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The Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way as the Foundations of a New Regionalism

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Abstract. Narratives are essential for organizations and states to provide a framework for their decision-making processes and organizational structure and bolster their legitimacy by appealing to shared values and worldviews. These narratives will play a greater role in a multipolar world characterized by a diversity of worldviews and values that shape the internal and external perceptions of international actors. The authors compare the critical narratives forwarded by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way. Drawing on scientific works dedicated to explicating the worldview, values, and norms espoused by the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way, the authors use syncretic approaches to show how these concepts are applied in these narratives. The Shanghai Spirit is based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, quality, respect for the diversity of civilizations, and the pursuit of common development. Similarly, the ASEAN Way is based on non-interference, non-confrontation, non-use of force, and consensus-based decision-making. The Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way have notable similarities, such as an emphasis on preserving sovereignty, a pragmatic approach to regionalism, and a flexible, non-binding application. Although they also have significant differences, such as the rationale behind them, different preferred means of cooperation, and an emphasis on state security versus human security. The article argues that the unique features of the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way, which promote loose regionalism, combined with the state-centric Westphalian features of the contemporary international system, result in a new form of regionalism that is open yet preserves and reinforces the individual sovereignty of states. In this sense, the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way may provide the intellectual basis for a new form of regionalism and international relations that can better respond to the emerging challenges of a multipolar world.

Key words: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, SCO, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, the Shanghai Spirit, the ASEAN Way, regionalism

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Концепции «Шанхайского духа» и «Пути АСЕАН» как основа нового регионализма

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Аннотация. Нарративы необходимы организациям и государствам, чтобы обеспечить основу для процессов принятия решений и организационной структуры, а также укрепить свою легитимность, апеллируя к общим ценностям и мировоззрению. Эти нарративы будут играть еще большую роль в многополярном мире, характеризующемся разнообразием мировоззрений и ценностей, которые формируют внутреннее и внешнее восприятие международных акторов. В исследовании сравниваются критические нарративы, выдвинутые Шанхайской организацией сотрудничества (ШОС) и Ассоциацией государств Юго-Восточной Азии (АСЕАН), — «Шанхайский дух» и «Путь АСЕАН». Опираясь на научные работы, посвященные изложению мировоззрения, ценностей и норм, составляющих «Шанхайский дух» и «Путь АСЕАН», авторы используют синкретические подходы, чтобы показать, как эти понятия применяются в данных нарративах. «Шанхайский дух» строится на взаимном доверии, взаимной выгоде, качестве, уважении к разнообразию цивилизаций и стремлении к совместному развитию. Аналогичным образом, «Путь АСЕАН» основан на невмешательстве, неконфронтации, неприменении силы и принятии решений на основе консенсуса. «Шанхайский дух» и «Путь АСЕАН» имеют заметные сходства, такие как акцент на сохранении суверенитета, прагматичный подход к регионализму и гибкое, необязательное применение. Однако у них есть и существенные различия, такие как обоснование, лежащее в их основе, различные предпочтительные средства сотрудничества, а также акцент на безопасности государства в противовес безопасности человека. Утверждается, что уникальные особенности «Шанхайского духа» и «Пути АСЕАН», которые продвигают свободный регионализм, в сочетании с государственно-центричными Вестфальскими особенностями современной международной системы приводят к новой — открытой — форме регионализма, при этом сохраняющей и укрепляющей индивидуальный суверенитет государств. В этом смысле «Шанхайский дух» и «Путь АСЕАН» могут стать интеллектуальной основой для новой формы регионализма и международных отношений, которые могут более чутко реагировать на возникающие вызовы многополярного мира.

Ключевые слова: Шанхайская организация сотрудничества, ШОС, Ассоциация государств Юго-Восточной Азии, АСЕАН, Шанхайский дух, Путь АСЕАН, регионализм

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Introduction

The Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way are the narratives that encapsulate the guiding principles of Asia's two largest regional organizations, the SCO and ASEAN. These narratives have provided an enduring framework for the decision-making processes, organizational structure and legitimacy of these organizations.

