ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)

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ABSTRACT

ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)

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The aim of this thesis is to put forward the role of the parliamentary dimension in regional integration process by making an analysis on the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). This analysis, which is to be enriched with theoretical and empirical discussion, contributes to the proper understanding of the impact of the International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) on the evolution of the regional integration process. After presenting the strength and weaknesses of AIPA, the thesis argues that AIPA so far has played a limited role in the ASEAN integration process. The factors that paves the way for this limited role are analysed based on a three-dimensional framework. Firstly, structural factors, stemming from the nature of the IPIs as advisory bodies which take non-binding decisions mainly in the form of recommendations. Secondly, systemic factors such as the low level of democratic standards and the weakness of the parliamentary system and tradition in the ASEAN region. Lastly, operational factors in which institutional and operational capacity of AIPA is analysed based on certain criteria such as the ambiguity of relationship with ASEAN as AIPA is not defined as a legislative branch, institutional limitations such

as low budget and staff numbers of Secretariat. Finally, the thesis puts forward certain guidelines concerning the steps that should be taken in order to remedy the current status of AIPA and strengthen its role in ASEAN integration process.

Keywords: International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), regional integration, democratic deficit

ÖZ

BÖLGESEL ENTEGRASYON SÜRECİNDE PARLAMENTER BOYUTUN ROLÜ: ASEAN PARLAMENTOLAR ARASI ASAMBLESİ (AIPA) ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tezin amacı, ASEAN Parlamentolar Arası Asamblesi (AIPA) üzerine bir analiz yaparak bölgesel bütünleşme sürecinde parlamenter boyutun rolünü ortaya koymaktır. Teorik ve ampirik tartışmalarla zenginleştirilecek olan bu analiz, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların bölgesel bütünleşme sürecinin evrimi üzerindeki etkisinin doğru anlaşılmasına katkı sunacaktır. AIPA'nın güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini sunduktan sonra, tez AIPA'nın şu ana kadar ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinde sınırlı bir rol oynadığını savunmaktadır. Bu sınırlı role zemin hazırlayan faktörler üç boyutlu bir çerçeveye dayanarak analiz edilmektedir. İlk olarak, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların çoğunlukla tavsiye şeklinde bağlayıcı olmayan kararlar alan danışma organları olarak doğasından kaynaklanan yapısal faktörler. İkinci olarak, ASEAN bölgesindeki düşük demokratik standart seviyesi ve parlamenter sistem ve geleneğin zayıflığı gibi sistemik faktörler. Son olarak, AIPA'nın kurumsal ve operasyonel kapasitesinin, AIPA'nın bir yasama organı olarak tanımlanmaması nedeniyle ASEAN ile ilişkinin belirsizliği, Sekretaryanın düşük bütçesi ve personel sayısının azlığı gibi kurumsal sınırlamalar gibi kriterlere göre analiz edildiği operasyonel faktörler. Son olarak tez, AIPA'nın mevcut durumunu düzeltmek ve

ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü güçlendirmek için atılması gereken adımlara ilişkin ilkeleri ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, Güneydoğu Asya Ülkeleri Birliği (ASEAN), ASEAN Parlamentolar Arası Asamblesi (AIPA), bölgesel entegrasyon, demokrasi açığı

To my mother…

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THE LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	: ASEAN Economic Community
AFTA	: ASEAN Free Trade Area
AICHR	: ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Right
AIPA	: ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
AIPACODD	: AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs
AIPO	: ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization
APSC	: ASEAN Political-Security Community
ASCC	: ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
APF	: ASEAN Peoples Forum
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	: African Union
CPA	: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
ECOWAS	: Economic Community of West African States
EU	: European Union
GOPAC	: Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption
GRINGO	: Government Run/Inspired NGO
IGO	: Intergovernmental Organization
IPI	: International Parliamentary Institution
IPU	: Inter-Parliamentary Union
MERCOSUR	: Southern Common Market
NAFTA	: North American Free Trade Agreement
PACE	: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PARLATINO	: Latin American Parliament
TPA	: Transnational Parliamentary Assembly
TURKPA	: Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States
WAIPA	: Women Parliamentarians of AIPA
YPA	: Young Parliamentarians of AIPA

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although the number of International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) has increased in the post-World War II period and especially after the end of the Cold War, they have not received the attention they deserve as a unit of analysis in the International Relations discipline.

The aim of this thesis is to put forward the role of the parliamentary dimension in regional integration process by making an analysis on the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) as a case study. This analysis, which is to be enriched with theoretical and empirical discussion, will contribute to the proper understanding of the role of the International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) on the evolution of the regional integration process.

1.1. Research Problem

Our world has experienced a phenomenon of regionalization that commenced after World War II and gained momentum following the conclusion of the Cold War. During this evolution, regional organizations emerged, yet they confronted the challenge of a democratic deficit. In response, these organizations chose to incorporate International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) into their frameworks to address this deficit and enhance their legitimacy among the public by adding a parliamentary aspect to regional integration efforts. Nevertheless, the function of IPIs in the context of regional integration remains a significant yet frequently overlooked topic in contemporary International Relations literature. Consequently, it is both relevant and necessary to explore the characteristics, structure, organization, and functions of IPIs, alongside their unique role in regional integration processes, within the scope of this thesis.

1.2. Research Questions

The main research questions that guide this PhD project is as follows: What is International Parliamentary Institution (IPI)? Why regional organizations establish IPIs? What specific functions are foreseen for the IPIs in regional integration process? What role do IPIs play in the regional integration processes? To what extent do IPIs fulfil these roles? How do IR theories explain the role of IPIs in the regional integration process? What are the peculiar characteristics of the ASEAN integration process? What role does AIPA play in the ASEAN integration process? To what extent does AIPA fulfil the role foreseen for the IPIs? What are the main reasons for the limited role of AIPA in the ASEAN integration process? How can AIPA's limited role be explained with reference to IR theories on regional integration and IPIs?

After presenting the strength and weaknesses of AIPA throughout this study, it will be argued that AIPA so far has played a limited role in the ASEAN integration process. Limited role of AIPA will be analysed based on a three-dimensional framework: Structural factors, stemming from the nature of the IPIs i.e. IPIs as advisory bodies issue non-binding recommendations. Systemic factors i.e. low level of democratic maturity of the ASEAN region when compared to other regions. Operational factors in which institutional and operational capacity of AIPA will be analyzed based on certain criteria such as the ambiguity of relationship with ASEAN as it is not defined as its legislative branch, institutional weaknesses including the lack of an adequate budget and low number of personnel at the Secretariat.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

In this part, important concepts that are directly related with the current study will be put forward and analysed in order to underline their specific characteristics and relevance.

1.3.1. Regionalism, Regionalization and Regional Integration

The notions of regionalism, regionalization, and regional integration are recognized as significant yet contentious concepts. Fawcett and Gandois provide a valuable

differentiation among these terms: they characterize regionalism as a "political initiative aimed at the creation of regions", regionalization as a "process of region formation that can occur organically" and regional integration as a "more extensive and intricate process involving economic and social change" (Fawcett and Gandois, 2010). Additionally, integration can be defined as the process through which states create institutions that are anticipated to yield greater future benefits and lower costs compared to what could be achieved without such institutions, ultimately enhancing efficiency and security (Haas, 1968). More specifically, regionalism encompasses a set of ideas, principles, and concrete objectives aimed at establishing, maintaining, or transforming the distribution of wealth, security, peace, and development within a specific region. It represents the aspiration of various stakeholders to align themselves within a defined regional context. In contrast, regionalization denotes the empirical process characterized by a transition within a particular geographical area from relative diversity and lack of collaboration to enhanced cooperation, integration, convergence, complementarity, and shared identity across multiple domains, including politics, culture, security, and economic growth (Öjendal, 2001, p.10).

Generally, regionalism refers to a government-driven effort that involves the creation of specific institutions and strategies aimed at supporting a designated geographic region. As such, regionalism is characterized as a systematic, top-down approach where governments, along with sub-national and non-state actors, collaborate on agreements and actions within a particular region of the world. In contrast, regionalization describes the manner in which individuals and groups connect a loosely defined geographic space through various patterns of transnational interactions. These interactions may include familial relationships, migration trends, economic exchanges, and cross-border media consumption, among others. In other words, regionalization is primarily a decentralized, complex, and often unintentional process, differentiating it from the more structured concept of regionalism (Beeson and Stubbs, 2012, p.1).

The term 'regional integration', on the other hand, describes the process through which countries within a specific geographical region come together to unify their

institutions, political frameworks, and economic systems, thereby forming a cohesive region. This process involves establishing agreements, unions, and larger-scale frameworks that facilitate coordination and collaboration among member nations. The primary objective of regional integration is to encourage economic growth, social advancement, political stability, and overall unity among the participating countries. Examples of basic forms of regional integration include free trade areas and common markets, while more advanced forms encompass monetary and political unions. The extent of integration varies based on the differing goals, responsibilities, and interests of the member states. To create an institution that aligns policies across various sectors, each nation must relinquish a degree of its sovereignty.

Regional integration is distinct from regional cooperation, which focuses on enhancing collaboration on specific issues among two or more nations without necessitating alterations in their behaviors. A key aim of regional integration is to foster collaboration among the participating states on various areas including political, social, and economic dimensions. Notable examples of regional integration organizations that represent different regions globally include the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

One might argue that as globalization intensifies, the importance of regional integration becomes increasingly pronounced. The influences of globalization and the rising inclination towards free trade agreements have led many countries to show a greater interest in forming integrated unions. Consequently, numerous nations are currently engaged in negotiations to establish various agreements aimed at promoting integration. It is essential to recognize that various regions may exhibit unique characteristics in their integration processes. Each integration effort is shaped by the specific objectives, priorities, and circumstances of the nations involved, as well as the distinctive traits of the surrounding environment.

Börzel maintains that regional cooperation among governments and regional integration can be seen as two ends of a spectrum that illustrates regionalism.

According to this line of argument, regional cooperation involves the collective exercise of state-based political authority within international frameworks to tackle shared challenges related to political, economic, or security issues. Conversely, regional integration focuses on creating supranational organizations empowered to make decisions that are binding on all member states (Börzel, 2011, p.10).

As far as the subject matter of the notion of regionalism is concerned, a wide array of interpretations has been proposed. However, it's generally accepted that there is a lack of universally accepted definition regarding what constitutes a region. However, most scholars would agree that a region entails some form of geographical proximity and contiguity alongside mutual interdependence. Additionally, some theorists might suggest including elements such as cultural homogeneity, a sense of community or the concept of regionness. Therefore, regionalism pertains to the processes and frameworks involved in building regions through enhanced economic, political, security, and socio-cultural connections among states and societies situated in close geographical proximity. In political science discourse, regionalism is frequently used interchangeably with concepts such as regional cooperation and regional integration; these can be viewed as two ends on a spectrum along which variations in regionalism can occur (Börzel, 2011, p.5).

As it is important to explore the intellectual roots and defining characteristics of academic debates throughout different historical epochs, rather than merely categorizing distinct phases of regionalism in a linear fashion, Söderbaum evaluates the development of regionalism scholarship in four stages: early concepts, traditional regionalism, contemporary regionalism and comparative regionalism (Söderbaum, 2015, p.5).

When it comes to the distinction between old and new regionalism, it's argued that the roots of old regionalism go back to the end of the Second World War. Old regionalism is characterized by being less theoretical, organized, and normative compared to new regionalism. (Costa, Dri, and Stavridis, 2013, p.6) In this sense, old regionalism has been criticised for its narrow focus on economic and financial integration, its strong influence from European integration processes, an excessive

emphasis on formal institutionalization, and its ties to the Cold War dynamics. In contrast, new regionalism represents a more inclusive form that arose in response to globalization after the Cold War era; it is characterized by an increasing array of both state and non-state participants including parliaments and civil society, operating across various levels and borders. This perspective also underscores the importance of informal modes of integration as equally crucial as formal institutional frameworks (Söderbaum, 2008).

It is generally claimed that in new regionalism where a 'bottom-up' methodology is favored over a 'top-down' one; non-governmental actors have an important role within civil society. Unlike assertions of neo-realists that regionalization was confined to interactions among heads of state or high-level officials like ministers or diplomats, it encompasses diverse public organizations at multiple levels including legislative bodies (Costa, Dri, and Stavridis, 2013, pp.6-7).

One of the most striking arguments of the new regionalism as far as this PhD study is concerned is its proposition that the regions should not be viewed as predetermined entities or formal organizations; instead, they emerge and evolve through the dynamics of global change. (Hettne, Inotai, and Sunkel, 1999, p.xv) Thus, new regionalism is characterized by a multifaceted approach to integration that encompasses economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. This perspective extends beyond merely establishing region-specific free trade agreements or security pacts; rather, it places significant emphasis on fostering regional unity and identity (Hettne, Inotai, and Sunkel, 1999, p.xvi).

A few key distinctions between 'old' and 'new' regionalism include the observation that contemporary regionalization efforts are increasingly driven from grassroots levels rather than imposed from above. Additionally, while economic motivations persist, political, social and environmental concerns and security challenges also compel nations and communities to collaborate within innovative regional frameworks.

Contemporary regional initiatives involve a diverse array of actors beyond just nation-states; various institutions, organizations, and movements play integral roles.

Moreover, new regionalism tends to be outward-looking rather than inward-focused which illustrates the heightened interdependence in the global world. The emergence of new regionalism within a multipolar global landscape, in contrast to the previous bipolar structure, is a key characteristic that sets it apart from the previous version. (Hettne, Inotai, and Sunkel, 1999, p.xvii).

Some researchers differentiate between two separate waves or generations of regional agreements starting with the end of World War II. The first generation, often referred to as old regionalism, can be characterized as an economic integration process primarily driven by government initiatives (Cofelice, 2012b, p.279). Hettne, on the other hand, characterizes the second generation of regional integration, termed 'new regionalism', as a multifaceted integration approach that incorporates political, social, and cultural components extending beyond mere security alliances or free trade agreements within regions where the central political aspiration appears to be fostering regional cohesion and identity. This second generation retains significance in its political dimension, which includes justice, culture, social issues, and identity. Involvement of non-state actors at both national and regional levels; multilevel governance, a robust international legal structure; and collaboration across various domains encompassing globally recognized values such as human rights, security, development, and environmental sustainability have also been largely associated with new regionalism (Cofelice, 2012b, p.280).

When it comes to the theoretical approaches towards regionalism, members of the constructivist school of thought highlight that regions should not be presumed to exist inherently. This perspective significantly contrasts with conventional views that regard regions as fundamentally defined entities. From this standpoint, every territory is socially constructed and thus subject to political negotiation. The emphasis lies on how political actors perceive and utilize concepts associated with 'regionness' along with the notion of a region itself. Consequently, the challenge shifts from simply detailing a specific array of activities within an established region or regional framework to understanding and elucidating the processes through which regions are formed and solidified (De Lombaerde, Söderbaum, Van Langenhove and Baert, 2010, pp.738-739).

In line with this constructivist understanding, it is argued that the dynamics of Southeast Asian regionalism can be interpreted not only through the lens of great-power relations but also by considering ideational influences such as norms and identity politics. While norms and identity are not the sole factors shaping Southeast Asian regionalism, they represent a crucial element in its development. The examination of security order in Southeast Asia is better served by focusing on the notion of community rather than merely on regime dynamics or the balance of power. Thus, regionalism in Southeast Asia should not be viewed as a mere adjunct to power politics; instead, it represents a potentially transformative force. A comprehensive understanding of the regional order in Southeast Asia necessitates an awareness of norms, identity, and institutional development (Acharya, 2005, pp.97).

Acharya points out to an important difference between regional identity as a tangible reality and regional identity as an ongoing pursuit by distinguishing between 'identity as being' and 'identity in the making.' According to him although Southeast Asia has yet to attain a permanent form of regional identity, there has been a notable and intentional movement towards establishing such an identity, particularly since the inception of ASEAN. In this context, exploring the process of building identity within Southeast Asian regionalism rather than taking it for granted would be a more meaningful attitude in order to grasp the pecularities of the region (Acharya, 2005, p.104).

Ba proposes that regionalism in Southeast Asia has manifested quite differently compared to its counterparts in other parts of the world as shared historical experiences have profoundly influenced the understanding of regional cooperation by the founding members of ASEAN and continue to shape their interactions. Regionalism in Southeast Asia in this regard has been designed not only to reinforce but also to protect the power, legitimacy, and resources of its member states by safeguarding their nominal sovereignty rather than transcending it (Ba, 2018, p.148).

New regionalism views regions as entities that are constructed and transformed amid global changes, rather than merely as formal organizations or static entities. This perspective emphasizes the dynamic nature of regions, highlighting their capacity for

evolution and adaptation. Regionalism is understood to include various aspects of integration, such as political, cultural, economic, and social factors. Consequently, this broader understanding extends beyond merely forming security arrangements or establishing free trade agreements. A key aim of regionalism in this regard is to cultivate a mentality of regional identity and unity, often referred to as 'region-building' (Farrell, Hettne and van Langenhove, 2005, p.8).

According to Cofelice, while IPIs are not significantly involved in old regionalism and it is uncommon to incorporate a parliamentary dimension and ascribe an active role to IPIs in the regional integration processes, new regionalism recognizes the significance of parliamentary input through the participation of parliamentarians in the integration process. New regionalism initiatives have increasingly been accompanied by a simultaneous trend toward regional parliamentarization efforts. Thus, IPIs have become increasingly central to the processes of regional integration, attracting greater attention from scholars within the International Relations (IR) discipline regarding their structure and roles in the era of new regionalism (Cofelice, 2012b, p.281).

