measly 26 percent of member-states' total trade,

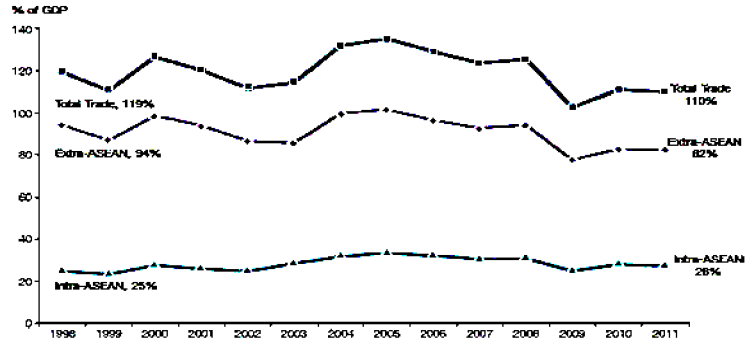

Figure 1. ASEAN trade performance: Trend of ASEAN trade value as a percentage of GDP (ASEAN 2012).

the figure did jump to more than 50 percent at certain points and sectors from 1990 to 2006 (Plummer and Chia 2009, 5–6). An institutionalized pattern of economic interaction is seen as emerging in this regard as "no ASEAN Member State does less than one-fifth of its trade with the region," which is unimaginable a quarter of century ago (Plummer and Chia 2009, 5–6). However, while this fifth of the overall trade volume happening within the region is commendable, especially with respect to ASEAN's past record, the fact remains that more than the majority of trade and investment is still outward-oriented. Figure 1 reveals the almost fixed trend in intra-ASEAN trade since 1996.

Apart from the historically recent decision to seriously move into deeper economic integration, the inflated sense of a single market, and the essentially diverse composition of economies and development strategies in the region, another enormous challenge is the institutional regularity and the conferment of some degree of power over units managing the creation of AEC. While discourses and work plans have been constantly developed especially in recent times, "progress made in ASEAN economic projects is being hampered by the lack of an effective institutional mechanism to enforce regional arrangements" (Akrasanee and Arunanondchai 2005, 72). This is because ASEAN's vision of economic integration anchors heavily on the enforcement of agreements that need ratification from the parliaments of member-states. This was the case for the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement, which took two long years before it was enforced. With this cooperation dilemma and the fact that there are no clear incentives

to minimizing delays, a genuinely integrated ASEAN market by the end of 2015 becomes untenable. In this regard, "empowered regional institutions" could shore up ASEAN's credibility of enforcing its numerous plans and agreements and in the long run strengthen the association in its goal of economic integration (Severino 2006, 353–54).

Economic convergence, in the form of single market, is not all there is in ASEAN's version of developmental regionalism. Economic cohesion is also a feature of contemporary attempts by the regional organization in enhancing a sense of integrated community. No less than the Eminent Persons Group, among the most influential ad hoc units during the deliberations for the ASEAN Charter, asserted that "even as ASEAN embarks on further integration, it must be mindful of the importance of narrowing the development gap" (ASEAN Eminent Persons Group 2006, 17). ASEAN heeded the call, at least most strikingly on paper, as it expressed in the existing ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint major items dedicated to developmental principle (ASEAN 2009)—a subpillar under the Economic Community on "Equitable Economic Development" and another subpillar under the Socio-Cultural Community on "Narrowing the Development Gap."

From the foregoing, the goal of coupling economic productivity with social equity appears noble for ASEAN. The ASEAN Framework for Equitable Economic Development (ASEAN 2011) defines the idea of equitable economic development as the "narrowing [of] development gaps within and between Member States, better access to opportunities for human development, social welfare and justice, and more inclusive participation in the process of ASEAN integration and community building." This is a more recent commitment compared to economic cooperation or integration, most probably an offshoot of the functionalist objective to foster a sense of community among peoples of Southeast Asia. One would find, however, previous allusions to addressing poverty and inequality in the region (ASEAN 1976).