These narratives have specific characteristics that give the SCO and ASEAN a syncretic, inclusive nature. In contrast, Western regional organizations such as the EU and NATO operate on an exclusionary basis, with prospective and current members required to adhere to the Westphalian concept of the state coupled with liberal norms and values. For example, the Westphalian model of sovereignty assumes that the state is a singular rational

actor, characterized by its sovereignty, fixed territories, and population, with the presumption that states should accept this norm, no matter how begrudgingly. The Western-dominated liberal international order also emphasizes strict regionalism based on compliance with explicitly and strictly defined legal parameters. In contrast, the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way accept fundamental differences and worldviews as an element of regionalism and international relations.

This inclusive, syncretic character of the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way extends beyond regionalism to international relations. Accordingly, these narratives have taken on a syncretic nature, fusing non-Western forms of regionalism with Western notions of the state and Westphalian sovereignty.

While the Westphalian model remains the core concept for the modern state and international relations, at the regional and national level, regionalism according to the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way is gaining traction between the SCO and ASEAN, overriding in some ways the Westphalian system that has dominated international relations. Regionalism enables the convergence of these two organizations within a common Greater Eurasian strategic space, covering East, Southeast, and South Asia.

As such, the SCO and ASEAN embody their respective narratives of regionalism and norm-making. The SCO is one of the major regional organizations in Eurasia, exporting its Shanghai Spirit narrative within a semi-formalized Westphalian regionalism framework. In contrast, ASEAN has a more diffused leadership, which affects how the organization functions within the Westphalian international system.

Thus, it is possible to outline the tenets of the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way, starting with their core principles and transposing these into their views of regionalism, decision-making processes and international systems. These narratives combine

syncretistically with the Westphalian features of the international system, creating a new form of international relations distinct from Western conceptions of a liberal world order with absolutist overtones that does not correspond to the diverse philosophical, political and cultural realities of humanity.

This new system of international relations could be based on the commonalities of the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way, as the SCO and ASEAN operationalize these narratives. The emphasis on open regionalism while preserving the Westphalian characteristics of individual states, the openness in accepting cultural differences, the practice of flexible compromise and consensus in critical decisions, the paradoxical approach of strengthening state sovereignty while fostering regional integration, and the minimal formalism in the conduct of administrative affairs characterize the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way in practice within and between the SCO and ASEAN.

Main Principles of the Shanghai Spirit

The Shanghai Spirit is based on the principles of mutual respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, inviolability of state borders, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of its use in international relations, and seeking no unilateral military superiority in adjacent areas.¹

These norms are deliberately different from those promoted by the US and other like-minded countries and have the dual purpose of providing the internal basis for the SCO members to cooperate productively and the outward purpose of challenging a perceived unipolarity in contemporary international relations (Bailes et al., 2007, p. 6). In particular, the SCO promotes the Shanghai Spirit

¹ Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization // CIS Legislation. June 7, 2002. URL: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=3851> (accessed: 12.04.2023).

as an alternative to outdated Cold War mentality, zero-sum games, and clash of civilizations by emphasizing partnerships rather than alliances.² It also addresses the inherent dangers of unilateralism. It can be argued that a unipolar world does not bode well for international peace and stability, wherein a system of checks and balances is needed to counterbalance unipolar aspirations (Rahman, 2007, p. 130).

In addition to that, the Shanghai Spirit revolves around mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and the pursuit of joint development. Central to its narrative is the concept of a harmonious world order, which is a multi-component governance and consultation mechanism which respects the diversity of cultures and institutions, follows the primary principle of international law, and copes with international affairs through consultation to build a world with enduring peace and shared prosperity (Fei Gao, 2010, p. 2). The concept also evokes the normative shared understating of equality in the international system, requiring a less hegemonic and unbalanced system pursued through development paths that differ from Western conceptions (Freire, 2018, p. 401).

These political values are the reason why the SCO has maintained its vitality and has become an influential regional international institution. It has been described as the organization's "spiritual home," a "unique source of smooth development within the organization," and "an essential guide for developing state-to-state relations, coping with global threats and challenges, and resolving international differences" (Xue Yamei & Makengo, 2021, p. 188).

² Deng Hao. 20 Years of the SCO: Development, Experience and Future Direction // China Institute of International Studies. December 3, 2021. URL: https://www.ciis.org.cn/english/ESEARCHPROJECTS/Articles/202112/t20211203_8276.html (accessed: 12.04.2023).