1.3.2. Parliamentary Diplomacy

Diplomacy is generally defined as the process of dialogue and negotiation through which states manage their relationships and pursue objectives without resorting to war. Diplomacy, an essential component of any international system, has changed dramatically throughout time because it needs a variety of networks, channels, actors and agents to function more effectively. The modern world's diplomatic environment is more complex due to the presence of numerous non-state players, international organizations and other groups. Furthermore, participation in foreign relations by lawmakers and other parliamentary organizations has increased. The concept and practice of diplomacy have been significantly impacted by this move towards a more parliamentary-focused global system; there is now more parliamentary involvement at the nation-state level, a proliferation of parliamentary institutions worldwide, and an expansion of the scope of parliamentary diplomacy.

The term parliamentary diplomacy refers to the various channels and methods employed by parliamentary actors to exert influence over other countries. (De Boer and Weisglas, 2007, 93–94) It also encompasses the wide range of international activities undertaken by members of parliament to foster mutual understanding among countries, enhance governmental oversight, better represent their constituents, and bolster the democratic legitimacy of inter-governmental institutions (Goinard, 2020, p. 114).

One unique role that parliaments around the world play in modern times is parliamentary diplomacy. It is primarily unrestricted by national and international legislative frameworks, having arisen from the real political activity of lawmakers. Consequently, the political and informal aspects of parliamentary diplomacy are what define it most. According to Stavridis and Jancic, this idea is likewise relatively fresh in terms of theoretical investigation and policy development (Stavridis and Jancic, 2016).

An important study undertaken by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world's oldest international parliamentary organization established in 1889, puts forward that parliamentary diplomacy encompasses a wide array of activities such as forming inter-parliamentary cooperation agreements to enhance bilateral relations, organizing regular meetings and visits between parliamentarians focused on conflict resolution, trust-building, and knowledge exchange, creating friendship groups and temporary committees, facilitating the sending and receiving of parliamentary delegations and engaging in multilateral inter-parliamentary organizations and conferences particularly the IPIs (IPU, 2005, p.8).

Jancic argues that parliamentary diplomacy, in its broadest definition, can be described as the individual or collective efforts by parliamentarians aimed at "catalyzing, facilitating, and reinforcing the constitutional roles of parliaments through dialogues among peers on numerous pressing policy issues across various continents and governance levels" (Jancic, 2012). While socialization among parliamentarians occurs at multiple levels from personal connections to institutional collaborations, IPIs serve as a channel between executive branches and differing public opinions and civil society entities. (Stavridis, 2021).

It is also argued that parliamentary diplomacy highlights a notable increase in the number of international or transnational parliamentary organizations and a broader engagement of parliamentary entities in global and regional matters which is driven mainly by the democratization of political systems and the integration of foreign policy into domestic agendas (Jancic, 2012, p.112).

As far as the current study is concerned, it is significant to emphasize that parliamentary diplomacy is in a way a generic term covering all sorts of activites of the parliaments and parliamentarians in foreign policy realm including the participation in the IPIs. Thus, establishment and functioning of the IPIs constitute an important and indispendable element of parliamentary diplomacy operating in a multilateral context.

1.3.3. International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs)

International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) are defined as:

> institutions in which parliamentarians co-operate with a view to formulating their interests, adopting decisions, strategies or programs, which they implement or promote, formally and informally, in interactions with other actors, by various means such as persuasion, advocacy or institutional pressure (Šabič, 2008a, p.258).

IPIs have become a substantial element of the regional integration processes especially after the World War II and in the post-Cold War era. As parliamentary assemblies, platforms and networks demonstrate distinct features in terms of institutional and organizational structures, rules and procedures, legal status, membership, resources, activities and powers; their roles in the regional integration process begin to receive increasing attention in the recent IR literature. The next chapter presents a more detailed analysis of the establishment, categorization and functions of the IPIs.

1.4. Theoretical Perspective

This thesis utilizes sociological institutionalism as its theoretical framework to analyze the formation and function of AIPA within the context of ASEAN

integration. The central premise of sociological institutionalism posits that the institutional context in which organizations operate is significant, as it provides both material resources necessary for action and the legitimacy that grants authority (Weaver, 2008: Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). This perspective highlights the importance of norms, rules, and culture in shaping not only behaviors but also the identities and self-perceptions of actors involved. In contrast to rational choice institutionalism, which asserts that political actors make decisions based on rational responses to their environment while primarily seeking to maximize utility (Weaver, 2008), sociological institutionalism views actors as social agents whose actions are influenced by cultural specifics and constructed around notions of appropriateness (March and Olsen, 1998; Schmidt, 2014; Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). Consequently, sociological institutionalism offers an endogenous perspective on the preferences, interests, and actions of political actors through a detailed exploration of discourse, myth, and ceremonial practices within organizations which provides a convenient argumentation in order to understand not only the motives behind the establishment of AIPA but also its limited role in ASEAN integration process. Norm diffusion theory will also be utilized in analysing various aspects of the establishment and role of AIPA which will be discussed comprehensively in the fifth chapter.

1.5. Literature Review

Schimmelfennig et al aim to investigate why international organizations establish IPIs but deny them the necessary institutional authority by pointing to the lack of power of IPIs apart from an advisory role vis-à-vis the executive branch. They argue that IPIs serve as a tool for strategic legitimacy as governments aim to guarantee that the executive organizations are perceived as democratically legitimate by creating IPIs that resemble domestic parliaments. They assert that international organizations set up IPIs in order to seem as though they are democratically governed (Schimmelfennig et al, 2021).

In the work by Cofelice (Coefelice, 2019) the conception and measurement of the IPIs, as well as their function in guaranteeing the democratic accountability of

regional international organizations are presented in an innovative and theoretically supported manner. The book accomplishes its mandate through a comparative study of the founding, development, institutional structure, supervision, and policymaking roles of IPIs from various parts of the world including Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Cofelice puts forward the role of IPIs on the decision-making process of regional bodies and explores the circumstances under which parliamentary institutions are anticipated to increase their influence. Despite the increasing attention being paid to IPIs in IR literature, there is still a gap that needs to be filled. Cofelice's work fills this gap by characterizing, evaluating, and elucidating the empowerment of these institutions—which vary greatly in terms of their roles, competencies, and composition. Following a discussion and evaluation of the institutional characteristics, authorities, and functions of IPIs, such as their creation, structure, and legitimation, the primary roles of the IPIs—consultative, oversight, appointment, legislative, and budgetary—are examined to determine the extent of their ability to impact regional organizations' decision-making process. Even while the concepts of 'people-centeredness' and 'people-drivenness' have been more prevalent in the core values and goals of regional organizations, particularly after the end of the Cold War, a rhetoric-reality gap affects most of them as the wishes of the public are not taken into consideration in an effective manner.

Costa et al (Costa et al, 2013) refer to restricted nature of the existing literature on IPIs as IR scholars paid traditionally little interest due to the fact that parliamentary organizations present limitations in terms of assertive power and enforcement mechanisms. Basicly three main causes have been identified for the proliferation of IPIs especially with the end of the Cold War i.e. expansion of international relations, democratization all over the world and technological advances and innovations particularly in communications. They present a two-fold argument for the introduction of the parliamentary dimension i.e. the need for a better involvement of citizens in regional integration processes and the call for a greater legitimization of regional integration institutions by their growing parliamentarization with the introduction of checks and balances. They define IPIs as "international institutions of a parliamentary nature, whether legislative or consultative, which meet on a regular basis and in which members are selected either from their national legislatures or

elected by the citizens of member states". (Costa et al, 2013) A regional parliamentary institution in this sense can be defined as "a transnational parliamentary body with a geographical basis, serving the goals of a regional organization or a regional policy with which it is often, but not always, institutionally linked". Costa et al mainly concentrates on the definition and purpose of IPIs in addition to the reasons, sources, format and growth of IPIs and their influence on regional integration.

Cutler defines an IPI as a:

> regular forum for multilateral deliberations on an established basis of an either legislative or consultative nature, either attached to an international organization or itself constituting one, in which at least three states are represented by parliamentarians (…) who are either selected by national legislatures in a self-determined manner or popularly elected by electorates of the member states. (Cutler, 2006)

Cutler further identifies four types of IPIs i.e. congress, assembly, parliament and legislature. These types refer to stages of institutional development, not to the specific names that individual IPIs may have. The three transitions between succeeding pairs of types may be referred to as initiation, take-off and spill-over.

Šabič, on the other hand, uses a broader definition of IPIs as:

> institutions in which parliamentarians co-operate with a view to formulating their interests, adopting decisions, strategies or programs, which they implement or promote, formally and informally, in interactions with other actors, by various means such as persuasion, advocacy or institutional pressure (Šabič, 2008).

Šabič argues that one can group IPIs into two broad categories either as 'international parliamentary organs' (IPOs), that is organs of international governmental organizations composed of parliamentarians (e.g. the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), or as 'international parliamentary associations' (IPAs), irrespective of how they are constituted and to what extent the appointment reflects the political spectrum in home parliaments. Based on the rapid expansion of the IPIs over the past several decades and their potential to become a force for more open and

democratic global government, Sabic highlights the origin and growth of IPIs as a phenomenon that needs to be thoroughly examined.

Kraft-Kasack uses the term 'Transnational Parliamentary Assemblies (TPAs)' and apply nine criteria covering various functions to present an empirically-grounded typology which differentiates between parliaments, assemblies and conferences. Kraft-Kasack mentions that all these three types of parliamentary forms beyond the nation-state already exist and lists and reviews them according to those criteria by utilizing her previous work dated 2005 as well as additional interviewing sources (Kraft-Kasack, 2008).

Kissling takes a different, normative, approach as its main objective is to show the need for a global parliamentary assembly. Irrespective of the validity of such a claim, her study also attempts to offer a categorization of the international presence of parliamentary institutions. Kissling differentiates between four or five types, according to whether one counts her first two categories as one or two. The new acronym she introduces is the 'GRINGOs', which she defines as "Government Run/Inspired NGOs". Then come what the author defines as "international or regional parliamentary organizations" and "international or regional specialized agencies" respectively. The last category is made of "parliamentary organs of international or regional organizations" (Kissling, 2011).

The originality of Cofelice resides in using powers and not only origins, structure and functions as criteria for categorizing IPIs. Cofelice comes up with three distinct groupings which this thesis adopts at its cetegorical orientation of the analysis of the IPIs. First category refers to 'Parliamentary Organs' as the highest level with most powers such as the European Parliament; 'Parliamentary Organizations' with mainly deliberative and consultative powers and 'Parliamentary Networks' with mainly lobbying and confidence-building powers. Cofelice also brings in additional interesting input as his work tries to assess why some IPIs are empowered and others not (Cofelice, 2011).

According to Rocabert et al. (Rocabert et al., 2019), there is a dearth of research on the establishment of legislative bodies, despite the fact that IPIs are now a well-

established aspect of international politics. They postulate that general-purpose international organizations (IOs) create and sustain legislative bodies that meet their demands for legitimacy by distinguishing between them and task-specific IOs.
Cutler defines IPIs as:

> international institutions of a parliamentary nature, whether legislative or consultative having three or more-member states (the parliamentarians being either selected from national legislatures or popularly elected by the electorates of the member states) and which is a regular forum for multilateral deliberations on an established basis, either attached to an international organization or itself constituting one (Cutler, 2001).

Cutler then surveys the growth of IPIs over three international systems as the Cold War system from 1947 until 1973; the system of multilateral interdependence from 1974 to 1991; and the international transition from 1992 until the end of the century (Cutler, 2001).

De Puig offers a useful description of most of the existing IPIs as a relatively new development that reflects in part the evolution of the world system. He thus emphasizes the importance of "external factors" in their developments and distinguishes four phases "the first experiences" (mainly of the IPU) and the new era of emerging "supra-state parliamentary assemblies" immediately "after the war"; the period of the two "blocs"; the "after the wall" phase and finally the current "one world" era, i.e. globalization. His historical approach is useful in that it shows an evolution of the whole process of parliamentarization but it falls into the trap of presenting it as merely a reaction to the geopolitics and historical context of each time period. Thus, the impact of those IPIs is not assessed; he overemphasizes the peculiarities of the European Parliament and falls into the the risk of imitation (De Puig, 2008).

Kissling offers a comprehensive analysis of IPIs as their number and competences are steadily increasing without substantive comparative investigations. She argues that IPIs increasingly fulfill genuine parliamentary oversight functions and has an increasing potential to contribute to overcoming democracy deficits at both regional and global levels (Kissling, 2011).

Börzel points out the expansion of inter-state activities at the regional level in the post-Cold War era and focusses on processes and structures of state-led regionalism driven by the delegation of policies and political authority to regional institutions concentrating on the drivers, outcomes and internal effects of regionalism including the role of the IPIs in the whole process (Börzel, 2011).

Rüland argues that nation states outsource decision-making to the international arena as a consequence of the intensification of regional cooperation resulting in the accumulation of decision-making on important policy issues in the hands of experts and bureaucrats, who can no longer be effectively held accountable by the duly legitimated national representative bodies. The public resents this lack of transparence and in order to mitigate this democracy deficit and to strengthen their legitimacy, many regional organizations – like international institutions in general – have created channels for civil society participation and parliamentary forums. Thus, ASEAN member states set up the ASEAN-Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) as the only forum associated with one of Asia's numerous regional organizations. In his seminal work, Rüland first contextualizes AIPA in Southeast Asia's regionalism, then briefly outlines AIPA's organizational structure and working procedures. Then he concentrates on the question of which functions AIPA performs for regional integration in Southeast Asia. He contends that AIPA has only somewhat democratized Southeast Asian regionalism since it is deeply ingrained in ASEAN's state corporatist ethos of interest representation. Rüland underlines that AIPA's ability to help ASEAN become a people-centered organization rather than a mostly state-centric and elitist one, a shift that even ASEAN officials believe is essential to boosting the association's legitimacy, is relatively modest in the absence of significant reforms (Rüland, 2011).

Acharya's central thesis in *The Quest for Identity* posits that regions are neither predetermined by geography nor culturally fixed. Acharya emphasizes that the construction of regions is inherently social and political; akin to nationalism and nation-states, regions can be 'imagined' and created. Accordingly, an identity-oriented approach transcends mere physical or structural limitations that define regional identity. Acharya's seminal work probes into Southeast Asia's international

relations by exploring not only the commonalities among its member states (the unity-in-diversity framework) but also how these nations, particularly their elites, engaged in socialization within an institutional framework i.e. ASEAN, thereby collectively 'imagining' themselves as part of a unique region (Acharya, 2000).

1.6. Contribution of the Study

The role, which IPIs have played and will play in regional integration process, remains underexplored within the discipline of IR. While IPIs increasingly take part in international governance structures, the number of scholarly works dedicated to understanding their functions, influence, and impact remains relatively limited. There are a few studies dealing with IPIs, and most of them have been conducted within the European and African regions. But the general body of literature still mostly concentrates on more traditional aspects of international organizations, leaving the parliamentary dimension of regional integration widely unaddressed. The case of IPIs in Asia, with a particular emphasis on the role played by the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, is especially underexamined. In the broader context of research into IPIs, rare are the studies devoted to AIPA. AIPA has a clear mandate and function in promoting parliamentary diplomacy and facilitating dialogue among ASEAN member states. Apart from marginal mentions of the AIPA in various book chapters on IPIs, there is no comprehensive or focused study yet made to deeply consider its institutional characteristics, evolution, and role in the ASEAN regional integration process. This latter gap is even more obvious when considering the whole academic work done in Türkiye; no post-graduate thesis or publication so far has researched systematically the role of IPIs, let alone that of AIPA, in the framework of ASEAN integration. It is with this in mind that the current study seeks to fill this deficiency by providing an in-depth analysis of IPIs themselves, their contribution to regional integration, and-most importantly-the role played within ASEAN by AIPA. The study will also draw on the author's academic and professional background to provide a well-rounded and informed analysis of the IPIs. By drawing on both theoretical knowledge and practical experience, the study will present a comprehensive overview of AIPA's role in ASEAN and light up its institutional strengths, limitations, and possible future developments. Such a contribution will be

valuable for scholars specializing in regional integration, parliamentary diplomacy, and global governance, but also for policymakers and practitioners involved in ASEAN's integration process. In the case of this research, it would fill in the important literature gap on IPIs that already exists and therefore constitute an urgent need for a study to be carried out on the role of AIPA in the process of integration of ASEAN, thus contributing to the scholarly discourse in Türkiye. The study shall go further to develop an in-depth and empirically grounded analysis that will add to the current state of knowledge regarding the evolving role that IPIs play within regional governance, while it nurtures a deeper appreciation for the parliamentary dimension in global and regional integration efforts. The research also aims to explain the involvement of parliamentary diplomacy in regional governance structures, especially in the Southeast Asia. Focusing on AIPA, it will add to the growing recognition of IPIs as critical players in regional integration and therefore offer a fresh perspective on the governance mechanisms at ASEAN.

This study will not only fill in an important academic lacuna but also provide policymakers in ASEAN member states with some practical use material. Proposed research has therefore become vital, given the broader influence of parliamentary bodies in setting regional policies and considering the fact that multi-dimensional understanding of AIPA's contributions to the process of ASEAN integration would possibly provide various inputs for shaping and influencing its institutional capacity and influence. Second, while ASEAN continues to grapple with multifaceted challenges in economic integration, security cooperation, and environmental sustainability, among others, the role of AIPA is indispensible in facilitating dialogue and consensus-building processes among member states. This study will go ahead to recommend ways AIPA could further strengthen its influence and impact in dealing with such regional challenges.

Another significant contribution that this research makes is from a comparative perspective. While the main focus will be on AIPA, other IPIs, such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament, The Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) and Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States

(TURKPA) will be drawn upon for parallel comparison. This work is intended to lend a deeper meaning to the question of how different IPIs operate within distinct regional contexts and, similarly, about the peculiar challenges and opportunities which IPIs face inside respective integration processes. This given study will try to draw a comparison of the structure and functions of AIPA with those of other IPIs, and explore the appropriateness of any given institutional features or strategies that could be applied to better strengthen the role of AIPA within ASEAN. Besides the academic and practical contributions, the present study also has relevance to the greater international relations and regionalism studies. Looked at from the parliamentary dimension of regional integration, it dares traditional state-centric models of international relations that have long dominated discourse. IPIs such as AIPA are representative of another kind of diplomacy, one that is anchored on dialogue, cooperation, and inclusivity, rather than the more rigid, government-driven approach. It will, therefore, add to the literature on how IPIs may influence international governance.

