ASEAN ENERGY CENTER'S ROLE ON ENERGY COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract - The progress of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia is integral with the establishment of regionalism, mainly through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In the sector of energy, the ASEAN Center for Energy (ACE) was established as a specialized body under ASEAN with its role to accelerate the progress of energy cooperation in the region in regards to the contemporary energy challenges. This research is done with the purpose of assessing to which extent the said institution could be effective in realizing energy cooperation in Southeast Asia, especially on the aspect of renewable energy.

By considering the organization as a part of Epistemic Community that has authoritative claims on domestic policy and relevant issues, on this case, energy sector, ASEAN Center for Energy has facilitated the process of energy cooperation through a variety of avenues. Among all, the establishment of ASEAN Plan for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) that covers multiple aspects of key issues regarding energy such as renewable energy through the RE-SSN (Renewable Energy Sub-Sector Network). In addition, ASEAN Center for Energy acts as a monitoring agent of the plan's progress by providing regular tracking and evaluation that will be addressed in the annual AMEM (ASEAN Ministers of Energy Meeting) and SOME (Senior Officials Meetings on Energy) as well as having dialogue partners with variety of expertise groups, including International Energy Agency (IEA).

Keywords - Southeast Asia, Cooperation, Energy, Epistemic Community

I. INTRODUCTION

Energy is one of the prominent aspects that can be encountered in studying the discipline International Relations. On this context, It shows importance in both states' economic development and an instrument of power exercise of the actors in the international politics. In the contemporary era, examining aspects of energy in International Relations poses further complexity in that it is not only observed in limited occasions such as development recipe and power exercise. Further concerns from environmental consequences on the usage of fossil fuel, inequality of infrastructures and technological capability to the urgency of considering renewable and sustainable energy use promotes the need in identifying the broadened roles of actors relevant. Cooperation on the energy aspect involves complex interactions between state and private actors – from energy multinational companies, environmentalists to expertise in energy sectors. These interactions are observable in international scope and regional scope.

The region of Southeast Asia that is known for its features of diversity of culture and identity prompted integration process relatively different to regions such as European Union. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was formed to facilitate multilateral cooperation of states in Southeast Asia and enabling platform to address variety of issues in economics and security sector hence why the establishments of particular regional communities. However, many scholars have pointed the notoriety of difficulties in establishing sound and realistic cooperation in Southeast Asian regions. In the energy sector, states are dubbed unwilling to "pool their assets and interests" in the particular sector – further prompting the barrier in lack of experience and political will that is observed. It is also notoriously known that existing human resources such as energy experts and policymakers are "largely unfamiliar" with the sophistication of renewable energy technologies.[1]

An independent intergovernmental organization under ASEAN named ASEAN Center for Energy is established in 1999 to accelerate the integration of energy strategies by providing relevant technical recommendation from expertise and platform needed to build a "coherent, coordinated, focused and robust energy policy agenda" for ASEAN member states.[2] This research is done with the urgency to assess the effectiveness of this organization with addressing the challenges of Southeast Asian region energy cooperation that has been addressed in mind.

This research will be divided into three major parts. The first part – the introduction had elaborated on the background on the historical aspect, opportunities and challenges in energy cooperation in Southeast Asia. The second part will elaborate on the theoretical framework which explains interdependence theory and epistemic community theory – two main theoretical basis for this research. The third part will be discussion which systematically, divided into the following processes: firstly a brief explanation about ASEAN Center for Energy, its vision and mission, roles, and functions from the statements in the organization's website will be provided. Secondly, a

[1] Samantha Olz and Milou Beerepoot. "Deploying Renewables in Southeast Asia." IEA Working Paper, 2010: p. 114.