The Shanghai Spirit emphasizes non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states and the responsibility of states for their stability, which contrasts with the Western concept of "responsibility to protect," which has been used as a pretext for military intervention, and respects differences in values while refraining from imposing its values as universal ones. Given that, the Shanghai Spirit follows "constructive engagement" in settling a crisis, preventing its escalation, and restoring stability based on international law.³

The Shanghai Spirit emphasizes the preservation of state stability to maintain the SCO's legitimacy. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen state sovereignty by emphasizing non-interference coupled with loose and informal consultation mechanisms, rather than interventionism and legalistic policies that erode the state's role. In line with this, the SCO builds its legitimacy on regional norms as embodied in the Shanghai Spirit, legitimizing itself as an alternative to Western-type organizations whose legitimacy is founded on external recognition by other international organizations and institutions, resulting in the SCO's strength being its independence from Western pressure (Dingwerth & Witt, 2019, p. 45).

The SCO promotes the Shanghai Spirit as a new model of interstate relations and regionalism based on a code of conduct instead of value-based goals and objectives (Jia Qingguo, 2007, p. 120). Hence, members behave reciprocally and cooperatively with mutual trust that evolves through a shared understanding of regional norms. The Shanghai Spirit has promoted the building of trust among its members. It has also provided a good framework for cooperation in combating separatism, terrorism, and extremism through

³ Zhao Huasheng. What is the Future for SCO? // Carnegie Endowment for Regional Peace. August 29, 2012. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2012/08/29/what-is-future-for-sco-pub-49218> (accessed: 12.04.2023).

practical confidence-building measures enabled by its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS). Such practical anti-terrorism exercises improve the capability of the SCO member states to tackle terrorist threats, with their military and security services learning tactics, weapons handling, command and control, logistics, and maneuvers to address common non-traditional security challenges (Zhao Xiaodong, 2012, pp. 15—16).

This idea contrasts with a Westphalian view of international relations, wherein anarchy is the defining feature of the global system and states are the primary actors caught up in a struggle to promote their interests using coercive power and violence, without understanding the international system as an organic whole.

The Shanghai Spirit also guides the SCO's relations with other international organizations. Accordingly, the SCO's activities are not aimed at undermining other cooperation mechanisms established by its members or other states or international organizations, but instead at creating additional spheres of cooperation that did not exist earlier or are impossible outside its framework.⁴ In line with this, the SCO is placing itself in the ongoing negotiation and re-negotiation of regional and global levels of governance by developing relationships with a range of actors such as ASEAN, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the UN (Aris, 2013).

The Shanghai Spirit has also been an instrumental narrative in guiding the SCO's foreign policy. Consistent with the tenets of the Shanghai Spirit, the SCO has constructed a narrative on international affairs revolving around the themes of non-intervention in

internal affairs, promoting a multipolar world order, and promoting a shared and balanced globalization whereby the world is not dominated by one power or culture (Aris, 2011, p. 143). Despite this grand vision, however, the SCO is still very much a work in progress, with changing the organization's identity to a more functional and issue-specific arrangement signaling to the international community that the SCO's concept of security goes beyond borders and policing.⁵

However, the Shanghai Spirit may still be immature as a concept because it has yet to reach the stage where it offers a well-articulated set of values that appeals to both China and other member states (Jia Qingguo, 2007, p. 123). Moreover, the SCO itself has been criticized as a league of autocrats, with the Shanghai Spirit attempting to give intellectual legitimacy to autocracy by creating a narrative to challenge notions of liberal democracy. Contrary to those accusations, however, the SCO is an open and inclusive organization, does not follow a policy of deterrence akin to Article 5 of the NATO Charter, and has no intention of power projection; it is therefore not aggressive and does not threaten anyone.⁶

Despite those criticisms, the Shanghai Spirit guides the SCO's multilateral cooperation efforts while promising a new non-alliance mode of cooperation for the foreseeable future. The Shanghai Spirit's features of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilizations, and pursuit of common development, cementing the strategic mutual trust between the SCO members, and actively resolving or reducing disruptions resulting from

⁵ Dadabaev T. In search of a new identity for SCO // East Asia Forum. September 20, 2022. URL: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/09/20/in-search-of-a-new-identity-for-sco/> (accessed: 21.03.2023).