As already said, the scholarly benefits related to the added knowledge on the subject are numerous, but it is also practically important and shows how regional governance models can be further improved. This study therefore purports to give a critical analysis of the operations of AIPA, its relative strengths, and weaknesses, and consequently follow up with recommendations that could be considered for reform or improvement of AIPA's role within the greater ASEAN governance structure. Strengthening AIPA's capacities could imply a more effective parliamentary oversight function and increased democratic legitimacy in the regional integration project of ASEAN. This would also serve as the basis on which developing an understanding of how IPIs can evolve through time, especially in regions such as Southeast Asia, where regional integration is rather young and dynamic. As the emerging ASEAN continues to grow and adapt, so will its multitude of challenges; geopolitical shifts, economic uncertainty, and other transnational issues like climate change and public health-the role of such institutions as AIPA will become even more critical. Through the analysis of AIPA's evolution and its current role within ASEAN, this thesis will be able to provide some ideas of how the IPIs in other

regions might similarly adapt and strengthen their position within regional frameworks.

One of the unique contributions this study will make is in its focus on the scholarly discourse and understanding in Türkiye regarding IPIs, especially in relation to Southeast Asia. As Türkiye further develops its political and economic relations with ASEAN countries, the deeper understanding of governance structures in ASEAN, including AIPA, will be of inestimable value for the policymakers and scholars of Türkiye. This thesis tries to fill the gap that exists between Turkish academic endeavor and the international debate on IPIs so as to establish such a relationship for Türkiye's approach toward ASEAN in much more subtle and substantial detail. The current research will also serve as a touchstone for comparative studies on regionalism, taking into consideration the AIPA case in the integration process of ASEAN. It will provide a frame that explains how parliamentary institutions contribute to regional governance in varying contexts; hopefully, future studies on other regional organizations, such as the African Union or Mercosur, will be nourished by this evidence. In this respect, this study will help scholars and politicians to learn from both successes and failures of AIPA for better effectiveness of IPIs elsewhere in other regions. Finally, the study contributes to the broader debate about the nature of global governance. It does this by developing an argument which holds that a more fully inclusive approach to the conduct of global governance requires the recognition of the place of IPIs among other actors. Given global governance's increasingly complex and multi-layered nature, the potential of IPIs to facilitate international cooperation and dialogue cannot be underestimated. The research thus locates AIPA within this broader context and underlines the relevance of parliamentary diplomacy as a means to address the pressing challenges of global interest and foster more inclusive and accountable governance systems. Conclusively, the present thesis will develop an all-rounded analysis of the AIPA that will enrich the academic literature but also the practical policymaking in the field of regional integration, parliamentary diplomacy, and international relations. It will fill a significant lacuna in the study of IPIs, especially with respect to Southeast Asia, but at the same time, it would have something to say for other regional contexts. The specific focus of the study on AIPA will shed light on the role IPIs

play in setting up regional and global governance, and it will also put forward suggestions on how such institutions can be strengthened with a view to the challenges in the future.

1.7. Methodology

This PhD study will benefit from a qualitative method and interpretative approach throughout the study. Primary sources such as reports and resolutions of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly will be utilized. Semi structured interviews with the MPs from different member countries as well as diplomats from the AIPA Secretariat who have taken an important role during the process has been made on the occasion of my field visits to Jakarta in 2023 and 2024 and Laos in 2024 respectively. Analysis of the Charter and Statute as well as press releases and official declarations of ASEAN and AIPA will undoubtedly provide first-hand and valuable information in the analysis of the position of the two institutions vis-à-vis each other. I will also make use of vast academic literature such as books and journals on regional integration in general and Southeast Asia in particular together with the IPIs. I will limit my analysis on AIPA's role in ASEAN integration process for a specific time-frame i.e. 2007-2023 as the parliamentary dimension of ASEAN took its current institutional form in 2007. All in all, this PhD study is based on a range of primary sources. It uses the official statements, declarations and official publications of ASEAN and AIPA. Apart from the textual data, the thesis benefits from interviews conducted with policymakers and diplomats of AIPA. The secondary sources are the relevant journal articles, books, media reports and commentaries and web sources especially the official web pages of ASEAN and AIPA.

1.8. Structure of the thesis

This PhD study consists of six chapters. The first chapter gives detailed information on the design of the research which includes research problem, research questions, conceptual framework including the discussion of basic concepts such as regionalism, parliamentary diplomacy and International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs), literature review, methodology and contribution of the study to the literature.

The second chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the IPIs as the main axis of this study by evaluating its origins, establishment and purpose as far as their role in the regional integration processes is concerned. An in-depth analysis of the peculiarities of ASEAN as a regional organization will be evaluated at the third chapter which will facilitate the reader's understanding of the characteristics of Southeast Asian regionalism in a better way. The fourth chapter consists of detailed information on the formation, background, organization and activities of AIPA. Without having a comprehensive knowledge on the structure and functions of AIPA, it won't be possible to grasp its role and effectiveness in the ASEAN integration process in a thorough manner. Based on the information attained from this chapter, the fifth chapter will discuss in detail the functions and role of AIPA in ASEAN integration process. The last chapter will wrap-up the major findings of this study and offer suggestions concerning future studies on this subject.

CHAPTER 2

INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS (IPIs)

When examining the emergence of the International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs), one comes face to face with three questions. First question attempts to find out the rationale of the region makers in taking the trouble of establishing a regional parliament. Second question is a quest to analyse whether regional parliaments achieve their purposes or not. Last question aims to make a categorization of these entities based on their similarities and differencens. (Malamud, 2011, p.108) This chapter attempts to evaluate and examine the emergence, establishment, categorization and functions of the IPIs within this framework.

A specialized organization that convenes representatives of national parliaments or legislative bodies from various countries to facilitate parliamentary dialogue, cooperation, and decision-making on matters of shared interest among participating nations is commonly referred to as an International Parliamentary Institution (IPI).

IPIs are founded with the goals of advancing democratic government, fostering interparliamentary connections, facilitating legislative cooperation and using parliamentary diplomacy to address global issues. IPIs provide legislators a forum for conversation, idea sharing and collaboration on shared goals; frequently, they serve to enhance the efforts of intergovernmental organizations. IPIs' essential characteristics can be presented as follows:

Membership: National parliamentary delegations or individual lawmakers from member nations usually make up IPIs. Membership may be restricted to a particular region or group of countries, or it may be available to all countries as is the case for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) which consists of parliaments of 180 countries all over the world.

Functions: IPIs facilitate parliamentary diplomacy by providing a forum for lawmakers to discuss issues, exchange best practices and work together on legislation. They might also be involved in varous issues such as upholding the rule of law, human rights, and democratic procedures.

Organization: IPIs are governed by their own organs including the General Assembly, standing and ad-hoc committees and working groups, as well as specialized committees and an Executive Committee, among other bodies. These organs help in decision-making, organizing, and carrying out the institution's operations.

Decision-Making: On a range of topics, IPIs have the authority to adopt resolutions, declarations, or recommendations. Despite not having legal authority behind them, these rulings have political clout and can affect national legislative agendas and policies.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), ECOWAS Parliament, Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), and ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) are a few prominent examples of IPIs.

2.1. Historical Background

Sabic argues that the emergence and growth of IPIs is a phenomenon that came into existence in the post-World War II era. According to him, the evolution of IPIs can be described as a process that developed through three main waves. First wave covers the period from 1889 to 1945 as their origins can be traced back to the establishment of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889. The period between the end of the Second World War and the demise of the Berlin Wall. The proliferation of IPIs started after World War II and can be associated to the phenomenon of regional integration that includes parliaments as part of a regional internal process and the need for its legitimisation and democratic dimension. Third wave refers to the late 1980s and 1990s with the end of the Cold War as the most

important development in that the number of IPIs exhibited a rapid increase. The proliferation of the IPIs in this period is closely linked to major trends and developments in international relations such the decline of ideological walls, which no longer impeded inter-parliamentary cooperation; the processes of democratisation at national level and the processes of globalisation and international regional cooperation which necessitated a stronger parliamentary backing (Sabic, 2008).

This new stage is often referred to as 'new regionalism', defined by Hettne as a multidimensional form of integration which includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects with the primary political ambition of establishing regional coherence and identity which transcends the goal of creating regional-based free trade regimes or security alliances as is the case in 'old regionalism' (Cofelice, 2016, p.17-18).

Table 1. Evolution of IPIs

	1889-1940s	**1950s-1980s**	**1990s-onwards**
Related international processes and demands	Conflict resolution Peace Security	Old regionalism (internal legitimisation and democratic dimension)	Democratisation Globalisation New/Open regionalism
Exemplificative cases	Inter-Parliamentary Union	-Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe -North Atlantic Assembly (NATO Parliamentary Assembly) -Latin America Parliament	-European Parliament -Parlasur -East African Legislative Assembly -ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

(Cofelice, 2015, p.7)

Kissling presents a valuable of analysis which gives an important insight with regard to the role of the IPIs:

> IPIs introduce a democratic element into regional and global governance. Mostly, they are no longer just restricted to a mutual exchange on national internal practices, but are also concerned with the foreign policy of their states and with issues of a global scope that are on the agenda of regional or

> international governmental decision-making. The exponential growth of IPIs in recent years is remarkable, as is their increasing institutionalization and transformation from looser forms of cooperation to more influential, effective and genuine parliamentary bodies with a legal status in international law (Kissling, 2011, p.49).

The early 20th century saw significant development and diversification in the functions and forms of international parliamentary bodies. International parliamentary institutions (IPIs) have become increasingly important to regional integration processes throughout the world. It has been argued that in an era of globalization, national sovereignty has been weakened and no single nation-state has the ability to address issues on its own. Globalization has promoted the interdependence between countries, thereby making it more difficult to address the myriad of issues affecting the international community. It has become apparent that in an era of interdependence, countries must work together to promote common interests and IPIs have become an important aspect of international organizations.

IPIs were initially conceptualized in connection with the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) when it was founded in 1889. IPU was one of the most advanced and largest ones of the IPIs that existed before 1945. With the founding of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) following World War II, the first regional parliamentary integration process took place. Although their activities and roles are restricted, the numbers of the IPIs have increased during the Cold War era with the establishment of the Andean Parliament in 1979, the African Parliamentary Union in 1976, the Latin American Parliament in 1964, the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1974, the Central American Parliament in 1975, and the ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) in 1977.

The end of the Cold War witnessed a rapid increase in the number of the IPIs and a re-organization of the already established ones. For instance, the North Atlantic Assembly which was set up in 1955 has taken its current name of NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) in 1999. ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO), on the other hand, was re-named as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in 2007 (De Vrieze, 2015, p.14-15).

The post-World War II period has witnessed the prevelance of the Eurocentric approach in IR discipline with regard to the studies on IPIs, which prioritized the EU and the European Parliament as a unit of analysis. However, with the introduction of the comparative regionalization studies which enabled regions to be compared in relation to their roots, growth, structure and effectiveness, across time, space and forms of organisation, this Eurocentric approach has weakened with the contextualization of the role of the IPIs in the multilevel global governance and regionalisation processes throughout the world in various regions (Cofelice, 2019, p.6).

2.2. Definition and Categorization of the IPIs

The first efforts towards a definition of IPIs were made by the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments of the IPU, which adopted two reports on this topic during the 1980s. The second report submitted in 1989 introduced for the first time the term "international parliamentary institutions" as an umbrella definition to cover all categories of interparliamentary bodies (Cofelice, 2012a, p.7).

Dr. Robert Cutler provided an extensive definition of IPIs, with four distinct features:

> An IPI is an international institution that is (1.) a regular forum for multilateral deliberations on an established basis of an either legislative or consultative nature, (2.) either attached to an international organization or itself constituting one, (3.) in which at least three states are represented by parliamentarians, (4.) who are either selected by national legislatures in a self determined manner or popularly elected by electorates of the Member States (Cutler, 2006, p.83).

Professor Zlatko Sabic developed a definition of IPIs which is slightly broader. He sees IPIs as:

> institutions in which parliamentarians co-operate with a view to formulating their interests, adopting decisions, strategies or programs, which they implement or promote, formally and informally, in interactions with other actors, by various means such as persuasion, advocacy or institutional pressure (Šabič, 2008a, p.258).

When it comes to the categorization of the IPIs, it is envisaged that diverse legislative assemblies, platforms, and networks frequently exhibit distinct characteristics including institutional and organizational structures, regulations and protocols, legal standing, membership, assets, roles, and authority. Thus, a conceptual framework for classifying and describing the various parliamentary assemblies, platforms, and networks have been developed in order to analyse the IPIs in a structured manner.

Kissling, in this regard, takes a sophisticated approach in identifying four different categories based on the legal status, institutionalization level, independence, and powers of the parliamentary platforms:

> These categories are inter-parliamentary NGOs or networks of parliamentarians; international or regional parliamentary organizations; international or regional parliamentary specialized agencies; and parliamentary organs of international or regional organizations. The main differences between these four categories are:
> - Networks of parliamentarians bring together individual parliamentarians.
> - Parliamentary organizations are stand-alone institutions and are not part of any international or regional governmental system.
> - Parliamentary specialized agencies are to a limited extent integrated into and linked to an international governmental organization's system.
> - Parliamentary organs of international or regional organizations serve as the parliamentary arm of international, regional or supranational organizations (Kissling, 2011).

Networks of parliamentarians which form the first category are a kind of parliamentary collaboration made up of loosely structured institutions that connect legislators at the regional, supraregional and global levels. The network of parliamentarians differs from a platform that brings together delegations representing the parliament as an institution in that it is made up only of lawmakers as individuals not as part of their national delegations representing the parliaments in an official manner. The Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) are two notable instances (Kissling, 2011).

Conversely, parliamentary organizations are independent institutions that do not belong to any international or regional governmental framework and are not

subordinate to national governments. As such, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for them to establish any kind of supervision or legislative role in relation to international governmental organizations. Parliament, not the government, approves the founding act, which can be ratified as an international parliamentary treaty or as a straightforward decision made by parliaments worldwide. From a legal perspective, the most notable aspect of these organizations is that the majority of them have an international personality sui generis. MP membership is not individual; rather, membership is realized via parliamentary delegations. Parliamentary groups typically enjoy greater autonomy and flexibility when it comes to choosing their membership. The largest and the most prominent international parliamentary organization is the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (De Vrieze, 2015, p.17).

> In terms of their powers, international parliamentary organizations, generally have a deliberative capacity, consisting in the formulation of non-binding resolutions that at best can develop into soft law. Some international parliamentary organizations, although formally independent, have been establishing a form of working relationship with intergovernmental organizations. In these cases, they have acquired some sort of consultative and oversight functions: indeed, they can adopt non-binding resolutions, proposals or opinions addressed to governments or governmental organs (Cofelice, 2013, p.14).

Since international or regional parliamentary organizations are closely linked to the phenomena of regionalism and regional integration, they are widespread where these phenomena are more consolidated, namely in Europe, Latin America, and Africa. As the Council of Europe (CoE) became the first organisation to introduce a parliamentary dimension in 1949 and European Parliament (EP) was the first supra-national parliamentary institution to be elected by universal suffrage in 1979, Europe has demonstrated a notable performance in this process.

The third form of IPIs is the parliamentary specialized agencies. Many of the characteristics of parliamentary organizations that have been discussed above also apply to parliamentary specialized agencies, such as the international personality sui generis. Specialized agencies and parliamentary organizations differ primarily in that the former are partially integrated and connected to the framework of an international governmental body. This indicates that government resolutions frequently reference

them. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM); the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly, the ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) are a few examples. When it comes to their formation, the majority of specialized agencies are established through a resolution made by formally involved lawmakers or a proclamation issued by Speakers of Parliament whereas others such are established by means of an international parliamentary treaty.

Delegations of parliament from each state or area determine who is eligible to serve on specialized agencies. Every specialized agency is governed by laws, rules of procedure, governing bodies, and frequently has its own budget. Foreign policy matters, enhancement of the regional integration process and harmonization of legislation can be given as important goals of parliamentary specialised agencies. Specialized agencies in general lack the ability to co-decide with governmental bodies or to obtain legislative powers. Additionally, the majority of them lack the ability to initiate political-legislative or quasi-legislative measures that would result in regulations being enacted for the entire region. Resolutions, recommendations, declarations, opinions, decisions and appeals addressed to the inter-governmental organizations or directly to the national governments may be adopted by the parliamentary specialized agencies with an unbinding nature (De Vrieze, 2015, p.18).

Parliamentary organizations that function as the parliamentary organs of international, regional, or supranational organizations make up the fourth category of IPIs. The most notable examples are the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament. An international or regional organization's superior system includes the parliamentary institution, which is subservient to it. These parliamentary organizations have their own budget, organs and statutes. As such, a large number of these kinds of parliamentary institutions continue to operate as independent entities despite serving as parts of regional or international organizations. In terms of their ability to make rules and exercise supervision over international organizations, they are in a better position than parliamentary organizations and parliamentary specialized agencies. However, their

participation and role are limited with the lines determined by the inter-governmental organization (De Vrieze, 2015, p.18-19).

2.3. Functions and the Role of IPIs in Regional Integration Process

The question as to why regional organizations establish IPIs or as Malamud rightly pointed out by asking why they take this 'trouble' has been an important motivation for the study of IPIs in IR discipline. Regional organizations establish IPIs for several reasons especially to enhance the effectiveness, legitimacy, and democratic governance of regional integration processes. As Schermers and Blokker (1995:381) rightly pointed "since international organizations cannot be controlled effectively by national parliaments, the only conceivable solution is the establishment of international organs with the task of exercising political control over the executive." (Cutler, 2013, p.105) By strengthening parliamentary democracy these asamblies and their networks can contribute to the democratisation of international regimes. Although not being full parliamentary bodies, the parliamentary asamblies import several principles of parliamentary democracy into the realm of intergovernmental interaction. They provide for more transpareny, for more discussion, for more accountability and for more control of the decisions made in these organisations (Marschall, 2007, p.16).