Alexander Chandra and Jenina Joy Chavez (2007, 99) report that the stark contrast between the richest and the poorest member-state in the region is particularly alarming as the per capita is fifteen times greater between these opposite poles. Further, they also claim that one in every five persons in ASEAN is living under the poverty line. One would get the sense that figures might have been improving with ASEAN claiming its stake on the issue. However, since the formal launching of IAI in 2000, signing of the Bali Concord II (ASEAN

Table 1. Human Development Index ranking of ASEAN member countries, 2012

Rank	Country	Rating in previous years							
		2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
26	Singapore	0.801	0.835	0.843	0.850	0.855	0.856	0.864	0.866
33	Brunei	0.818	0.830	0.834	0.835	0.834	0.835	0.837	0.838
61	Malaysia	0.705	0.738	0.742	0.746	0.750	0.752	0.758	0.761
103	Thailand	0.626	0.656	0.661	0.670	0.672	0.673	0.680	0.682
112	Philippines	0.602	0.622	0.624	0.630	0.635	0.636	0.641	0.644
124	Indonesia	0.543	0.572	0.579	0.591	0.598	0.607	0.613	0.617
128	Viet Nam	0.528	0.561	0.568	0.575	0.580	0.584	0.590	0.593
138	Lao PDR	0.448	0.484	0.491	0.500	0.507	0.514	0.520	0.524
139	Cambodia	0.438	0.491	0.501	0.508	0.513	0.513	0.518	0.523
149	Myanmar	0.380	0.436	0.448	0.459	0.468	0.474	0.479	0.483

Source: UNDP Human Development Index 2012.

2003), and conceptualization of regional community through specific blueprints (ASEAN 2009), the numbers in the Human Development Index, as shown in table 1, have not really improved and remained almost static over the recent years.

The discourse of the AEC Roadmap on Equitable Economic Development (2009) presents two ways in which the envisioned economic community could respond to the development gap in the region. One is through taking small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) seriously and the other, often cited as the major regional project for addressing the development puzzle, the IAI (Chandra and Chavez 2007, 99; Narjoko, Kartika, and Wicaksono 2009, 116). Reviewing the past two work plans of the IAI (2002–2008 and 2009–2015), most of the stipulations concern the latest entrants to the ASEAN, the CLMV. As pointed out by activists in the region, "[w]hile IAI is supposed to be available for all ASEAN members, it is primarily designed for CLMV" (Chandra and Chavez 2007, 99). Such is not an unfounded critique given that poverty does not choose geographic locations. Nevertheless, by taking into account the notion of social justice, the imperative to prioritize limited resources, and the practicality of economic cohesion in facilitating regional community-building, it is indeed warranted that the CLMV should be given utmost attention as it lags behind the ASEAN-6. Even granting this point as valid, however, one finds an almost inexplicable stagnation or piecemeal improvement in the CLMV in terms of the trends in human development.

Just like other ASEAN blueprints and work plans, IAI is stuffed with well-meaning programs. It could have even rendered moot the critique raised on its extremely preferential treatment in responding to the more comprehensive problem of equitable development had it realized its vision of putting the CLMV at a relative level with the ASEAN-6. This failure, it seems, can be anchored on the institutional drivers relating to the discharge of the initiative. Resource mobilization for one is a perennial problem plaguing the implementation of action plans such as this.

The doctrine of equality in paying membership dues in the ASEAN has effectively stunted the institutional capacities of the regional organization. In a 2007 separate study, for instance, it is manifested that the "main fund that bankrolls the IAI, the ASEAN Development Fund (ADF), gets more contribution from Japan (US$70 million) than from the ASEAN members (US$1 million each), raising concerns that IAI projects may be unduly influenced by external partners' priorities" (Chandra and Chavez 2007, 100). A similar discussion on special funding for addressing the issue of the development gap was also brought up by the Eminent Persons Group in their Report on the ASEAN Charter but was unilaterally rejected by ASEAN governments (Narjoko, Kartika, and Wicaksono 2009, 138). The regional organization from this point suffers from a lack of accountability because it could not claim the project, its successes and failures included. Overreliance on external donors sends a confusing signal

that conflates the discursive and institutional prioritization of addressing equitable economic development. Overreliance on external donors sends a confusing signal marked by a discursive commitment for addressing equitable economic development but without the institutional push from the organization itself. "[A] coherent and sustainable program to narrow the gap should be funded using ASEAN's own resources as third-party funding tends to result in ad hoc implementation and lack of ownership among funding recipients" (Narjoko, Kartika, and Wicaksono 2009, 140).