⁶ Ivanov O. Unlike NATO, SCO is not aggressive, and threatens nobody // Global Times. September 13, 2022. URL: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202209/1275130.shtml> (accessed: 21.03.2023).

⁴ Lukin A. V. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: What Next? // *Russia in Global Affairs*. 2007. No. 3 (August-September). URL: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/the-shanghai-cooperation-organization-what-next/> (accessed: 21.03.2023).

internal and external negative factors are essential for further consolidating the organization, raising the level of cooperation, and increasing its role in regional and international affairs.⁷

Main Tenets of the ASEAN Way

The ASEAN Charter succinctly lists the norms of the ASEAN Way, which include respect for the independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and national identity of all ASEAN member states; shared commitment and collective responsibility in enhancing regional peace, security, and prosperity; renunciation of aggression and the threat of use of force; peaceful settlement of disputes; non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN member states; and consultation-consensus decision-making.⁸ It also shows that political values dictate that common state interests, not ideology or form of government are the foundation of good relations, with emphasis on non-interference in internal affairs, treatment of others as equals, respect for their autonomous political choices, avoidance of indiscreet remarks and criticisms, with peace and harmony being the highest political objective (Mahadevan, 2012, pp. 372—373).

The ASEAN Way transcends Westphalian concepts of sovereignty, in the sense that it goes beyond state-centric practices, but does not undermine the Westphalian fundamentals of the modern state, making it a form of quasi-regionalism or regional internationalism (Noortman, 2016, pp. 21—22). It is also distinguished by its implementation in a framework of regional interaction, where the cultivation of specific habits such as discretion,

informality, expediency, consensus decision-making and non-confrontational bargaining contrast with adversarial posturing and legalistic decision-making associated with Western diplomatic practices (Jones & Smith, 2007, p. 155). In practice, this means urgent issues are addressed in multiple high-level summits, workshops and working groups, which obscure but do not resolve underlying disagreements, competition, and tensions within the organization. These interactions are integrators that prevent ASEAN from dissolving.⁹

The ASEAN Way is also vital for ASEAN's ability to manage the regional security environment in Southeast Asia and to the organization's ability to maintain centrality in Asia-Pacific security affairs. ASEAN's centrality can be seen as its being in between, being closely connected to, and being in several networks in the broader East Asian security landscape, wherein its position at the center and bridging role is the reason it is perceived as the driver and foundation for other regional institutions in Asia (Caballero-Anthony, 2014, p. 568).

In this area, the ASEAN Way has demonstrated its ideational power in persuading extra-regional states to use ASEAN-led institutional mechanisms for dialogue, forging common interests, and promoting regional cooperative security (Caballero-Anthony, 2022). ASEAN's role can be described as that of a "regional conductor" that can provide the "regional orchestra" and provide a "score" consisting of framework norms and institutions wherein all regional players can operate (Yates, 2016, p. 457).

The ASEAN Way has led to the development of a Southeast Asian regional community. However, the ASEAN Way still reflects the primacy of state sovereignty as opposed to its gradual erosion (Acharya, 1999, p. 74).

⁷ Zhao Mingwen. Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A New Stage, New Challenges, and A New Journey // China Institute of International Studies. August 10, 2018. URL: https://www.ciis.org.cn/english/ESEARCHPROJECTS/Articles/202007/t20200715_3591.html (accessed: 21.03.2023).

⁸ The ASEAN Charter // ASEAN. January 2008. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/archive/publications/ASEAN-Charter.pdf> (accessed: 12.04.2023).

⁹ Davies M. Why Southeast Asia still bothers with ASEAN // East Asia Forum. January 12, 2019. URL: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/01/12/why-southeast-asia-still-bothers-with-asean/> (accessed: 21.03.2023).