With regard to the relationship between the IGOs and IPIs, Cofelice argues that:

> the affiliation to IGOs confers on these parliamentary bodies the capacity to be part and virtually influence inter-governmental decision making processes, and at the same time to acquire and develop a set of functions that somehow mirror the traditional ones exercised by legislatures at the national level, such as consultation, legislation, oversight on budget and the executive (Cofelice, 2015, p.17).

Cofelice puts forward the alternative strategies of IPIs in their attempt to overcome their weaknesses with regard to the legislative potential by stating that the IPIs:

> have generally tried to compensate the lack of legislative powers with additional, less traditional, functions, such as strengthening the ability of

> national parliamentarians to exercise oversight functions at home; lobbying governments to ratify international legal instruments; carrying out election observation and democratic technical assistance programmes; promoting confidence building, conflict resolution and human rights (Cofelice, 2016, p.19).

Peculiar characteristics of the international parliamentary organizations have been put forward by Cofelice by claiming that they:

> share the same functions of transnational networks of parliamentarians, especially in terms of technical assistance programmes and confidence building and parliamentary socialisation. However, being institutions where parliamentarians act in their official capacity, in addition to these basic functions they are also endowed with a general deliberative capability, consisting in the formulation of non-binding resolutions that at best can develop into soft law (i.e. declarations, recommendations etc.). Some of them can conclude international treaties and private law contracts; send election observation and fact-finding missions; receive petitions from citizens. Vis-à-vis the national level, some have specific functions dealing with the harmonisation of national legislations, including the possibility to adopt framework conventions (Cofelice, 2015, p.15).

Within the framework of this categorization, AIPA can ben located under this heading as an international parliamentary organization. AIPA, as an international parliamentary organization, adopts joint communiques at the end of the General Assemblies with a non-binding character. Moreover, AIPA hold meetings with the participation of the member parliaments in order to harmonize legislation and forms election observation missions on the occasion of the elections in member countries.

The next category, which comprises of the parliamentary organs of the IGOs, is defined by Cofelice as:

> as parliamentary branches of IGOs, established through an intergovernmental agreement, whose members may be appointed by national assemblies or directly elected to that office. In addition to the functions displayed by the previous categories, the affiliation to IGOs confers on these parliamentary bodies the capacity to be part and virtually influence inter-governmental decision-making processes, and at the same time to acquire and develop a set of functions that somehow mirror the traditional ones exercised by legislatures at the national level, such as consultation, legislation, oversight on budget and the executive. Thus, for instance, the European Parliament can

adopt a motion of censure on the activities of the European Commission (Cofelice, 2015, pp.15-17).

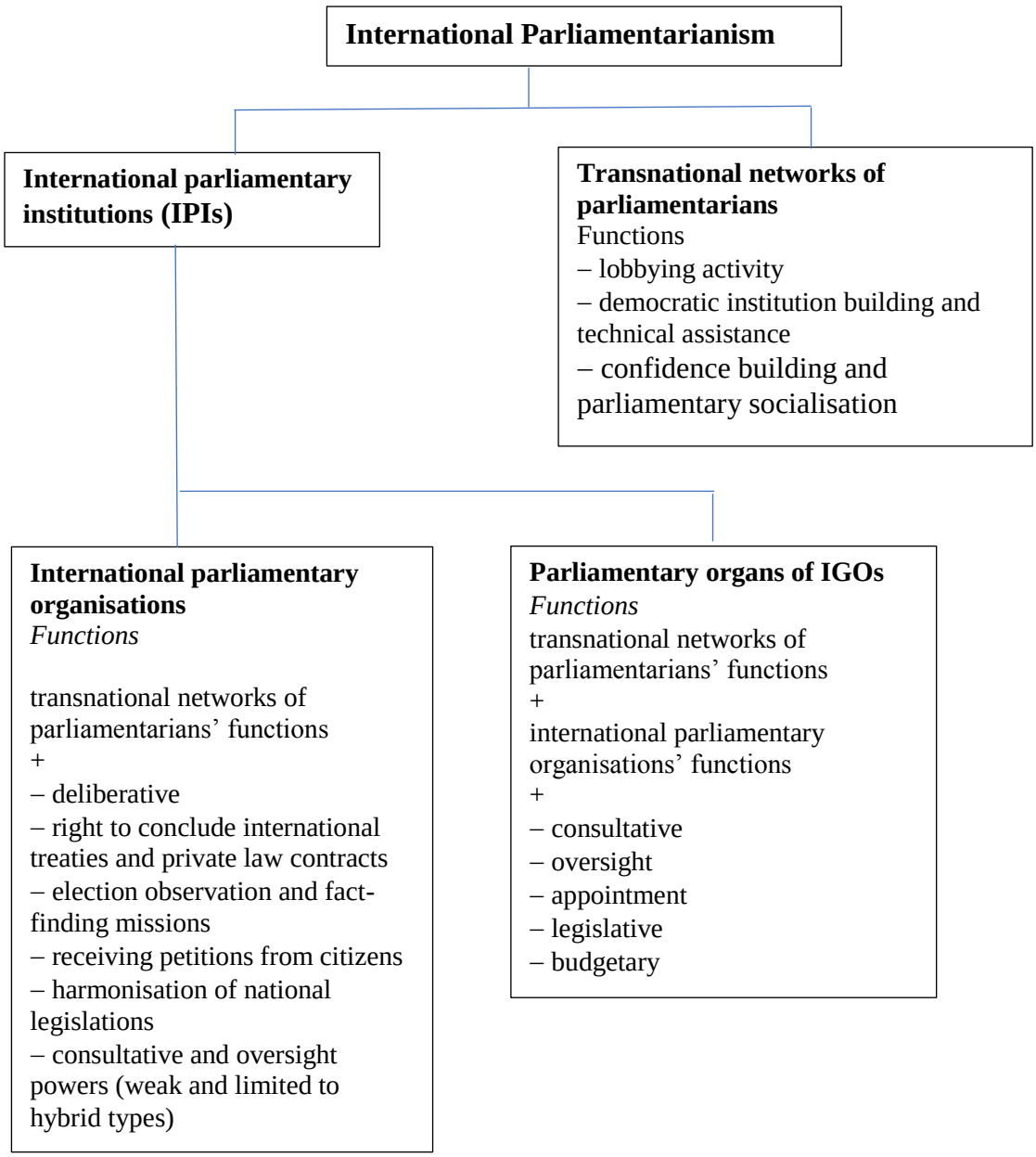

Figure 1. Categories and functions of international parliamentarianism (Cofelice, 2015, p.20)

Cofelice underlines the strengthening of the position and role of the IPIs by stating that:

> the IPIs have become an essential component in the institutional architecture of international organisations. On the one hand, the creation of new

> intergovernmental organisations goes often along with discussions about incorporating a parliamentary body into them; on the other, existing international organisations that lack a parliamentary body are more and more criticised for what is supposed to be an institutional deficit (Cofelice, 2016, p.20).

Thus, IPIs play an important role in regional integration processes by promoting democratic governance, accountability, and parliamentary oversight within regional integration initiatives. These institutions are designed to provide a platform for parliamentary representatives from member countries to collaborate, exchange ideas, and contribute to the decision-making processes of regional integration. It is generally considered that IPIs can also play a significant role in promoting regional integration by helping to maintain and foster a community of ideas and also can act as a critical juncture in the process of change in the greater levels of policy and legislative harmonization.

The establishment of IPIs in regional organizations should be seen as an important part of the development of international relations in the region concerned. This is because the IPI is seen as not only becoming a supplementary organ to the principle treaties of the organization, but also as having the potential to influence the character of the broader regional organization. By sharing serving MPs from each of the member states, an IPI plays an important role in developing a regional identity in the hope that the actions and decisions made about specific regional issues might be in the common interest and easily representable by a single regional stance to the ordinary people.

IPIs help to express and institutionalize shared political, economic, and social values by committing the serving MPs to a set of principles outlined within a treaty to which they must adhere. This has the potential to influence the state and its foreign policy in aligning with the region, which might be a long-term solution to avoiding conflicts of interest with other member states. An IPI can also be seen as a way to empower an essential public identity of the region; through interaction with various regional NGOs, the public, and ultimately holding consultation with other parliamentary assemblies, it might become easier to represent the group’s stance on international issues.

As to the role and strengths of the IPIs, Habegger highlights the significant practices undertaken by pointing out that:

> IPIs open up intergovernmental decision-making processes that too often take place behind closed doors; they engage government representatives in a political dialogue; they allow parliamentarians to elicit information from ministers and diplomats by asking questions regarding policies that may affect their constituents; they permit parliamentarians to bring in ideas, proposals or even values that may otherwise remain unheard; they expose parliamentarians to the political leaders of other countries, making them aware of international problems and reminding them of the necessity to engage in international cooperation; and they allow elected representatives better to control not only the actions of international organizations, but also the foreign policies of their own government. Overall, they are able to contribute to more participatory, transparent and accountable global governance (Habegger, 2010, p.200).

By sharing serving MPs from each of the member states, an IPI plays an important role in developing a regional identity in the hope that the actions and decisions made about specific regional issues might be in the common interest and easily representable by a single regional stance to the ordinary people. IPIs help to express and institutionalize shared political, economic, and social values by committing the serving MPs to a set of principles outlined within a treaty to which they must adhere. This has the potential to influence the state and its foreign policy in aligning with the region, which might be a long-term solution to avoiding conflicts of interest with other member states. An IPI can also be seen as a way to empower an essential public identity of the region; through interaction with various regional NGOs, the public, and ultimately holding consultation with other parliamentary assemblies, it might become easier to represent the group's stance on international issues.

IPIs have come to play various, albeit limited, roles in regional integration processes. IPIs provide a platform through which national parliaments coordinate their activities and undergo a process of socialization with one another. IPIs perform a constructive role in encouraging national parliaments to internalize the norms and rules of a given community and act in the interests of the collective whole. Lawyers and political scientists alike diagnose the problem of democratic legitimacy in global governance and acknowledge that globalization significantly impinges on democracy and on the

traditional functions and functioning of parliaments. The most conspicuous institutional response to this problem is the creation of the IPIs (Jancic, 2015, p.204). Parliamentarians acting globally add both democratic legitimacy and transparency to international affairs by resorting to institutional pressure, persuasion and advocacy in order to promote their positions. They thereby stimulate public debate and facilitate the development of shared norms and values in an interdependent world. (Jancic, 2015, p.208) Similarly, even though regional integration parliaments do not carry out distinctive parliamentary functions, they have a special communicative role as they aid intraregional communication and nurture a shared regional identity among political elites (Jancic, 2015, p.209).

Parliamentary assemblies exercise a number of functions that are comparable to those of national parliaments such as the ability to constrain or check executive power at the regional level performed by the intergovernmental organizations (Habegger, 2006, pp.134). Cofelice rightly points out to the distinction between the formal and informal powers of the IPIs by stating that the:

> positivist works have largely focused on IPIs' formal powers, while generally neglecting their informal and soft-power mechanisms such as information exchange, deliberation, persuasion that do not always have an immediate and visible effect, but that often represent the main raison d'être of many parliamentary institutions. Such positivist approaches are particularly unsatisfying during the current era of globalization. While in the Cold War era states were the key actors that determined the dynamics of interactions in the international community, and IPIs could at best perform oversight and/or legitimating functions vis-à-vis inter-governmental policy- and decision-making processes, today parliamentarians participate in international relations not exclusively through formal institutions, but also through informal transnational networks. As a consequence, the bulk of their activities has begun to shift from formal parliamentary functions to less conventional tasks. A non-exhaustive list includes: conducting parallel diplomatic relations (known as parliamentary diplomacy); acting as moral tribunes, lobbying governments and national legislatures to adopt specific policies or ratify international instruments; providing democratic institution building and technical assistance programmes; upholding confidence building and parliamentary socialisation (Cofelice, 2019, p.8).

IPIs have various functions in regional integration processes that contribute to the effectiveness and democratic governance of regional organizations:

2.3.1. Enhancing Democratic Governance Through Remedying Democratic Deficit and Realizing Democratic Accountability

Regional organizations establish IPIs to promote transparency, democratic accountability and parliamentary oversight within regional integration initiatives with a view to remedy the democratic deficit inherent at the international organizations. IPIs provide a mechanism for parliamentarians to monitor the implementation of regional agreements, assess the impact on national interests, and hold governments accountable for their actions. Through IPIs, parliamentarians can scrutinize regional integration policies, raise concerns, and contribute to the effective and responsible governance of regional organizations.

IPIs enhance democratic representation by giving parliamentarians a voice in regional integration processes. They provide a platform for elected representatives to express the views and concerns of their constituencies and contribute to the decision-making processes. Through IPIs, parliamentarians can ensure that the interests and perspectives of their respective countries are considered. IPIs are deemed essential in enhancement of democratic governance. They are seen as important both in influencing political culture and behaviors by social learning processes among elites and citizens and providing a representational hinge between domestic and international levels on which to validate the democratic credentials of a given state's involvement in regional cooperation.

Habegger, on the other hand, points out to the establishment of the IPIs as a significant tool to overcome democratic deficit by stating that the:

> parliamentary assemblies, being composed of deputies who are at the same time representatives in their respective national parliaments, create an immediate link between the national and the international decision-making levels. This approach of integrating parliamentarians builds on a core idea of democratic polities in which parliament secures the legitimacy of political action through a process of representation, at the same time assuring citizens' participation and guaranteeing transparency in the political process. Thus, the establishment of a parliamentary assembly would give international organizations a system of 'checks and balances' between governmental and

> parliamentary bodies similar to what is already in place at the national level (Habegger, 2006, pp.133-134).

Regional organizations establish IPIs to ensure democratic representation and participation within regional integration processes. IPIs provide a platform for elected representatives from member countries to voice the concerns and interests of their constituencies. By involving parliamentarians, regional organizations aim to enhance the legitimacy of regional integration initiatives and ensure that decision-making processes consider the democratic mandates of member countries.

Kissling emphasizes the role of the IPIs in terms of remedying the democratic deficit in IGOs and their limitations in this regard by making a comprehensive analysis based on the advent of the era of globalization in which:

> issues increasingly need to be decided at higher levels, many globally, in order to achieve effective solutions or regulations. Regional or subject-related integration is therefore advancing. The increasing number and rights of IPIs testify to this and indicate a need for parliamentary control of these regional and global problems. What is at stake is the overcoming of the international democratic deficit that is growing more and more as decisions are transferred to other, regional and international levels. IPIs however in general lack continuity through their periodical elections and are sometimes hampered in their effectiveness through structures that favour tedious participatory procedures and debate. Public ignorance of their actions and importance is widespread and makes IPIs less relevant than they could be. And the overabundance of information and issues to be addressed overstretches the capacities of IPIs. Nevertheless, IPIs provide moral legitimation for international decision-making by making it more transparent, accountable and participatory. Moreover, as bodies composed of elected representatives that are accountable to their constituents, IPIs in principle make sure that the people are not ignored and that public participation is secured (Kissling, 2011, p.52).

2.3.2. Legislative and Oversight Functions

IPIs serve as a legislative body representing the interests of member countries in regional integration initiatives. They can contribute to the development and enactment of laws, regulations, and policies that are essential for the functioning of regional agreements and institutions. IPIs provide a forum for parliamentarians to discuss, debate, and pass legislation related to regional integration.

IPIs participate in the legislative processes of regional integration by discussing, reviewing, and contributing to the development of laws, regulations, and policies. They have the authority to propose, amend, and vote on legislation related to regional integration. Through this function, IPIs ensure that the legislative decisions of regional organizations reflect the input and expertise of parliamentarians.

Legislative harmonization is the process of creating common legislative standards and ensuring their effective and uniform implementation. Through legislation, governments are able to create the legal framework necessary to ensure private sector involvement in regional integration. IPIs support this process by providing forums in which representatives can draft legislation on a regional level, discuss the ramifications of legislative proposals, and commit their governments to a common course of action. This function of IPIs is perhaps best demonstrated in the European Union where over 80% of domestic legislation in member states originates from EU legislation. IPIs provide a vehicle to translate national legislation into community law or to agree upon new legislation to regulate behavior between member states. At this stage, the most appropriate task is to monitor the execution of legislation by governments and identify positive and negative experiences. This would lead IPIs to develop best practices in regulation and even prepare model laws for member states to adopt.

The process of harmonization is an important building block of regional integration. It involves the establishment of a common legal framework for economic activities of member countries in the relevant sector through the formulation of common rules and regulations. It may also involve the mutual recognition of each other's rules and regulations or the establishment of supranational regulatory institutions. Harmonization is especially important in the economic sector and in the development of the single market. As the development of the single market would foster greater economic efficiency and a higher division of labor, it would also lead to greater competition.

IPIs play a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of regional agreements and policies. They monitor the activities of regional organizations, evaluate their

performance, and hold governments accountable for their commitments. Through parliamentary oversight, IPIs help ensure transparency, accountability, and responsible governance within regional integration processes.