Developmental regionalism at the time of regional community-building seems to be in full swing as shown by refreshing discourses and attempts at reorienting the direction of ASEAN from mere cooperation to that of integration. The projects aimed at the creation of a single market and the realization of equitable economic development point to a transformation born of a series of incremental changes in the regional organization since the time of its formation and the critical juncture in the '90s that forced ASEAN to reinvent itself. There are

discursive irregularities to these, however. Their substantive content reveals conflated meanings—single market for what is just a common market and narrowing of development gap, which is specifically CLMV-oriented. These have enabled and restricted ASEAN simultaneously, leading it to new areas of concern but limiting it as well in terms of what could actually be done. Institutional challenges have likewise multiplied out of these regional initiatives. ASEAN, through its Charter and Community Blueprint, has sought an upgrading but has maintained its usual conduct of affairs that characterized its past.

Conclusion

Bonn Juego describes the ASEAN Economic Community as a project on "accumulation by dispossession" (2014, 13; Juego attributing the concept to David Harvey). He regards its facilitation of processes of free flow of goods, services, investments, capital, and skilled labor as detrimental to what he calls the "regionalism of the commons" (Juego 2014, 17) This perspective, similarly pursued by epistemic communities and regional civil society organizations, points to a discursive formation on development that haunts ASEAN as it nears its 2015 deadline.

A survey of discourses on the regional organization's approaches to developmental regionalism demonstrates its historically contingent, complex, and intertwining limitations and possibilities for change. The conceptualization of a single regional market, although quite different from the normative idea, hinges on a regime of rules that cannot be applied in an institutional design that privileges the old cooperation framework of ASEAN. More importantly, and in direct connection with developmental regionalism, the commitments for equitable economic development, whose discourse emanates from a mix of regional activities—from SMEs and Growth Triangles to IAI—appear as merely consequential relative to the plan of establishing a single market.

On the other hand, discourses of developmental regionalism in the region have opened up spaces for intervention and engagement with other stakeholders. This would be atypical of ASEAN in its first three decades of existence. Economic interaction from within the region is more active than ever, however miniscule and inconsistent for some. Likewise, and as a result of integration plans, ASEAN has decided to take up progressive causes such as reaching out to its less developed member-states. Developmental regionalism, in the specific form of managing the disparity between ASEAN 6 and the CLMV, has taken,

for instance, two community pillars in the ASEAN Community Blueprint. In all these, it can be argued that the discourse has been evolving across time, in contrast to the generally accepted critique about the regional organization.

Nonetheless, a shift in discourse does not automatically entail institutional change. Indeed, a parallel development that occurred side by side with ASEAN's discursive transformations is its institutional innovations, most strikingly dramatized by the signing of the ASEAN Charter and the Community Blueprint. However, discursive and institutional changes rarely go together in the same pace in the regional organization. While arguable still, it can be said that ASEAN has reached some level of discursive complexity but without the institutional regularity necessary to complete the process.

These antagonisms in the historical development of the regional organization reflect the state of ASEAN studies as well. One would note, for instance, that much has been said about the propensity of ASEAN to inaction, a discourse by itself based on the sheer volume of declarations and work plans the regional organization has produced in recent years but sans the corresponding deliverables. Discursive institutionalism provides a rather dynamic interpretation, however, with its emphasis on the simultaneity of continuity and change in the almost half-a-century existence of ASEAN. Employing this analytical approach, one gets a sense that discursive and institutional improvements in the regional organization have been possible relative to the contexts from within and outside Southeast Asia. This is not without a counternarrative as irregularities have attended these attempts at innovation—for example, ambiguities in discourse or lack of institutional capacities. The conceptualization and communication of the idea of developmental regionalism in ASEAN demonstrate that its very discourses and institutional contexts have similarly enabled and restricted the transformation of the regional organization. Addressing this remains one of the most enduring challenges of ASEAN as it nears its 2015 deadline.❁

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