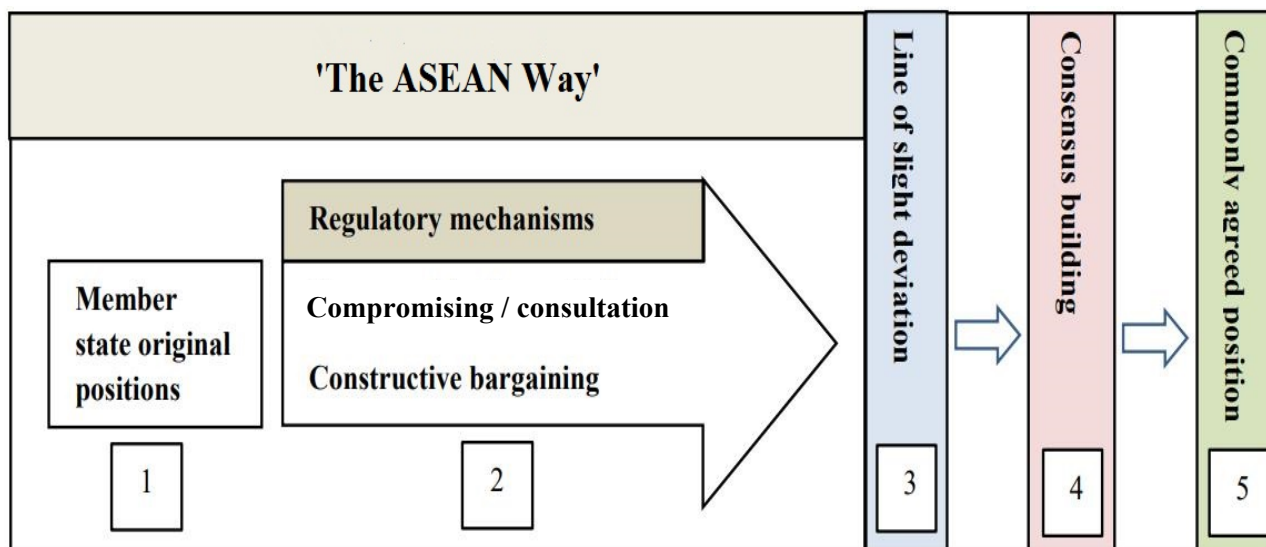


Figure 1. Framework for Understanding the ASEAN Way as a Diplomatic Approach
 Source: (Padmakumara, 2021).

This arrangement also reflects ASEAN’s limited institutional agency, as it has a minimalist approach to its institutions and mechanisms, resulting in the organization not being an actor in its own right, neither capable of providing leadership, nor having an independent voice on regional matters, and not even authoritative enough to remind its members to put the regional good above national interests (Kliem, 2018, p. 24). However, this minimalism is not a flaw, but a design feature that enables cooperation in a culturally and politically diverse region.

An important significant feature of ASEAN is its tendency to look for multiple strategic partners featuring diverse worldviews and interests. This tendency of omni-enmeshment requires engaging major powers in regional multilateral institutions, multilateral and bilateral free trade agreements, bilateral security exchanges, and multilateral security cooperation (Goh, 2008, pp. 123—124). In practice, ASEAN aims to be a “regional conductor,” capable of maintaining strategic stability and survival through redefining, reclaiming, and renegotiating its roles through bargaining with competing for great powers in the Pacific (Yates, 2016, p. 445). The ASEAN

Way can be conceptualized as a five-stage process in this role, as shown in the Figure 1.

The ASEAN Way, as explained by S. Padmakumara, involves five stages (Padmakumara, 2021, pp. 9—11). The first stage involves members seeking an appropriate institutional mechanism that provides the appropriate level of comfort for agreement. The second stage involves regulatory processes such as compromising, consultation, and effective bargaining to allow flexibility to address the concerned issues and advance discussions. The third stage involves compromises and adjustments required by the common position. The fourth stage the practical response to the consensus, with ASEAN member states adjusting their respective policies to the maximum extent possible to accommodate the common position. Finally, the fifth stage involves the consolidation of consensus with ASEAN members acting in accordance with the organization’s position.

Being a regional conductor through omni-enmeshment using loose, informal and dialogue-driven diplomacy removes role autarky from ASEAN, as the organization becomes dependent on external powers for role

recognition and relevance. ASEAN maintains its legitimacy by harmonizing the interests of competing great powers through its institutional mechanisms and by being perceived as competent and impartial in its regional conductor role.

However, ASEAN's loose and informal approach to itself as an organization and regional security cooperation has its limitations. For one thing, ASEAN's norm of consensus makes it difficult for the organization to take quick decisions on internal and regional affairs, as each member has veto power on decision-making.