They monitor the activities of regional organizations, evaluate their performance, and hold governments accountable for their commitments. Through parliamentary oversight, IPIs help ensure transparency, accountability, and responsible governance within regional integration processes. Legislative and oversight activities are seen as central roles for IPIs. They provide the most direct means for parliaments to influence the activities of the organization and to ensure that it is acting in keeping with its commitments and mandates. Meetings between parliamentarians of member states and officials of the organization provide an opportunity to be informed of the activities and policies of the organization. This information can be taken back to individual parliaments to be debated, i.e. oversight of activities in reference to domestic policy or discussed within the institution's own meetings to determine if it is consistent with the commitments agreed upon by member states. The reason for this is that they provide a link between the decision-making of the main institutions and the general public and interest groups. This is primarily done through the oversight of the legislation that is produced by the Council of Ministers or other relevant organs. This is a good aspect of democratic governance, and in many ways, the IPIs ensure that the rule of law is adhered to and not abused by the executive. In addition to this elementary legislative role, IPIs also play a commanding role in ensuring regional organizations and their policies are under parliamentary scrutiny. In this scrutinizing role, IPIs hold regional institutions and governments accountable for their actions by ensuring that former act in a transparent manner through the observation of agreements reached among member states. This also involves observance of the democratic governance and rule of law principles in order not to allow abuse of authority on the part of executive bodies of the regional organizations.

Parliamentary oversight occurs through many different methods such as regular hearings, questioning of officials, and review of policy implementation. These activities provide an assurance that the regional organization is indeed carrying out its numerous responsibilities and that the policies enacted are within the interest of,

and in accordance with the legal frameworks of, the member states. The IPI, in this regard, serves as a check to the executive branches of the regional organization-a means of assurance that legislation enacted is indeed being carried out and, when relevant, monitored and analyzed. Another important aspect of this watchdog role relates to the adopted regional policies, monitoring, and evaluation, and impacts in states. IPIs also stimulate discussion in the area of strengths and weaknesses at the regional level agreement and offer an idea for changes that can be made. In evaluating the performance of regional organizations and documenting cases of best practice, as well as areas where reform is needed, IPIs help ensure on-going improvements in regional governance. They ensure that the progress of regional integration is as it should be, and that problems or stumbling blocks in the implementation process are identified and dealt with before it's too late.

The oversight functions of IPIs nurture accountability in that the member states and their respective governments are made to answer for their commitments. This often means ascertaining that governments adhere to regional agreements and policies and are not acting in ways that constitute a detraction to the collective goals of integration. It becomes most useful when addressing issues of economic integration, where there is the notion of conformity with regional standards as being important for the success of the single market or other economic frameworks. Public accountability is another dimension of this oversight function. Indeed, constant consultations with the public and interest groups make IPIs very important mechanisms through which regional integration processes and policies are disseminated to the citizens of the member states. A bridge between the regional institutions and the public, a way of ensuring that decisions taken at the regional level do reflect the needs and concerns of the larger population. It improves the legitimacy of regional governance, where decision-making processes are more transparent and accessible.

Legislative and oversight activities are seen as central roles for IPIs. They provide the most direct means for parliaments to influence the activities of the organization and to ensure that it is acting in keeping with its commitments and mandates. Meetings between parliamentarians of member states and officials of the

organization provide an opportunity to be informed of the activities and policies of the organization. This information can be taken back to individual parliaments to be debated, i.e. oversight of activities in reference to domestic policy or discussed within the institution's own meetings to determine if it is consistent with the commitments agreed upon by member states.

IPIs in regional bodies play a pivotal role in the efficacy of decision-making in the community or organization. The reason for this is that they provide a link between the decision-making of the main institutions and the general public and interest groups. This is primarily done through the oversight of the legislation that is produced by the Council of Ministers or other relevant organs. This is a good aspect of democratic governance, and in many ways, the IPIs ensure that the rule of law is adhered to and not abused by the executive.

2.3.3. Dialogue and Consensus-Building

IPIs facilitate dialogue, exchange of ideas, and consensus-building among parliamentarians from different member countries. Regional organizations recognize the importance of inclusive and constructive discussions to address the complexities and challenges of regional integration. IPIs provide a platform for parliamentarians to engage in open dialogue, build relationships, enhance mutual understanding, and foster cooperation among member countries. The IPIs will also help make sure that the voices of smaller or less influential member states are represented in the regional decision-making process. Emphasizing equal representation and encouraging inclusive dialogue, IPIs give all the member states equal opportunity and a right to participate irrespective of their difference in size or political influence. This goes a long way in developing regional policies in a just and harmonious way, with consideration for each member state's interest. This is because the principle of equal representation creates in smaller member states a sense of ownership that prompts them to take active interest and show support for various regional initiatives.

Apart from promoting internal dialogue among member states, IPIs also serve an important purpose in terms of external diplomacy through the building of relations

with other regions and international organizations. Equally, the IPIs provide a platform for interregional dialogue wherein parliamentarians engage their counterparts from other parts of the world by sharing experiences of common challenges and determining opportunities for cooperation. Such is the essence of inter-parliamentary diplomacy in enhancing global understanding, strengthening multilateralism, and addressing cross-border issues such as climate change, global trade, and security threats.

IPIs finally act as catalysts for deeper regional integrations through entrenching the view that with the collective action of member states in solidarity, there is more stability, prosperity, and security. The IPI dialogue and consensus building therefore cultivate a sense of shared purpose among member states that is indispensable in moving integration projects like customs unions, economic cooperation agreements, and environmental pacts. As the parliamentarians work in concert to forge consensus, they contribute to the emergent development of a regional identity that fortifies the political will to move regional integration forward. It is, therefore, the duty of IPIs to foster dialogue and consensus-building not only within but also beyond their respective regions. Through open, inclusive, and constructive discussion platforms, IPIs are able to allow parliamentarians to maneuver through cumbersome regional puzzles, find commonalities, and hammer out agreements reflecting both national interests and regional aspirations. In fact, this process of dialogue is not only fundamental in reaching an agreement upon regional policies but also for the building of trust, which would allow the fostering of cooperation in regional integration in a democratic and sustainable way.

2.3.4. Public Engagement

Public engagement and the consultation function are some of the key roles assigned to IPIs in an effort to make regional integration processes more open, inclusive, and participatory. Regional organizations usually suffer from an inability to be proximate enough to the common public because decision-making most often happens at either an intergovernmental or bureaucratic level too far from daily citizens' concerns. IPIs have become important in bridging this gap because they usually form a critical link

between regional initiatives and the citizens they affect. They do so through different activities that are undertaken in the interest of actively fostering public participation, raising awareness, and creating opportunities for citizens to be involved in regional integration. Besides, IPIs facilitate public consultations and hearings-a way of providing a direct avenue through which citizens can share their opinions, concerns, and suggestions regarding regional policies. IPIs seek to ensure that such consultations with parliamentarians allow public perspectives to be taken into account in the decision-making processes of regional organizations. Such consultations are often the very mechanisms through which regional policymakers receive the critical feedback necessary to correct policies so that they more accurately reflect the needs, priorities, and aspirations of the populations they serve. Further, this form of engagement process gives greater legitimacy to regional integration projects and increases democratic accountability wherein citizens can hold their representatives and regional institutions responsible for decisions affecting them.

IPIs also perform roles of advocating for public interests within regional organizations. In other words, the parliamentarians bring the issues and inputs of the people before the regional decision-making table in IPIs. Parliamentarians in IPIs ensure that the voices of the people are not lost in the technical discussions or policy formulations driven by elites. This represents an important advocacy function, serving to ensure that the policies under discussion are actually a product not just of the governments or bureaucratic elites, but of the collective input of the very people who are most directly affected by those policies. Besides, such an advocacy upholds the democratic principle of responsiveness of governance to the will and aspirations of the people at either national or regional levels.

Events, seminars, and workshops organized by IPIs may lead citizens to be more interested in regional integration processes and eventually take ownership of, and hence responsibility for, such a process. These activities also create awareness among the citizens on the opportunities for involvement and the ways in which regional decisions may affect them, thus cultivating a better-informed citizenry that is more willing to get engaged. This will consequentially enable the citizens to

participate more in discussions related to regional integration through forums, in election cycles, or any other participatory mechanism, with regard to broader participation at the regional level and an increase in vibrancy within democracy. Another role of engagement in public activities would be strengthening the legitimacy of regional integration. More than just having a say in the making of regional policies, there will be greater support and trust for the regional institutions involved in such areas. The IPIs, therefore, can help foster a sense of ownership and inclusiveness of regional projects and reduce public skepticism or resistance to the integration initiatives at least in such areas where regional cooperation may be politically sensitive and/or controversial. In a nutshell, public engagement by IPIs is a matter of necessity to ensure that regional integration processes are open, participatory, and democratically accountable. Through the dissemination of information, facilitating popular consultations, promoting citizens' representation, and stimulating public involvement, an IPI closes the gap between regional institutions and the larger populace. Essentially, IPIs ensure that regional integration initiatives are informed by the voices and views of the people whose lives such processes touch. In so doing, they contribute toward more equitable and people-centered regional governance.

2.3.5. Conflict Resolution and Mediation

In certain cases, regional organizations establish IPIs to play a role in conflict resolution and mediation within regional integration contexts. IPIs can serve as neutral platforms for dialogue and negotiations, allowing parliamentarians to engage in constructive discussions to address disputes and resolve conflicts among member countries. By involving parliamentarians in conflict resolution processes, regional organizations aim to foster peace, stability, and cooperation within the region.

Besides mediating active conflicts, IPIs can also play a preventive role in identifying potential sources of tension and working proactively to address them before escalation. Parliamentarians, through regular contact and cooperation, can find an early warning of conflict in political instability, economic inequalities, or ethnic tensions and then try to intervene for preventive measures against the outbreak of

violence. The IPIs thus contribute to the creation of not only a resolved conflict but also one that is resilient and more stable within the region. Conclusion IPIs are one of the key players in conflict resolution and mediation within regional integrations. The IPIs enable peace, stability, and cooperation among member states by providing neutral platforms for dialogue and negotiations, have an enabling environment that comprises trust-building confidence measures, and encourage inclusive dialogue. This makes the IPIs especially capable of mediating disputes and finding long-lasting solutions to regional conflicts, thereby enabling parliamentarians from various backgrounds and political standpoints to engage in the most constructive way. IPIs will, for a long time, be essential in making sure that conflicts are resolved through diplomatic and peaceful means for the ultimate goal of realizing broader regional integration and cooperation.

2.3.6. Consultation and Input

IPIs serve as platforms for consultation and input, allowing parliamentarians to provide feedback, suggestions, and concerns related to regional integration initiatives. They create opportunities for parliamentarians to engage with regional organizations, share the perspectives of their constituencies, and contribute to the decision-making processes. Through consultation, IPIs ensure that the voices and interests of parliamentarians and the public are considered in regional integration policies.

International Parliamentary Institutions have played an instrumental role in facilitating consultation and input in various regional integration initiatives. They offer organized forums for parliamentarians to work with the regional organizations through a formal channel wherein various regional policies and strategies, along with their views and expressions on them, might be shared. It has been highly important to make the decisions made at the regional level representative of the various interests at the Member States, their parliaments, and finally their constituencies.

Another important function an IPI can serve is the chances it gives the parliamentarians to be able to come into direct contact with the decision-making

procedures of the regional organizations. These are the platforms where the elected representative voices the needs and priorities of his constituents; a democratic link between regional governance structures and the people it represents. In regular meetings, debates, or consultative sessions, parliamentarians can raise issues critical to their national interests, at the same time helping toward the broader discussion on regional cooperation. This ensures that the standpoints of a given country, and more importantly the people's standpoints, are brought forward at the time of formulating the regional policies.

The IPIs thus provide a platform for multilevel dialogue where parliamentarians may bring in the concerns of their respective national parliaments to the regional arena. Such functions become especially relevant in the context of regional integration whereby policies designed by regional bodies can have extensive reverberations within the domestic political, economic, and social spheres. Parliamentarians can express their concerns with the consultation mechanisms on how some integration initiatives may affect their respective countries and suggest changing them to bring the regional policies in line with the national priorities. This is not only key to regional integration going forward in a balanced and equitable manner but also to preventing potential conflicts resulting from neglect of interests of some member states. Besides giving input regarding proposed policies, parliamentarians who form part of IPIs offer positive suggestions during the policy formulation stage. This means regional organizations tap into skills and on-the-ground knowledge that parliamentarians might have, and in most instances are usually better positioned to understand how regional policies would come into practical effect in their countries. In this regard, parliamentarians are thus very well positioned in a place of providing their input with respect to the implications of regional initiatives touching on areas such as trade, infrastructure, health, or environmental protection at the local level. This type of input goes a long way in helping regional policies not only be theoretically sound but also pragmatic and implementable. Public participation is also extended through mechanisms of consultation and input by IPIs, opening and increasing the transparency of decision-making processes by regional organizations. The parliamentarians act as representatives of the people, serving as a link between the public and regional organizations to ensure that citizens' views and concerns are

put into consideration in regional policies. Participating in consultation processes, members of parliaments would be in a position to get views from their constituencies and present such concerns in regional forums, hence making the integration process responsive to needs of the people. It would also help in engendering confidence in regional organizations and increase popular support for regional initiatives.

2.3.7. Promoting Human Rights and Rule of Law

It was thought at the time that the establishment of these institutions would serve to legitimize the organization in the eyes of its member states, and ensure a degree of parliamentary control that would be necessary for their consent to giving up national sovereignty. Gradually, however, there has been a shift in the 'basic' and 'derivative' functions of IPIs, where now there has been development of clear tasks aimed at facilitating democracy and cooperation among the institutions and member states of regional organizations. This has been due to demands by parliamentary actors themselves, but the specific reasons for this shift are varied. One way in which regional organizations promote human rights and the rule of law is through the democratic conditionality approach. This is where human rights and democracy constitute a condition for the organization of cooperative relations with it, where an adherent must demonstrate that it has a representative government based on the rule of law, and respect for human rights and freedoms as is the case at PACE where new members are obliged to adopt the European Convention on Human Rights and possess principles of democratic government bound by the rule of law.

2.3.8. Monitoring the Implementation of the Regional Policies and Agreements

The enhancement or establishment of IPIs have usually emphasized the need for mechanisms of democratic control over the executive organs of an organization. The most appropriate form of control is to exert influence upon its implementation of regional policies and aggrements thoughout the region in an effective manner and upon the formulation of executive policy that will follow it up.

In this respect, IPIs are capable of performing this role of monitoring the implementation of regional policies because of their nature as representative bodies

composed of parliamentarians who are directly responsible to their national constituencies. The positioning by IPIs enables them to have democratic control over the decision-making and policy implementation processes of regional organizations. As much as the executive arms of these organizations-mostly consisting of bureaucrats, technocrats, and government appointees-formulate and execute policies, it is the duty of IPIs to ensure that such policies are in line with the agreed mandates and principles set by member states and are implemented in a way that promotes the collective interests of the region. A primary role played by IPIs in their monitoring is to provide feedback and recommendations to executive organs on the realization of policies and agreements. If an implementation is noted to be not full or is not in tandem with the agreed intent, then IPIs may recommend adjustments with a view to ensuring that policies are fine-tuned for the needs of the region. The process is important to ensure an improvement in the quality of regional governance and further embodies the notion that the executive should not operate independently of the legislative and parliamentary arms of the organization. In such a nature, IPIs advance the system of check and balances within regional governance structures. Ideally, this system prevents regional governments from allowing the scenario wherein power bunches up in one or few branches and policies are implemented in a manner that should appeal to the whole region. Added to this, IPIs also have responsibilities with regards to budgetary oversight, especially in how regional funds are allocated and used within the implementation of policies and agreements. For example, IPIs may scrutinize budgetary reports and financial audits to determine if resources are used efficiently in a transparent manner and in line with the agreed priorities of the region. It would therefore check mismanagement, corruption, or misappropriation of funds and in essence increase financial accountability of regional organizations in this process. Secondly, IPIs perform their function of monitoring, which is very significant in the context of maintaining the credibility and legitimacy of regional organizations before the member states and their citizens. IPIs build confidence in regional institutions by effectively and transparently implementing policies and agreements. Citizens are most likely to support regional integration projects where they feel that policies are being implemented in a transparent and accountable way, and in the interest of the citizens. In this respect, the monitoring role of the IPIs is not confined to compliance with policy but also encompasses the dimension of regional

ownership and stakeholder involvement in the integration process. The monitoring function of IPIs is also especially critical in regions where member states may be at different levels of political stability, economic development, or institutional capacity. For instance, in such a case, IPIs would ensure that the policies were implemented in such a way that they were equitable and responsive to the various needs and challenges of the different member states. This helps in leveling the playing field for regional integration processes, ensuring that less developed or smaller states are not left behind in the implementation of regional policies.

Also, IPIs are involved in scrutinizing the policy implementation process at the regional level, thereby ensuring that the implementation of the policy aligns with national interests and regional agendas. In this case, IPIs act as a link between national parliaments and the regional governance structure to make sure regional policies are implemented and enforced according to the needs and priorities of each individual member state. Because members of parliament are directly responsible to their national constituencies, they are in a better position to determine whether regional policy implementations reflect the interests of their citizens and contribute to national development imperatives. The value of such close linkage between the national and regional levels of governance is that IPIs will then be able to monitor what is happening on the ground with respect to regional agreements and provide timely feedback on the effectiveness of these policies.

2.3.9. Capacity Building

IPIs provide capacity-building programs and resources for member parliaments and parliamentarians to enhance their understanding of regional integration issues and enhance their organizational and personel capacities in this regard. They offer training, workshops, and educational materials to support relevant departments of the parliaments and parliamentarians themselves in their engagement with regional integration processes. By strengthening the capacity of the parliaments and parliamentarians, IPIs enable them to effectively contribute to regional integration initiatives and perform their oversight and legislative functions in an effective manner.