[2] C.G Zamora (eds),, "ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2016 – 2025," *ASEAN Center for Energy*, Jakarta, 2015: p.1

brief comprehension of APAEC-RE and the indicated role of ASEAN Center for Energy and the RE-SSN will be discussed and will be contextualized with the epistemic community theory. Eventually, an additional elaboration on the organization's role in other renewable energy cooperation initiatives in Southeast Asia outside APAEC will be discussed.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research will examine and identify the roles and effectiveness of ASEAN Center for Energy in the scope of regional energy cooperation in Southeast Asia amidst of the contemporary dynamics of energy sector with concerns such as the urgency to use renewable energy addressing environmental consequences of conventional energy use and technological advancement. Supporting the research questions, Interdependence Theory and Epistemic Community as the main theoretical basis will be used:

2.1. Interdependence Theory

Interdependence is a theory that addresses the mutual dependence between extended actors in the international politics as a result of advancement in technology and communications.[3] This theory is integral with the Liberalism perspective of the International Political Economy – in which it acknowledges the broadened role of non-state actors – which reflects to the challenge of the realists assumptions that states are the only relevant actor in the international community. Cooper's approach on interdependence asserts that there has been a limitation for states to "achieve their desired aims – regardless of their formal retention of sovereignty" and that states should respond to this phenomenon by coordinating their domestic policies as a result of interaction with a variety of actors in a much more limited manner[4], contrasted to Realism perspective. Specifically, Keohane and Nye's complex interdependence will be more appropriate in this study as it is regarded that multiple channels (governmental and nongovernmental) plays more role in the specific issue addressed.[5]

In this research's context, the energy sector in Southeast Asia is not accommodating only the interests of ASEAN member states as individual state actors – hence the formation of ASEAN Center for Energy and its designated role which will be elaborated further in point 3.

This approach can be used to explain aforementioned previous pessimistic views on states' capacity on previous part in regards of energy cooperation in Southeast Asia. It could be further argued that the ASEAN Center for Energy is established as a manifestation of expertise recognition in providing technical recommendations to support ASEAN member states energy policy implementation.

2.2. Epistemic Community

Epistemic Community is one of the key concepts in International Relations that were coined by Peter M. Haas. This concept addressed the presence of the growing technical uncertainties and complexities of problems of global concern. Reflecting to this, epistemic community is "a network of professionals with recognized competence in a particular domain with authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue." It also seek to address how states identify their interests and recognize the latitude of actions deemed appropriate in specific issue-areas of policy making are function of the manner in which the problems are understood by the policy maker or are represented by those to whom they turn for advice under conditions of uncertainty.[6] Furthermore, epistemic communities can facilitate "diffusion of information and learning" – prompting shifts in the pattern of decision making itself.[7]As it is comprehended by Haas that actors' understanding of the world and the formulation of alternative actions are shaped by belief systems, operational codes, and cognitive maps. As such, epistemic communities are considered to have shared causal and principal beliefs, in which the legislator and bureaucratic agents are designated as having unshared causal and principal beliefs.[8]

Addressing prominence of epistemic communities in the international environment, Haas asserts that reality is socially constructed and strongly uncertain: that ideas will inform policies structuring.[9]The dimension of the knowledge source possessed by the actors is outlined to further assert the desired outcome of epistemic community's function: "as it possess consensual knowledge and shared interest.[10]" Seemingly, Haas meant to contrast epistemic communities' legitimacy in terms of knowledge if compared to more powerful actors frequently referred in literatures: legislators, bureaucratic agencies are labeled to have disputed/absent knowledge and also unshared interest.

The researcher would identify ASEAN Center for Energy as part of epistemic community based on its

[3]Richard N. Cooper, "Economic Interdependence and Foreign Policy in the Seventies,"*World Politics 24*, January 1972: p. 179.