ASEAN's unique brand of regionalism is a product not only of its loose and open regionalism, but also of its relative lack of capacity to take direct, practical action on regional security issues. ASEAN's brand of regionalism is characterized by multiple institutions and mechanisms that have a low pragmatic impact overall on regional security.

While ASEAN has been prosperous in pursuing short-term security goals, it has not yet been successful in alleviating Southeast Asia's diplomatic and security dilemmas. One criticism of the ASEAN Way is that it simply obscures, but does not address the fundamental causes of regional security issues in Southeast Asia. In other words, ASEAN's non-interference norm for regional diplomacy significantly reduces political awareness of pressing regional concerns within the bloc, resulting in the postponement of conflict explosion rather than a definitive solution to regional security challenges (Aminuddin & Purnomo, 2017, pp. 33—34).

ASEAN's soft regionalism makes it a survivable regional organization. However, this same softness opens the organization to questions about its long-term relevance in contemporary international relations, which is increasingly characterized by great power competition and multipolarity. Although ASEAN has yet to live up to its full potential, it

is one of the few channels where Southeast Asian states can stand their ground along the fault lines of competing great power interests.¹⁰

Similarities between the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way

The Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way have significant points of convergence, with their strong emphasis on non-interference in the internal affairs of their members, consensus-based decision-making, peaceful settlement of disputes, cooperation for mutual benefit, respect for cultural diversity, and focus on regional stability and development. Moreover, the commonality of both narratives emphasizes a consensus among the SCO and ASEAN members and implicit recognition by other parties to maintain credibility. In this sense, the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way rely on consensus-based and role-performance-based approaches to maintain the legitimacy of the SCO and ASEAN as international organizations.

A pragmatic, open, and relativistic approach to achieving legitimacy is evident in the open regionalism, informality, and stress on consultation and consensus of the SCO and ASEAN in their interactions and decision-making processes. Both organizations employ a consensus model of decision-making, which serves as the foundation of their ideological and philosophical views for further dialogue (Alimov, 2018, p. 118). In addition, the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way emphasize seeking agreement and harmony, the principle of sensitivity, politeness, non-confrontation, and agreeability, the focus of quiet and private elitist diplomacy versus public washing of dirty linen, and the direction of being non-legalistic (Tobing, 2018, p. 151).

¹⁰ Chong J. I. ASEAN and the challenge of a multipolar world // East Asia Forum. September 12, 2018. URL: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/09/12/asean-and-the-challenge-of-a-multipolar-world/> (accessed: 21.03.2023).

This applied approach to gaining legitimacy emphasizes tangible results since it is tough to argue against success, which also gives leeway on how legitimacy is gained. On the other hand, this approach can open a relativistic way of achieving moral legitimacy, which opposes absolutist notions of such. Given that, the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way do not rely so much on formal recognition of external parties to gain credibility and legitimacy, but on practical results as seen through the emergence of regional harmony. This approach allows for flexibility in achieving legitimacy, as evidenced by the open regionalism, informality, and stress on consultation and consensus of the SCO and ASEAN in their interactions and decision-making processes.

The Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way emphasize the concept of centrality. While the SCO and ASEAN ascribe centrality to themselves, in practice these organizations have diffuse power centers. Even if China is arguably in the pilot seat of the SCO, the organization's subsequent growth to include India, Pakistan, and Iran diminishes China's role in the main seat as intra-organizational multipolarity sets in within the organization. Likewise, while Indonesia has the political, economic, and military influence to act as ASEAN's *de facto* leader, it has not done so. Such a dynamic ensures that each ASEAN member state serves as a 'power center' and avoids the situation where one state dominates regional organizations, which inevitably leads to their failure.

In addition, individual SCO and ASEAN states show flexibility in terms of their autonomy, as they do not adhere so rigidly to each organization's framework, but exhibit their levels of strategic independence from each organization, forming independent interactions outside the organization as individual states, forming separate groups within the organizations. India, for example, is a member of the SCO. However, it also has

relations with the US, Australia, and Japan, which are critical of China and the SCO. Similarly, ASEAN members are invested in the organization to varying degrees and show some flexibility in their commitment to the organization and foreign policies. For example, Cambodia is the only ASEAN member state with observer status in the SCO, while all other ASEAN states only interact with the SCO members on a bilateral level. However, even then, the quality of their ties varies depending on their relationship with China.