IPI's motive for capacity-building is realized by creating knowledge-sharing platforms, where parliamentarians and staff can share ideas, best practices, and common solutions to challenges that face national parliaments within the context of regional integration. These take the shape of regional conferences, study missions, and interparliamentary dialogues where representatives from different member states come together to learn from others' experiences and discuss strategies that could be used to enhance their engagement with regional governance. Through these means, IPIs foster peer-to-peer learning and cross-border collaboration that has an overall impact of making regional governance far more cohesive and integrated in the case where parliaments have become central in shaping policy outcomes. Moreover, capacity building via IPIs addresses legislative harmonization. For instance, regional integration often requires national parliaments to harmonize their domestic laws with the regional agreements and policies. Such harmonization can be highly technical and specialized, requiring the use of international law together with the regional legal framework. IPIs support national parliaments by offering technical support and legal expertise in overcoming legal obstacles concerning the adoption and enforcement of regional laws. IPIs ensure that members of parliament and staff are knowledgeable on the processes involved in regional legal frameworks through training programs and workshops in building legal capacity.

Furthermore, many IPIs embark on programs aimed at enhancing the research capacity of national parliaments, knowing well that meaningful engagement in regional integration requires a strong need for them to be abreast of economic, social, and political impacts of regional policies. This involves various research grants, access to regional data, and analytical tools which parliamentarians might use to analyze the probable results of regional agreements and policies. In this respect, investment in research capacity represents a way through which IPIs would be well positioned to empower parliaments to make more informed decisions and engage in evidence-based policymaking that fuels effective and sustainable regional integration. Thirdly, building capacity is often supplemented by the formulation of public engagement and communication strategies. Given that parliamentarians are representatives of their constituents, it is part of their mandate to ensure that the general public is informed about the regional integration process and the implications

it might have for daily life. IPIs also provide training in articulating regional issues in such a way that these can be presented to the public at large, and MPs are able to communicate the benefits and problems of regional integration relevant to their electorates. Such public communications are important in engendering a grassroots base of trust and support for regional integration initiatives, demystifying the regional governance process, and bringing it closer to the general population.

The IPIs also contribute to capacity building in the promotion and use of digital tools and technological innovations in parliamentary work. In the increasingly digital world, effective use of information and communications technologies is key to efficient parliamentary work in a more transparent manner. IPIs often support national parliaments in adopting digital solutions that facilitate virtual meetings, online consultations, and digital document management to thereby enhance their capacity for more efficient and responsive engagement with regional organizations. Digital tools also create avenues for parliamentarians to better engage with their constituents through interactive platforms where citizens can share their views on regional policies and give feedback about the performance of their representatives. Another issue of capacity building is a concentration on the development of a culture of accountability within the parliaments themselves through the training in ethical standards, good governance, and anti-corruption measures to enable parliamentarians to carry out their functions with integrity and transparency. This is very important in regions where corruption or ineffective governance structures may erode public confidence in their parliamentary systems. IPIs promote accountable governance to strengthen the legitimacy of national parliaments and regional organizations for a more transparent and reliable regional integration process.

2.3.10. Promoting Peace and Stability

Regardless of the different theories that support the relationship between regional integration and peace and stability, the general consensus is that regional integration decreases the likelihood of war or conflict between member regions. IPIs in this regard assist regional organizations in promoting peace and stability by means of the activities of the parliamentarians within the parliamentary diplomacy.

Overall, IPIs contribute to the democratic governance, transparency, accountability, and public participation within regional integration processes. They ensure that the voices of elected representatives are heard, facilitate legislative functions, and promote consensus-building among member countries. By involving parliamentarians, IPIs strengthen the legitimacy and inclusiveness of regional integration initiatives.

These functions collectively enhance the democratic governance, transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of regional integration processes. IPIs ensure that regional organizations operate in line with democratic principles, involve parliamentarians and the public, and foster collaboration among member countries.

Efforts may also be made to directly influence the organization's decision and policy-making process. Depending on the organization's structure, there may be opportunities for input into decisions at various levels. One of the most ambitious ways to effect decisions is through adding input to the decision-making process of the regional organization with a view to shape policy and decisions in accordance with their mandate from the electorate.

All in all, by establishing IPIs, regional organizations recognize the importance of democratic governance, parliamentary oversight, and public participation in regional integration processes. IPIs contribute to the legitimacy, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of regional organizations, ensuring that regional integration initiatives reflect the diverse perspectives and interests of member countries. Although a steady increase in rights and competences can be observed, IPIs have not acquired significant legislative and control rights vis-à-vis the IGOs (Kissling, 2011, p.49).

2.4. Challenges and Limitations of International Parliamentary Institutions

Although International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) have a solid historical background and a comprehensive role, they also face a number of limitations and challenges that constrain their effectiveness in regional integration processes.

2.4.1. Limited powers and influence

IPIs in regional organizations often have advisory functions to the principal intergovernmental decision-making bodies. They may not have the mandate to discuss all issues on the agenda of the main intergovernmental organization, and they may not have the ability to make binding decisions on member governments. The rules regarding voting procedure and the requirement for a consensus may not favor the institution that is seeking a greater role in decision-making. All these factors can limit the influence and impact of the IPIs. IPIs as consultative bodies lack the relevant powers and authority to perform democratic control and oversight over the intergovernmental organization. Since IPIs are essentially creations of the main regional organization, they naturally become subservient to the wishes as well as policy directions decided by the central institutional body. This situation is apparent in ASEAN where AIPA is tied to ASEAN such that AIPA is not allowed to execute basic functions of the IPIs such as democratic control and oversight.

2.4.2. Inadequate Resources and Capacities

It has been a common experience that all the tasks or efforts done by regional parliaments always face the problem of lack of resources and capacities. In the EU, it has been a common pressure for the European Parliament to have more resources in order to conduct several programs and activities that are needed by the EU to provide solutions and policies for a better life for EU society. Lack of resources and unclear competency division with the other EU institutions are also the main problems for the EP to achieve. This is also faced by the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization. The human resources and budget are vital things to conduct several activities and tasks that are mandated by the organization and AIPA in this regard demonstrates weaknesses in terms of its budget and personnel number of the AIPA Secretariat.

2.5. To what extent do IPIs fulfill the roles and expectations in regional integration?

There are several challenges encountered by the IPIs in their efforts to promote regional integration. These are: 1) insufficient mandates and power-sharing

arrangements for the IPIs; 2) the divergence in the policy objectives on regional integration in comparison with the member states; 3) lack of resources for the IPIs to implement their tasks; and 4) insufficient support and enthusiasm from political leaders and public support for regional integration.

The impact of IPIs upon the trajectory of a region's integration is a complex one, and is heavily dependent upon the specific characteristics of the IPI in question, the nature of the regional organisation, and the intentions of the state and non-state actors involved in the process of the region's integration.

According to Sabic, it is unclear how exactly the efficacy of IPIs may be quantified. Using the decision-making authority that IPIs are endowed with could be the most tangible way to gauge their impact on intergovernmental policymaking. The issue is that decision-making processes usually do not include IPIs. Naturally, IPIs have no formal authority to make decisions, but even within the IPI community, very few can assert that they have the legal authority to make choices that need to be abided by by the governments. It is safe to argue that the European Parliament is the only IPI that makes effective and authoritative use of those authorities. An additional potential metric for assessing the effectiveness of IPIs may be the results of their projects that they present to governments (Šabič, 2008b, p.83).

Cofelice maintains that, in order to fully understand the role and limitations of IPIs, a comprehensive and methodically analytical framework is needed which address the following issues:

> 1) how ideas enter IPIs, by looking at the role of parliamentary norm entrepreneurs and the influence exerted by institutional platforms' formal and informal rules; 2) how parliamentary actors shape norms and policies, through argumentation and deliberation; 3) how parliamentary actors spread norms, both within their own community of member states (through inter-institutional bargaining and socialisation processes) and eventually towards external actors (drawing on the assumptions and causal mechanisms developed by the diffusion theory) (Cofelice, 2019, p.13-14).

Conversely, De Puig emphasizes that IPI action is restricted. It has no sovereignty and no authority to establish and enforce laws. International parliaments can only

make suggestions and recommendations and are not empowered to make legally enforceable decisions due to the institutionalization process that gave rise to them. It's perfectly reasonable to refer to this as a democratic deficiency. Sometimes, these forums have produced broad consensus through debating subjects of great significance. Therefore, it appears quite disappointing that their recommendations, which are not enforceable by law, have not been implemented by the governments and have remained ineffective. (De Puig, 2004, p.61) IPIs have a significant influence in legitimizing popular longings due to their transnational nature and pursuit of solutions to the world's major issues. They can be helpful in putting some pressure on governments to make citizens' desires known internationally (De Puig, 2004, pp.61-62).

It is also claimed that although IPIs generally lack relevant powers and authority especially in decision-making, democratic control and oversight at the regional level, there is a considerable potential for IPIs to act as catalysts for international co-operation on pressing issues, as norm promoters and actors in reducing global democratic deficit (Šabič, 2008b, p.84).

All in all, a number of variables, such as the nature, authority, and efficacy of the IPI and the regional integration project itself, can affect the role of the IPIs in regional integration process. Furthemore, effectiveness of IPIs is influenced by a number of factors, including their institutional structure, authority and powers within the intergovernmental organization, member states' political will to support the IPI, level of support from regional organizations and the overall context of regional integration. Therefore, the nature of IPIs' roles differs widely amongst them and can only be determined case-by-case.

CHAPTER 3

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

This Chapter aims to put forward the historical background, structure and basic premises of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with a specific emphasis on the main characteristics of ASEAN integration process especially the 'ASEAN Way', low degree of democratic maturity of the member countries, low level of institutionalization, reluctance towards deeper integration, which has repurcussions on the parliamentary dimension i.e. AIPA.

The ASEAN region has a population of more than 700 million, covers a total area of 4.5 million square km and expected to have a combined gross domestic product of approximately USD 4 trillion by the end of 2024. Since its establishment, ASEAN has substantially enhanced security and stability throughout Southeast Asia, while also promoting economic growth and cooperation on international issues. Yet certain regional issues remain divisive within ASEAN, such as Myanmar's civil war, which has proved challenging for the bloc to address uniformly, and relations with China, particularly with regards to economic ties and territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Even though ASEAN is widely disputed as a regional organization, it serves as the main organizational manifestation of Southeast Asia as a distinct region and has become a particular focal point of regionalizing processes as well as the opportunities and limitations of the regional level in responding to and mitigating global and transnational processes.

Some have hailed ASEAN as a means of ensuring peace and security in the area, while others have dismissed it as almost useless and said that its members disregard its empty obligations (Ba and Beeson, 2018, p.146).

3.1. Historical Background

The five founding members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand—formed the organization on August 8, 1967, in Bangkok. January 1984 saw the admission of Brunei, July 1995 of Vietnam, July 1997 of Laos and Myanmar, and April 1999 of Cambodia. With the explicit goal of institutionalizing cooperation in all spheres including economic, political, security, and social; ASEAN established strong roots throughout Southeast Asia. The main purposes of ASEAN as set out in Article 1 of the ASEAN Charter are:

1. To maintain and enhance peace, security and stability and further strengthen peace-oriented values in the region;
2. To enhance regional resilience by promoting greater political, security, economic and socio-cultural cooperation;
4. To ensure that the peoples and Member States of ASEAN live in peace with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment;
5. To create a single market and production base which is stable, prosperous, highly competitive and economically integrated;
6. To alleviate poverty and narrow the development gap within ASEAN through mutual assistance and cooperation;
7. To strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law, and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, with due regard to the rights and responsibilities of the Member States of ASEAN;
8. To develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning, and in science and technology, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community;
9. To promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building;
10. To promote an ASEAN identity through the fostering of greater awareness of the diverse culture and heritage of the region;
11. To maintain the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners in a regional architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive (ASEAN Charter, 2007).

The ASEAN member states exhibit a range of historical backgrounds, levels of cultural development, economic development, and sizes. As a result, ASEAN offers a structure that enables its member nations to address a range of concerns and

common themes together. This involves a concern in maintaining peace and stability, promoting active cooperation and mutual aid on issues of shared interest, and caring for the welfare and way of life of the local populace.

The development of intergovernmental cooperation in the domains of politics, economy, security, socioculture, and education was one of the main goals outlined in the founding of ASEAN. Nearly every country in Southeast Asia faced disagreements or conflicts with other countries prior to the establishment of ASEAN. One such example is the war that arose between Indonesia and Malaysia from 1963 to 1966. The ASEAN governments signed the ASEAN Concord with the primary goal of advancing regional peace and stability, as stated in the Bangkok Declaration. By emphasizing economic cooperation, industrial projects, and intraregional trade, the ASEAN Concord seeks to foster an environment that is favorable for regional peace and stability. ASEAN is only a "continuous process of identity construction," and its strength lies in its shared identity, which is essential to the security community. (Acharya, 2009, p. 28).

3.2. Structure and Organization

The institutional structure of ASEAN is relatively complex as it has nine main institutional bodies and complicated linkages among them reflecting a comprehensive organizational system covering all areas of regional integration in Southeast Asia.

3.2.1. The ASEAN Summit

The ASEAN Summit is the highest institutional authority and poicy making body of ASEAN and gathers twice a year with the participation of the heads of member states and dialogue partners. ASEAN Summit is responsible for "taking decisions on key issues pertaining to the realisation of the objectives of ASEAN, important matters of interest to member states" and thereby setting the directions of ASEAN policies, which in turn provide the impetus to the ASEAN Community to move forward. The Chairmanship of the Summit rotates annually in alphabetical order (ASEAN Charter, 2007, Article 7).

The leaders also review ASEAN cooperation and integration efforts by special emphasis on the three ASEAN community councils: the ASEAN Political-Security Community Council, the ASEAN Economic Community Council, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council.

These councils consist of ministers from related ministries of each member state. The ASEAN Leaders would meet with these councils to give the council guidance and to review their work plans. The ASEAN Summit is a key event for the regional grouping as it provides guidance and decisions on the future direction of ASEAN. It is also seen as an important opportunity for the leaders to engage in the discussion on pressing issues within the region. To encourage ASEAN external relations and to enable the leaders to discuss an issue with an external party at the same place and time, ASEAN also holds a number of summits with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other countries including Sectoral Dialogue Partners such as Türkiye.

3.2.2. The ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC)

ACC comprises of the foreign ministers of the member states who meet at least twice a year. ACC is responsible for preparing the ASEAN Summit and coordinating the implementation of agreements and decisions of the ASEAN Summit and is tasked with enhancing policy coherence, efficiency and cooperation across these institutions with the ASEAN Community Councils (ASEAN Charter, 2007, Article 8).

3.2.3. The ASEAN Community Councils

The ASEAN Community Councils together comprise the Three Pillars of ASEAN Community Councils the: ASEAN Political-Security Community Council, ASEAN Economic Community Council, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council. The objectives of each pillar are to coordinate the work of the relevant sectors, ensure the implementation of the relevant decisions as well as to submit reports and recommendations to the summit. Each ASEAN Community Council meets twice a year (ASEAN Charter, 2007, Article 9).

3.2.4. ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies

The ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies are in charge of implementing the agreements and decisions of the ASEAN Summit, strengthening cooperation in the field and submitting reports and recommendations to their respective Community Councils (ASEAN Charter, 2007, Article 10).

3.2.5. ASEAN Secretariat

The ASEAN Secretariat was established in 1976 and is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. It is an international body with diplomatic status and is tasked to coordinate the implementation of the decisions of the ASEAN Summit. The Secretariat also serves as a channel of communication between ASEAN and other international organizations. The establishment of the ASEAN Community saw a significant transformation in the role and functions of the Secretariat. This was encapsulated in the Charter, giving the Secretariat a wider political-security, economic, and socio-cultural mandate to serve the needs of the Community.

ASEAN Secretariat is the main administrative organ of the ASEAN. The Secretary General is appointed by the ASEAN Summit for a non-renewable term of five years and is assisted by four Deputy Secretaries-General. The Secretariat was primarily established to support the decision making and organizational structure of ASEAN. One of the principal duties of the Secretariat is setting up the agenda and ensure that the implementation of ASEAN decisions and policies follow up in a coordinated manner (ASEAN Charter, 2007, Article 11).

3.2.6. Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)

The Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) is composed of the Permanent Representatives to ASEAN who act as ambassadors. They “support the work of the ASEAN Community Councils and ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies” as well as “liaising with the Secretary-General of ASEAN and the ASEAN Secretariat on all subjects relevant to its work and facilitate ASEAN cooperation with external partners” (ASEAN Charter, 2007, Article 12).

3.2.7. The ASEAN National Secretariats

The ASEAN National Secretariats serve as "the national focal points, being the repository of information on all ASEAN matters at the national level, coordinating the implementation of ASEAN decisions at the national level" (ASEAN Charter, 2007, Article 13).

3.2.8. The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)

At the 15th ASEAN Summit in Thailand in 2009, the ASEAN Leaders officially launched the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in order to achieve the goals of promoting and defending fundamental freedoms and human rights. The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), which was ratified in November 2012 and accompanied by the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, signed by ASEAN Leaders, further strengthened the attachement of ASEAN to the notion of human rights. The AICHR's creation is evidence of ASEAN's dedication to pursuing innovative tactics to improve regional human rights cooperation. The AICHR is intended to be a key component of the ASEAN organizational framework and the overarching body in charge of advancing and defending human rights throughout the region. The governments of ASEAN have pledged to protect the fundamental freedoms and human rights of their citizens, as evidenced by their adoption of the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration as the framework for regional cooperation on the promotion and protection of human rights.

The representatives of the AICHR are chosen by the governments of their respective countries. The AICHR bases its decisions on consensus and consultation. The AICHR has endorsed a number of important publications since its founding, such as the Guidelines on the AICHR's Relations with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the Guidelines on the AICHR's Operations. The Five-Year Work Plan, which is based on the 14 AICHR mandates, contains the priority areas on human rights identified by the AICHR. Based on the Work Plan and in response to new demands on human rights in the area, the AICHR annually identifies its high priority programs

and activities. The AICHR meets twice a year on a regular basis and more frequently as needed, and it reports to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers (ASEAN website, www.asean.org).