[4]Richard N. Cooper, "Economic Interdependence and Foreign Policy in the Seventies," *World Politics 24*, January 1972: pp. 170 -171

[5]Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 2nd ed. Glenview, IL,1989: pp. 24–29

[6] P.M Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1992: pp. 4-5

[7]ibid

[8]*ibid*

[9] P.M Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1992: pp.13-15

[10] P.M Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1992: p. 19

vision and mission and also the purpose of the organization that aligned with the aforementioned theory, which would be further elaborated in point 3. The researcher believes that this theory would help to provide standards and theoretical legitimacy in realigning the organization's role and function with the research question. Another reason is that this theory is useful to distinguish ASEAN Center for Energy with another actors observed such as ASEAN member states, bureucrats and policymakers and how they interact with each other.

DISCUSSION

ASEAN Center for Energy (ACE), that was established on January 1st 1999 is an independent, intergovernmental organization that is superordinated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ACE does its function under the guidance of a Governing Council consisting of Senior Officials of Energy from ASEAN Member States as well as a ex-oficiomember from the ASEAN Secretariat.[11]

There are two main arguments presented in this research that are instrumental in answering the research question. The first one is ASEAN Center for Energy being identified as an epistemic community in this research as reflected in its vision and mission – which is to accelerate "the integration of energy strategies within ASEAN by providing relevant information and expertise to ensure the necessary energy policies and programs are in harmonywith the economic growth and the environmental sustainability of the region….." "….[12]." ASEAN Center for Energy is an independent structure that does not have the capacity to exercise power on behalf of the ASEAN member states, or even ASEAN itself.

Secondly, ASEAN Center for Energy exercises its role in the Southeast Asian energy cooperation mainly through its involvement in ASEAN Plan for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) by assisting senior energy officials and in carrying out their responsibilities on the program's implementation by providing "technical support and assistance in the supervision, coordination and review of the cooperation program and activities" "……" and "provide policy analysis and statistics.[13]"

The official homepage of the organization elaborated this mechanism as follows:

"ACE assumes a central role in the ASEAN energy sector. It works closely with energy authorities/ministries in the 10 AMS called the Sub-sector Networks (SSN) and the Specialised Energy Bodies (SEB), as well as with the ASEAN Secretariat which acts as the custodian and administrator of the Endowment fund. Together, they implement the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation, which serves as a blueprint for better cooperation towards enhancing energy. Keeping the region's development sustainable and environmentally friendly is an important concern of ASEAN's energy sector. This concern is shared as a common theme of each Sub-sector Network in implementing its programmes."[14]

ASEAN Power Grid	To initiate multilateral electricity trade in at least one sub-region by 2018.
Trans ASEAN Gas Pipeline	To enhance connectivity for energy security and accessibility via pipelines and regasification terminals.
Coal & Clean Coal Technology	To enhance the image of coal through promotion of clean coal technologies (CCT).
Energy Efficiency & Conservation	To reduce energy intensity[3] by 20% in 2020 based on 2005 level.
Renewable Energy	Aspirational target to increase the component of renewable energy[4] to 23% by 2025 in ASEAN Energy Mix[5].
Regional Energy Policy & Planning	To better profile the energy sector internationally.
Civilian Nuclear Energy	To build capabilities in policy, technology and regulatory aspects of nuclear energy.

Table 1: Sectored programme of the ASEAN Plan for Energy Cooperation (APAEC). Retrieved from APAEC 2016 = 2025 Document, C.G Zamora (eds.), ASEAN Center for Energy http://www.aseanenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/HighRes-APAEC-online-version-final.pdf

In the aspect of Renewable Energy, for instance, ASEAN Center for Energy exercises its role on energy cooperation of Southeast Asiathrough its involvement in ASEAN Plan for Energy Cooperation – Program Area No. 5: Renewable Energy Program (APAEC-RE) by assisting senior energy officials and in carrying out their responsibilities on the program's implementation. Specifically, they are providing "technical support and assistance in the supervision, coordination and review of the cooperation program and activities" "……" and "provide policy analysis

[1111] ASEAN Energy Center, 'Introduction' [Online] n.d. Available on: http://www.aseanenergy.org/ (Accessed April 20th, 2017: 12:21 PM)