Differences in the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way

There are also clear differences between the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way. The Shanghai Spirit and the SCO may be framed as China and Russia's joint experiment in multilateral diplomacy and international norm-building. However, the ASEAN Way preserves the independence of each ASEAN member, while keeping the bounds of the regional organization amorphous in the sense that each member state has different degrees of relations with other states and regional organizations, such as the SCO.

By implication, the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way also differ markedly in how they are put into practice. While both philosophies emphasize social harmony, the SCO has a practical and direct approach to regional security cooperation. At the same time, ASEAN maintains a dialogue- and development-based process for regional security challenges. This difference may reflect a preference for strong state authority within the SCO to actively maintain peace and social harmony, as compared to ASEAN, which keeps some of its institutions and mechanisms to a minimum and keeps these closely tied to member states. The SCO has a practical approach to regional security cooperation, as it conducts exercises within the framework of its RATS.

In contrast, ASEAN is wary of being perceived as an emerging military organization and prefers a dialogue approach to addressing threats to social harmony. Nevertheless, despite that initial hesitance ASEAN members conduct practical cooperation outside the organizations' framework. The Tri-Border Security Agreement between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines is emblematic and seeks to secure the shared maritime border between these three countries. This difference between the two organizations reflects the SCO's desire for the state to play a leading role in maintaining regional security and the diverse interests and allegiances of ASEAN members.

The Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way also differ in their approach to achieving social harmony. While the SCO and ASEAN reinforce the role of states between both organizations, the SCO has a much deeper focus on state security, focusing on the state-centric and collective security preferences of the organization. In contrast, ASEAN has a more people-centered approach, focusing mainly on challenges to human security and adopting a development-based approach wherein member states have more control over ASEAN initiatives within their territories. This illustrates the difference between the SCO's concept of the state as the foundation of regional security and the looser nature of the ASEAN Way, with a broader framework of regional security.

Conclusion

Narratives such as the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way still play an essential role in international and regional organizations, embodying the SCO and ASEAN's values and norms. Following the Shanghai Spirit, the SCO seeks to promote and export its norms within the Westphalian international system. Similarly, ASEAN, by playing the role of regional conductor in accordance with the precepts of the ASEAN Way, strives to harmonize the competing interests of external actors through

ASEAN-led institutional mechanisms, which in turn become 'norm factories' for all parties involved.

The similarities between the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way in deriving authority, gaining legitimacy as international organizations, and emphasizing the maintenance of harmony while maintaining the individual sovereignty of states may bespeak a new form of regionalism. Both the SCO and ASEAN are designed to safeguard the sovereignty of their members, making both organizations agents of sovereignty, and their members are strong adherents to this idea (Maulaya, 2021, pp. 246—247). These arrangements combine the holistic approaches, pragmatic and conceptually loose characteristics of the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way to forge a common regional identity while maintaining the Westphalian character of states to participate in the Westphalian international system, wherein states are still the primary players. Through the SCO and ASEAN, these philosophies may, in turn, contribute to the reshaping of today's international system, as these philosophies may hold the conceptual answers that address exclusionary and outdated forms of engagement such as alliances, spheres of influence and trade blocs.

However, philosophical and intellectual poverty characterize the Shanghai Spirit and the ASEAN Way. The discourse on their philosophical premises has yet to be fully linked to the expositions of these organizations' core values. In a way, the linkage between theory and practice is minimal. These organizations have yet to craft a values-based narrative appealing to interested parties.

Nevertheless, as the growth of the SCO and ASEAN continues in today's international relations, further exchanges cultural and education sectors within these organizations enable more discussions between academics and scholars to improve the narrative these organizations offer. Such discussions may focus on dis-embedding concepts from member states'

cultures, refining and integrating them into a more extensive history of organizational values and principles, thereby adding to the diversity and intellectual depth of the Shanghai Spirit and ASEAN Way. In this sense, the

Shanghai Spirit and ASEAN Way may provide the normative basis of a new form of regionalism and international relations that is more responsive to the international security challenges of our time.

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