3.2.9. The ASEAN Foundation

ASEAN Foundation aims to bolster greater awareness of the ASEAN identity, people-to-people interaction, and close collaboration among the business sector, civil society, academic circles and other stakeholders in ASEAN. In other words, it collaborates with pertinent institutions and backs the ASEAN Secretary General in his efforts to foster ASEAN community building. (Rattanasevee, 2014) The leaders of ASEAN came to the realization that the people of Southeast Asia still have not interacted enough, nor they share enough wealth. In light of these factors, on December 15, 1997, during the 30th Anniversary Commemorative Summit of ASEAN in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, ASEAN leaders established the ASEAN Foundation. The ASEAN Foundation plays a crucial part in filling these voids. As one of ASEAN's bodies, its primary responsibility is to assist ASEAN in fostering awareness, identity, interaction, and development among its members in an effort to bring people together and aid in their personal growth. ASEAN Foundation is one of the important tools for achieving ASEAN's objectives. Since its founding in 1967, ASEAN has worked hard to hasten the region's social advancement, cultural advancement, and economic growth. ASEAN Foundation, since its founding in 1997, has played a crucial role in achieving these goals (ASEAN website, www.asean.org).

3.3. Key Achievements and Initiatives

ASEAN has had numerous key achievements over its more than 50 years of existence. These achievements have helped to build a solid foundation for further prosperity, peace, and stability in the region. Through promoting regional cohesion-developing ties of confidence, friendship, and mutual respect among the ASEAN countries strong enough to enable them to resolve their own differences, pursue their common interests more effectively, and discourage outside intervention -ASEAN would also facilitate its members' common pursuit of economic growth (Djiwandono et al., 1986, p.196).

Using a more sociological perspective, taking into account the significance of regional norms and identity formation provides a more thorough explanation of the successes and shortcomings of ASEAN while also creating room for a more transformative understanding of the Asian security order, where socialization and institution-building are to be understood as shaping the regional balance of power rather than just being adjuncts to it (Acharya, 2005, p.95).

3.3.1. ASEAN Community

The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (also known as Bali II) in 2003 enabled ASEAN members agree to formalize their three areas of cooperation into pillars. With this significant structural reform; security, economic and socio-cultural communities were to be established that would bring about renewed and heightened activities.

The formal declaration of the establishment of an ASEAN Community by the ASEAN leaders during their summit in November 2007 was a major milestone. For the first time in the history of ASEAN, a legal and institutional framework with clear timelines has been established for achieving the three pillars of the ASEAN Community, namely the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. A blueprint has been developed for each of these pillars, identifying goals, implementing measures, and timeframes for achieving ASEAN Community.

The ASEAN Charter, which was adopted in, endowed the commitments undertaken in Bali II with a legal framework, by establishing the legal framework. While first article of the ASEAN Charter outlines the goals of ASEAN and includes the maintenance of regional peace and security in addition to commitments to promoting democracy and human rights; non-intervention and full domestic freedom are paired with the development of good governance and respect for the rule of law in the second article.

As ASEAN works toward the attainment of the ASEAN Community by the end of 2015, the three pillars of the organization have come into sharper focus. To describe

the changes, ASEAN has released and worked toward three blueprints, one for each pillar. To encompass a wider variety of activities that take place within it, the security community has been called the political-security community. In an effort to achieve "comprehensive security," ASEAN cooperates in both conventional and non-traditional security domains (Ba and Beeson, 2018, p.156).

ASEAN Community was formally established at 27th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2015 and ASEAN Community Vision 2025 was adopted and presented at the same Summit.

Coming into the second decade of the 21st Century, this is a major development in the history of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, as ASEAN is stepping up its cooperation and integration to a more advanced level. It will provide for a more comprehensive, durable, and results-oriented further development of cooperation and closer interaction among the peoples and member states of ASEAN. This would also enable ASEAN to stay outward looking while maintaining centrality, and increasing its contribution to the stability, security, and prosperity of the region.

'ASEAN Community Vision 2025', adopted in Malaysia on 21 November 2015, was a significant milestone in ASEAN integration process by introducing the formal establishment of the ASEAN Community 2015. The Vision document underlines the:

> resolve to consolidate ASEAN Community, building upon and deepening the integration process to realise a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community, where our peoples enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, higher quality of life and the benefits of community building, reinforcing our sense of togetherness and common identity, guided by the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter (ASEAN Community Vision 2025).

The Vision document highlights the common vision for "a peaceful, stable and resilient Community with enhanced capacity to respond effectively to challenges, and ASEAN as an outward-looking region within a global community of nations, while maintaining ASEAN centrality."

3.3.1.1. ASEAN Political-Security Community

The Political and Security Community is one of three pillars which form the ASEAN Community. It aims to create a robust and enduring mechanism for security dialogue and cooperation for the prevention and resolution of intrastate and interstate conflicts. Through political dialogue and confidence building, no tension has escalated into armed confrontation among ASEAN member countries since its establishment more than three decades ago. To build on what has been constructed over the years in the field of political and security cooperation, the ASEAN Leaders have agreed to establish the ASEAN Security Community (ASC). The ASC shall aim to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world in a just, democratic and harmonious environment.

The members of the Community pledge to rely exclusively on peaceful processes in the settlement of intra-regional differences and regard their security as fundamentally linked to one another and bound by geographic location, common vision and objectives. It has the following components: political development; shaping and sharing of norms, conflict prevention; conflict resolution, post-conflict peace building; and implementing mechanisms.

The Heads of State emphasized that ASEAN Political-Security Community by 2025 shall be a "united, inclusive and resilient community. Our peoples shall live in a safe, harmonious and secure environment, embrace the values of tolerance and moderation as well as uphold ASEAN fundamental principles, shared values and norms. ASEAN shall remain cohesive, responsive and relevant in addressing challenges to regional peace and security as well as play a central role in shaping the evolving regional architecture, while deepening our engagement with external parties and contributing collectively to global peace, security and stability."

The ASEAN Security Community is aimed at ensuring that the peoples and countries of ASEAN live in peace with one another and with the world in a just, democratic and harmonious environment. This is essential in ensuring that ASEAN's development and the welfare of its peoples are not only maintained, but continuously enhanced.

The idea of an ASEAN Security Community was first conceived by Malaysia in the mid-1990s. When first introduced, it was a loose concept aimed at merely forging the political will at the national level to prevent conflicts and promoting a regional identity in order to ensure that nations behaved in a non-threatening and cooperative manner in dealing with one another. The turmoil which enveloped the ASEAN region following the collapse of the Cold War and the end of the Sino-Soviet conflict resulted in a re-evaluation of the ideal characteristics and the expected timetable of establishment for this concept in order to render it more capable of addressing the security needs of the region. Owing to this, the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community has its roots in these characteristics of the aftermath of the Cold War.

The establishment and nature of the ASEAN Political and Security Community is officially enshrined in the Bali Concord II of 2003. This document stipulated that ASEAN was to "achieve a security community of our region where states live at peace with one another and with the world at large" and through the sharing and resolution of conflicts, a more peaceful and stable Southeast Asia would be attained. It was agreed that this would be done through upholding the rule of law in international and domestic affairs, confidence building, and the preservation of traditions and a culture of conflict prevention and resolution.

Another important milestone as far as the security of the Southeast Asia is concerned is the establishment of the the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994. It is argued that:

> in recognition of security interdependence in the Asia-Pacific region, the ARF's agenda aims to evolve in three broad stages, namely the promotion of confidence building, development of preventive diplomacy and elaboration of approaches to conflicts. The ARF discusses major regional security issues in the region, including the relationship amongst the major powers, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, transnational crime, South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula, among others (Association of Southeast Asia Nations: Overview, European Parliament, 2009).

The lengthy period of domestic and regional conflicts and confrontation has left behind a legacy of fear, misconceptions, and distrust among the peoples and decision-makers in Southeast Asia. To avoid the repetition of history and to provide

a stable environment for socio-economic development, ASEAN members have agreed to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in their relationship with one another and in their dialogue partners.

ASEAN's contribution to the maintenance of regional peace and stability should not be undermined. ASEAN has experienced success in maintaining a region of relative peace and stability, free from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Traditional security issues in ASEAN have substantially decreased and can be considered as resolved, with the two most significant issues of the conflicts in Indochina and the situation in East Timor having been settled. As a result, ASEAN has been successful in preventing the spread of such conflicts and tensions to other parts of the region and has consistently maintained Southeast Asia as a region of peaceful coexistence and constructive cooperation.

3.3.1.2. ASEAN Economic Community

The idea of an economic cooperation in Southeast Asia was not a new idea, because even before the Second World War and post-World War, efforts to promote economic cooperation were undertaken in the region. The idea of economic cooperation resurfaced in the 1960s, but due to differences in political and economic ideologies in addition to the existing confrontation among several countries, the idea was postponed. The efforts in ensuring regional development and stability as well as in the alleviation of poverty were apparent when the first ASEAN Summit was held in Bali on 1976 and it was accepted in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord I which stipulates ASEAN's goal to strengthen the foundation for a dynamic and prosperous Southeast Asian region. This was to be established by ensuring political stability, increasing economic stability and later by improving ASEAN's position as an influential force in the global arena.

ASEAN was established in 1967, in a regional environment that was far from conducive to the creation of a regional organization. Although the Association's five founding members - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand - were divided on many issues, it was decided that it would be best to minimise the

risk of intra-regional conflict by focusing on economic growth; a formidable goal considering the region's underdevelopment, the long-standing mutual suspicion among the countries, and long-standing security issues such as the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation over the creation of Malaysia, and the Philippines' claim to Sabah. In order to promote economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region it was agreed that there was a need to establish a regional organization that would contribute to the promotion of regional peace and stability.

With this the signing of the Bangkok Declaration which served as the organization's foundation, on 8th August 1967 it managed to do just that. Main objectives are creating a single market and production base and competing successfully in the global economy.

The ASEAN Economic Community shall be the end-goal of economic integration measures as outlined in the ASEAN Vision 2020. Its goal is to create a stable, prosperous and highly competitive ASEAN economic region in which there is a free flow of goods, services, investment and a freer flow of capital, equitable economic development and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities in year 2020.

The significance of the The ASEAN Economic Community has been emphasized as follows:

> The ASEAN Economic Community shall establish ASEAN as a single market and production base, turning the diversity that characterises the region into opportunities for business complementation and making the ASEAN a more dynamic and stronger segment of the global supply chain. ASEAN's strategy shall consist of the integration of ASEAN and enhancing ASEAN's economic competitiveness (Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II), 2012).

The leaders underlined that "ASEAN Economic Community by 2025 shall be highly integrated and cohesive; competitive, innovative and dynamic; with enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation, and a more resilient, inclusive, and people-oriented, people-centred community, integrated with the global economy." (ASEAN Economic Community Vision 2025, 2015).

It is argued that:

> in moving towards the ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN has agreed on instituting new mechanisms and measures to strengthen the implementation of its existing economic initiatives including the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) and ASEAN Investment Area (AIA); accelerating regional integration in the priority sectors by 2010; facilitating movement of business persons, skilled labour and talents; and strengthening the institutional mechanisms of ASEAN, including the improvement of the existing ASEAN Dispute Settlement Mechanism to ensure expeditious and legally binding resolution of any economic disputes. (ASEAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darusselam).

3.3.1.3. ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) has been a dream of the ASEAN founding fathers, and it is about building a stable, prosperous and highly competitive ASEAN economic region, an ASEAN security community built on the regional order that is peaceful and free from the dangers of war and conflict, and an ASEAN socio-cultural community that is highly conscious of its identity and its achievements. It is testimony to ASEAN's adherence and commitment to realizing a people-centred ASEAN that is dynamic and development oriented. That the three Blueprints are designed to build a caring and sharing ASEAN, characterized by greater social welfare and a more inclusive community where the marginalized and vulnerable, including the elderly, the disabled and the children have their rights protected as well as the equal opportunity to contribute towards and enjoy the benefits of the ASEAN that is well integrated and united. The ASCC is also about closing the development gap and enhancing the competitiveness of ASEAN such that it is enabling of its people to seize the opportunities brought by regional integration and globalization.

> The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community envisages a Southeast Asia bonded together in partnership as a community of caring societies and founded on a common regional identity. ASEAN Community 2025 Vision put forward that "ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community by 2025 shall be one that engages and benefits the peoples, and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient, and dynamic." The Community shall foster cooperation in social development aimed at raising the standard of living of disadvantaged groups and the rural population, and shall seek the active involvement of all sectors of society, in

> particular women, youth, and local communities. (Association of Southeast Asia Nations: Overview, European Parliament, 2009)

ASEAN member states have identified four areas of cooperation within the ASCC that are of common interest to all member states. These four areas are to create greater opportunities for the vulnerable and the marginalized, to strengthen human development, to build a caring and sharing society, and to preserve and promote culture and civilization.

> ASEAN shall ensure that its work force shall be prepared for, and benefit from, economic integration by investing more resources for basic and higher education, training, science and technology development, job creation, and social protection. ASEAN shall further intensify cooperation in the area of public health, including in the prevention and control of infectious and communicable diseases. The development and enhancement of human resources is a key strategy for employment generation, alleviating poverty and socio-economic disparities, and ensuring economic growth (Association of Southeast Asia Nations: Overview, European Parliament, 2009).

3.4. Peculiar Characteristics of ASEAN Integration Process

The ASEAN integration process possesses several peculiar characteristics that distinguish it from other regional integration initiatives.

3.4.1. ASEAN Way

One observer said, "ASEAN's achievement is all the more impressive because it was born out of conflict thirty years ago," and added that despite this, "peace has been maintained throughout its existence." It appeared that a set of practices that became known as the "ASEAN Way" held the key to this conflict resolution. It involved reaching a consensus, having non-binding discussions among government officials, and staying out of member nations' domestic affairs (Cabarello-Anthony, 2005, p.94).

The 1976 Bali Accords incorporates two agreements vital for the functioning of the ASEAN. Second article of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) dated 1977 presents six principles to guide member states and the working of ASEAN itself:

(1) Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations;
(2) The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coersion;
(3) Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
(4) Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means;
(5) Renunciation of the threat and use of force;
(6) Effective cooperation among themselves (ASEAN TAC, 1977, Article 2).

The adoption of these ideas, which have come to be known as the 'ASEAN Way' had two significant effects on ASEAN. In the first place, it gave members peace of mind that working with their neighbors would not compromise their domestic independence. Second, it contributed to the development of a gradualist, consensus-based diplomacy in which decisions were implemented only when all members approved them; as a result, ASEAN would always proceed at a leisurely pace that was agreeable to all. Politicians in the area at the time reasoned that the creation of this diplomatic code made sense because it upheld and encouraged their concerns for national security and the zealous defense of their sovereignty (Ba and Beeson, 2018, p.150).

ASEAN is known for its unique style of diplomacy, often referred to as the "ASEAN Way" which emphasizes consensus, dialogue, and non-confrontation in addressing regional issues. The ASEAN Way promotes a constructive and non-adversarial approach to conflict resolution and fosters cooperation among member states. It also prioritizes building trust and maintaining stability in the region.

The ASEAN integration process follows a gradual and incremental approach, characterized by a step-by-step progression. Rather than pursuing an accelerated integration model, ASEAN has adopted a principle of "ASEAN Way," which emphasizes consensus-building, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for the sovereignty of member states. This approach allows for flexibility and accommodates the diverse economic, social, and political contexts within the region.

Decision-making within ASEAN follows a consensus-based approach, where member states strive to reach unanimous agreement on key issues. Consensus-building is a fundamental principle of ASEAN, reflecting the commitment to

respecting the interests and concerns of all member countries. However, achieving consensus can sometimes lead to a slower decision-making process and compromise on certain issues.

Infused into the ASEAN's cultural and political identity is the principle of non-interference, which has gained reputation as the organization's most defining characteristic. Initially developed as a strategy to prioritize economic development and prevent rivalry between member states, the principle has evolved to become much more as a foundational ideology guiding relations amongst states within and beyond ASEAN. Despite protests over the years from some states that have sought to protect themselves from foreign intervention, the principle has stood the test of time and become ingrained as a determinant of regional order and the basis of state sovereignty. Despite this, the principle and foundation of state sovereignty it provides has had the effect of reducing conflict and tension within the ASEAN region in comparison to other areas of the developing world.

Consensus is achieved in an informal, unstructured, and unsystematic manner. It is not confined to specific meetings and the timing of reaching an agreement can vary depending on the issue concerned. Decision-making in ASEAN is also based on consultation between the member states. Through consultation, ASEAN member states are able to identify areas of common interests and concerns in different regional and international issues.

The "ASEAN Way," which institutionalizes non-interference, the sanctity of state sovereignty, consensus-building, consultations, non-binding regulations, and informal decision-making, is said to be the means by which ASEAN governs. Another way to describe ASEAN regional governance is as state-led and elite-centered, two traits that drive the Association's rate of integration (Nem Singh, 2008, p.3).

The "ASEAN Way", consensus, compromise, and consultation, is the cornerstone of ASEAN's fundamental code of behavior. Decisions are made by consensus and broad agreement while accounting for a variety of cultural norms. The ASEAN Way

might be seen as one of ASEAN's distinctive features in this sense. The fundamental tenets of the "ASEAN Way," which are not unique to Asia, include peaceful negotiation, refraining from using force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations, and decision-making by consensus (Katsumata, 2003, p. 116).

According to Acharya, the cornerstones of the ASEAN Way are Malay cultural standards that have grown throughout the region (Acharya, 1997). It is based on the principles of peaceful conflict resolution, territorial integrity, and noninterference. The main goal of the ASEAN Way has been to establish standards for encouraging state collaboration. Under the ASEAN Way, supranational strategies and significant intergovernmental engagement are unacceptable (Orcalli, 2017, p. 177).