[12] ASEAN Energy Center, 'Vision and Mission,' [Online] n.d. Available on: http://www.aseanenergy.org/ (Accessed April 20th, 2017: 12:21 PM)

[13] C.G Zamora (eds),, "ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2016 – 2025," *ASEAN Center for Energy*, Jakarta, 2015: p. 5

[14] ASEAN Energy Center, 'ACE in the ASEAN Energy Sector,' [Online] n.d. Available on: http://www.aseanenergy.org/ (Accessed April 20th, 2017: 12:21 PM)

and statistics.[15]" The APAEC-RE itself aspires to "increase the component of Renewable Energy to 23% of total energy share by 2025" and "enhance awareness on the role of renewable energy among policy makers, private sectors, and public." These key targets would be the basis on the action of task force responsible for the APAEC-RE, the RE-SSN (Renewable Energy Sub-Sector Network) – consisting of representatives of the countries' designated energy officials under the assistance of ASEAN Center for Energy.[16].
RE-SSN is responsible to track the annual progress of renewable energy infrastructure and policy implementation to support the achievement of key targets as explained above. In addition, ASEAN Center for Energy functions as the monitoring agent of the plan's progress by providing regular tracking and evaluation that will be addressed in the annual AMEM (ASEAN Ministers of Energy Meeting) and SOME (Senior Officials Meetings on Energy) [17]

Aside from the APAEC, the ASEAN Center for Energy has a role in helping the establishment of a variety of energy cooperation between ASEAN and other parties such as dialogue partners and other energy expertise-related international organizations such as the ECCJ, Global CCS Institute and the International Energy Agency[18]. In addition, it has a role in the ASEAN+3 cooperation (ASEAN with China, Japan and Korea) in energy sector. Some of the projects like Oil Stockpiling which has the goal that "every member country in the ASEAN+3 has a common best-practice on Oil Stockpiling to execute effective ways in the ultimate stronghold of energy security by 2030" is integral with the implementation of APAEC, specifically in Regional Energy Policy-Planning sector.[19]

CONCLUSION

ASEAN Center for Energy was established over the concern on how the contemporary energy issues can be addressed in Southeast Asia, reflecting to the challenges expressed in the first part of the research. The researcher noted, however, that the visibility of a regional energy cooperation in Southeast Asia will not solely be dependent on the presence of ACE – but more towards how ASEAN Member States can consider the outcomes of ACE programs, as elaborated, to be later adapted in their respective domestic energy policy.

The researcher acknowledged the need of further examinations of ACE's effectiveness in context with the contemporary issues of energy in the future, especially with the establishment of United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030. In light of aforementioned matter, the researcher aspires to observe the active participation of Southeast Asia in contributing to the progress of Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy up to 2030, especially through the interaction between ASEAN Center for Energy and respective ASEAN Member States.

APPENDIX

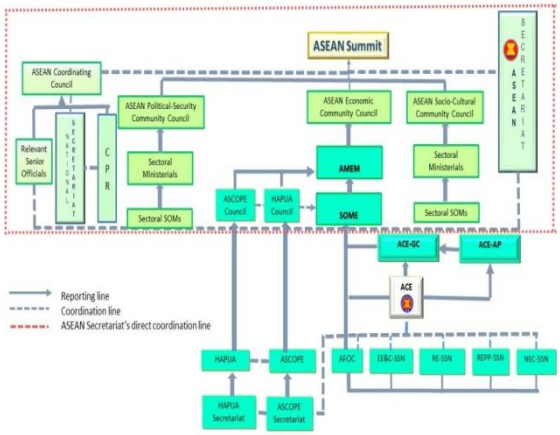


Figure 1: Designation of ASEAN Center for Energy with another actors relevant in ASEAN. Retrieved from ASEAN Center for Energy Website http://www.aseanenergy.org/about-ace/ace-in-the-asean-structure/

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