It is generally accepted that the informality of norms and behavior patterns, as opposed to rigidity or dominance, is a prerequisite of the ASEAN Way. For Acharya, the strength of ASEAN is rooted in a shared identity that is connected to the process of public construction. A crucial component is identity, and the "ASEAN Way" is a "continuous process of identity creation." (Katsumata, 2003, pp. 115- 116). This shared identity is the foundation for ASEAN's efficiency. To overcome the conflicts and challenges that jeopardize ASEAN's unity and centrality, ASEAN's centrality and unity are crucial. Unlike the EU, which is a supranational institution, ASEAN is a representation of successful regionalism (Anbumozhi, 2017, p. 314).

Goh argues that the ASEAN Way offers a normative foundation for the ASEAN Charter and Declaration's comprehension and application. It highlights how crucial informality, adaptability, and cultural sensitivity are while making decisions. It rejects supranationalism and supports a cultural regionalism based on a hazy notion of national identity. It attempts to eradicate some members' dominance in order to highlight the equality of its members (Goh, 2000, p. 113).

Compared to other regionalisms founded in other regions, ASEAN operates in a different way. This strategy, which came to be known as the "ASEAN Way", anticipates that decision-making procedures will result in unanimity among ASEAN member states. Consultations between member states on a bilateral and multilateral

basis are the means by which consensus is reached. Throughout all of these processes, member states have found that non-interference in domestic affairs that is, refraining from meddling in one another's internal affairs is the most delicate problem. In light of this, ASEAN's organizational structure was created. From the 1967 Bangkok Declaration to the 1976 Bali Conference, ASEAN lacked a functional organizational framework. Feraru (2016). Five committees were formed at the Bali meeting in 1976, where the organization was further developed. These include the ASEAN Secretariats, ASEAN Heads of State Meetings, ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meetings, and ASEAN Economic Ministers Meetings (Keling et al., 2011, pp. 172–173).

The current form of ASEAN's organizational structure was esablished in 2007 with the adoption of the ASEAN Charter. With the exception of the ASEAN Summit and the AMM, practically all committees and sessions under this new arrangement can be regarded as forums for reaching more consensus among ASEAN member states through consultation procedures in line with the ASEAN Way framework (Feraru, 2016).

Leifer emphasizes the importance of ASEAN's predilection for informalism, which he referred to as the "ASEAN model" or the "ASEAN Way": Security has always been addressed within ASEAN through communication and consultation as opposed to traditional collective security and formal dispute resolution procedures which is what the so-called ASEAN model is all about (Acharya, 2005, p.99).

Similar acknowledgements have been made by ASEAN governments, including a realist one like Singapore, of the non-interference norm's importance in preserving regional stability. Singapore's foreign minister Jayakumar has referred to the principle of non-interference as the major element in the absence of armed conflict between ASEAN states since the very formation of the association (Acharya, 2005, p.100).

Acharya distinguishes ASEAN's legal-rational from its socio-cultural norms by defining 'legal-rational' norms as 'formal rationalistic principles of law' and 'socio-

cultural' norms as the basis of informal social controls and social habits. Acharya, furthermore, underlines that particular norms, values, and practices have evolved within and define ASEAN throughout the integration process (Acharya, 2001, p. 24).

Narine further emphasizes that the sociocultural standards known as "the ASEAN Way" are unique to Southeast Asia and are based on Malay cultural traditions. They place a strong emphasis on the procedures of consensus-building and consultation that lead to shared organizational perspectives. Narine, moreover, identifies informality, minimalism in organization, inclusiveness, intensive consultations leading to consensus and peaceful resolutions of disputes as indispensable characteristics of the ASEAN Way (Narine, 2006, p. 204).

The ASEAN Way pushes ASEAN to resolve differences amicably rather than allowing them to sabotage collaboration in other domains. The ASEAN has taken a fairly adaptable stance on regionalism. Members of ASEAN resolve to go their separate ways if they are unable to reach a consensus on a single policy, couching their arguments in language that minimizes distinctions. Recalcitrant members cannot obstruct institutional advancement by opting out of multilateral agreements with the opportunity to join later, thanks to the "ASEAN minus X" principle (Narine, 2008, pp.413-414).

3.4.2. ASEAN Centrality

ASEAN Centrality centers on the distinctive function of ASEAN within the region and the evolving ASEAN framework. The institutional structure and flexibility of ASEAN contribute to its strength. Due to its adaptability, ASEAN has been able to change with every significant historical shift. This framework aids in ASEAN's survival and ascent in the international arena, despite a conflict between the ASEAN Way and the organization's primary goal.

The ability of ASEAN to handle competitive politics between major countries is said to be one of the main reasons it has been able to maintain its leadership role in regionalism in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific. Even if there are governments with

more material resources, ASEAN has managed to create collaborative projects and incorporate them into the regional architectures it has established. The 2007 ASEAN Charter legally enshrines this unique status as "the centrality of ASEAN." (Yoshimatsu, 2022, p.3). The argument also goes that ASEAN centrality cannot exist without ASEAN unity and ASEAN neutrality, and that ASEAN's days as a key region are numbered unless its members take this seriously and act appropriately (Acharya, 2017, p.279).

3.4.3. Low Level of Democratic Governance

The diverse political cultures that have contributed to the various political regimes in Southeast Asia, from absolute monarchy in Brunei to military dictatorship in Myanmar to democracy in Indonesia and the Philippines, have also defined the region's interstate relations.

An additional intriguing finding is the way specific legislative forms have changed throughout the area. Certain countries seem to share commonalities in their parliamentary and political systems. Similar institutions can be found in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam, all of which have a strong Communist heritage. Parliamentary business in Singapore, Malaysia, and to a lesser extent, Brunei is organised similarly to the Westminster system in the United Kingdom. Compared to parliaments in other nations, those in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar appear to be busier, more independent, and send out more signs of defiance against the government. These are also conventional presidential systems (Seifert, 2015, p.71).

Even though the majority of the countries in the region have constitutions that uphold democratic principles, democratic growth is not always uniform. Not all of the nations in the region have democracy as their political system; since the region was split up based on its Cold War colonies, which were primarily autocracies, the Association was unable to control an ongoing approach to such rights and ideas among ASEAN's member nations. The main barriers include the state's inability to implement democracy, as seen by the election procedures that continue to be well

below international norms, voter intimidation, vote-buying, and the suppression of civil society, in addition to accountability and transparency.

While there are parliaments in every ASEAN member state, few of them are multiparty parliamentary democracy. South-East Asia has made considerable strides toward democratic administration over the past 20 years, but there have also been some setbacks. Despite the fact that this is the fundamental component of parliamentarism as it is understood in Europe, executive branches of governments occasionally find it difficult to submit to any form of parliamentary control (Vandewalle, 2015, p.8).

Table 2. Democratic Governance in ASEAN Member States

ASEAN Member States	**Political Regime (2023)***	**Democracy Index (2023) ****	**Global Freedom Score (out of 100) *****
Brunei Darussalam	absolute monarchy	No data	28 – not free
Cambodia	electoral autocracy	3.0	23 – not free
Indonesia	electoral democracy	6.5	57 – partly free
Lao PDR	closed autocracy	2.1 (2006)	13 – not free
Malaysia	electoral democracy	7.3	53 – partly free
Myanmar	closed autocracy	1.8 (2006)	8 – not free
Philippines	electoral autocracy	6.7	58 – partly free
Singapore	electoral autocracy	6.2	48 – partly free
Thailand	electoral autocracy	6.3	36 – partly free
Viet Nam	closed autocracy	2.6	19 – not free

(compiled by the author)

Political Regime

***** Based on the classification by Lührmann et al. (2018) Our World in Data, https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/political-regime?tab=table (accessed on August 25, 2024)

Democracy Index

****** Our World in Data, https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/democracy-index eiu?tab=table&country=ARG~AUS~BWA~CHN~KHM (accessed on August 25, 2024)

Global Freedom Score

******* Freedom House, https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores?sort=asc&order=Country (accessed on August 25, 2024)

Table 2 shows that while none of the ASEAN member states are situated as liberal democracy as political regime, three members are designated as closed autocracies. The status of the member states at the Democracy Index, which evaluates the extent to which citizens can choose their political leaders in free and fair elections, enjoy civil liberties, prefer democracy over other political systems, can and do participate in politics, and have a functioning government that acts on their behalf, rranging from 0 to 10 (most democratic), is a clear manifestation of the low level of democratic standarts in the region. Global Freedom Score also suggests that ASEAN member states are well-below the satisfactory level of enjoying fundamental rights and freedoms.

The 9th Summit of ASEAN in October 2003 marked a significant acceleration of the region's democratic evolution as an organization. As a result, this block became an ASEAN Community by 2020, with three pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). Later, ASEAN leaders accelerated the process to be realized by 2015. This was known as the ASEAN or Bali Concord II. A few successes coupled with a determination to establish ASEAN as a society that is both "people-oriented" and "owned by the elite." The upholding of democracy is one of the key concerns that ASEAN will have to deal with, along with cooperative efforts and a people-oriented commitment.

The ASEAN Charter pledges its members to "strengthen democracy, protect human rights and freedoms, and enhance the rule of law and good governance." By hosting several forums, seminars, and other capacity-building events pertaining to the promotion of democratic ideals and human rights, ASEAN has taken a number of actions toward the enforcement of democracy at the regional level. It is debatable whether ASEAN has fully internalized democracy-building, which includes the reconstruction and strengthening of democratic institutions, despite the region's

numerous initiatives to uphold democracy. This is likely due to some ASEAN nations' mistrust of democracy and their perception of it as the standard.

One of the more notable concerns in Southeast Asian politics and research is the persistence of authoritarian, state-centric, top-down practices, which can be attributed in part to the contested nature of states in the region. In Southeast Asia, there are still many restrictions on the space, involvement, and non-state-centric concerns of civil society. This is particularly the true when it comes to their official recognition of their legitimacy as political actors, their interaction with official procedures, and other issues that aren't usually considered in state affairs. ASEAN, governed by elites focused on the state and characterized by state-centric norms, practices, and concerns, is a prime example of authoritarian governance, reflecting the authoritarian nature of the states that make up the region (Ba, 2018, p.283).

Nem Singh demonstrates that Southeast Asia's impact from democratization has been inconsistent. The Philippines' People Power Revolution of 1986 signaled the region's shift to liberal democracy. In the latter part of the 1990s, Thailand and Indonesia came after this. Regional democratization will continue to be centered in nations with more transparent internal politics, despite growing requests for democratic accountability and political involvement in regional social policy. They are unlikely to be successful in influencing domestic policy in other nations in Southeast Asia through pressure groups (Nem Singh, 2008, p.18).

3.4.4. Importance of the ASEAN Charter

The ASEAN Charter functions to establish a legally binding framework for the Association and to institutionalize ASEAN. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 10 heads of state signed a charter on November 20, 2007, with the goal of establishing an ASEAN Community by giving ASEAN a strong institutional framework and legal base. Similar to the European Union (EU), the Charter envisaged a multi-level decision-making framework that included ministerial councils and a summit of heads of state overseeing different areas of cooperation. In addition, it is supported by senior official committees and sector-specific ministerial

organizations that function similarly to Europe's comitology system. In Jakarta, the "capital" of ASEAN, a committee of permanent representatives stands on either side of the structure. Lastly, the Charter gives the Association legal identity and gives the ASEAN Secretariat a role in decision-making, both of which enhance the organization. For an organization that has long taken pleasure in pursuing a unique kind of regional collaboration characterized by informality and minimal institutionalization, this institutional progression is impressive (Lenz, 2021, p.1).

Despite the fact that ASEAN is intensifying its integration efforts across the board, the region still faces a number of obstacles, including the need to close the development gap, a more dynamic and complicated international environment, and intense economic competitiveness. One key tool that ASEAN can use to better position itself to meet these challenges is an ASEAN charter. It offers ASEAN a chance to reflect on its successes and failures, reassert its significance, and chart a new course for ASEAN integration. In addition to giving ASEAN legal personality, the Charter aims to give the organization a new lease on life, reinforce and codify its main goals and tenets, fortify its institutions and organizational structure, and work toward closing the development gap in order to keep ASEAN's position as a catalyst for regional cooperation and dialogue (Eminent Persons Group, 2006, p.7).

These peculiarities, which represent the various interests, objectives, and strategies of member nations, contribute to the distinctive character of the ASEAN integration process. Because ASEAN integration is flexible, consensus-based, and progressive, member states' diverse requirements and goals may be accommodated while yet allowing for incremental development.

3.5. Significance of the ASEAN integration process

Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has been committed to enhancing regional peace, stability, economic integration, and socio-cultural cooperation. The ASEAN integration process holds immense significance for the Southeast Asian region and the global community as a whole. One of the major significances of ASEAN integration lies in its ability to promote regional peace, security, and stability. The

member states have recognized the importance of maintaining peaceful relations and resolving disputes through peaceful means. ASEAN has played a crucial role in facilitating dialogue and negotiations among its member states, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflicts and tensions. Through mechanisms like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN has fostered trust-building and confidence-building measures among its members, ensuring regional stability in a volatile geopolitical environment.

Another key significance of ASEAN integration is its role in promoting economic growth and development in the region. The establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) aims to create a single market and production base, facilitating the free flow of goods, services, investment, and skilled labor. This integration has resulted in increased trade, foreign direct investment, and economic cooperation among the member states. By removing trade barriers, harmonizing policies, and promoting regional connectivity, ASEAN has attracted investment, boosted exports, and stimulated economic growth, benefiting businesses and individuals within the region.

Furthermore, ASEAN integration holds significance in fostering socio-cultural cooperation and understanding among its diverse member states. The establishment of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) aims to promote collaboration in areas such as education, health, social welfare, and cultural preservation. By facilitating people-to-people connectivity, promoting educational exchanges, and preserving cultural heritage, ASEAN integration strengthens the bonds between its member states and promotes a sense of shared identity and unity. This cultural exchange not only enriches the region but also promotes mutual understanding and tolerance, contributing to regional harmony and cooperation.

The significance of ASEAN integration extends beyond the region itself. ASEAN plays a crucial role in the global arena as a key player in regional and international affairs. Through its engagement with major powers and regional organizations, ASEAN has become a platform for dialogue, cooperation, and conflict resolution. In conclusion, ASEAN has contributed to promoting peace, stability, and economic

growth within the region. By fostering regional cooperation, ASEAN has strengthened the bonds between its member states and promoted mutual understanding. Additionally, ASEAN's role in regional and international affairs has positioned it as a key player in shaping policies and addressing global challenges.

3.6. Democratic Deficit in the ASEAN Integration Process

One of the common themes of criticism for ASEAN is the lack of a people-centered organization and one of the best ways to address this would be through addressing democratic deficit in ASEAN integration.

Democratic deficit is a relatively abstract concept to describe a situation in which the implementation of a democratic system within a state is sub-par or non-existent. The exact criteria for a democratic system are not globally agreed upon, but simply put, democracy is a system of government where the people have sovereignty and exercise this power in its governance. This requires the people to have some form of political equality and the government being elected through some means of fair and free election. The representatives elected then rule within the bounds of upholding human rights, law and order. This leads to democratic processes being responsive to the people it represents, and another key point is the horizontal and vertical accountability of the state. Horizontal accountability is the state holding other branches of government accountable to the people and preventing the undue accumulation of power, and vertical accountability, where the state is held to account by the people.

It is argued that as domestic political systems and institutions frequently influence the development and function of regional institutions, the formation of ASEAN was aided by a shared trend among its members toward increased authoritarianism and non-democratic ideals. But recent events have amply illustrated the vulnerabilities of a closed, extremely informal, and patrimonial ASEAN. There is currently pressure on ASEAN to transition to a more inclusive regionalism that handles a greater variety of transnational concerns, adopts a less dogmatic interpretation of non-interference, and is more receptive to the demands of civil society (Acharya, 2003a, p.388).

Following the economic crisis of 1997, ASEAN gave growth, stability, and economic recovery in the region top priority. As a result, it appeared as though people were unaware of problems with democratic principles and human rights, which were seen as Western ideas inappropriate for Asian communities. As a result, throughout the years 1998 to 2001, the terms “democracy” and “human rights” were infrequently used in ASEAN declarations, and the ASEAN Charter contained no reference to human rights whatsoever.

The ASEAN’s aim for regional integration has been impacted by its democratic deficiency. The deterioration of democratic ideals and norms in a few member states is concerning, despite the ongoing regional integration. When it comes to actively encouraging democratic governance at the national level in its member nations, ASEAN hasn’t always been dependable. ASEAN is compelled to take decisive action when a member violates its own ASEAN principle and Charter because of the decision-making process that relies on consensus and the concept of non-interference in each other’s domestic affairs.

It was a fruitless attempt to get ASEAN to take a united stance in resolving the political unrest in Myanmar due to the ongoing arrest of the leader of the pro-democracy movement, Aung San Suu Kyi. In 1989, the country’s name was changed from Union of Myanmar to Republic of the Union of Myanmar by the military dictatorship, which also used the general election to resolve the political unrest. During the 1993 SEA Games hosted by Myanmar, it caused diplomatic tensions between Malaysia, Singapore, and Myanmar in the years that followed.

This is because Malaysia and Singapore have refused to refer to Myanmar as such, viewing it as a disdainful act given the outcome of the Panglong Conference, which established the Union of Burma in 1948. Failing to do so has actually deteriorated ASEAN's interstate ties and destroyed the notion that mutual understanding of member nations' differences is essential. This kind of situation has continued up to this point, and ASEAN has done nothing to give the Rohingya people in Myanmar an official status and shield them from prejudice and persecution. Stepping back into the ASEAN context, democratic deficit is no less difficult and challenging to define.

This is due to Southeast Asia itself being culturally diverse and non-homogeneous, while having a differing history and experience with developing nations. This culminates in some of the ASEAN countries themselves having differing ideas of what constitutes democracy and its relevance to their state of development.

Concern over ASEAN's "democratic deficit" has grown as a result of decision-making processes that lack openness. It is argued that agreements and policies are made by the governments and high-ranking officials of the participating nations without the input of their legislatures or, more crucially, the people who will be impacted by the agreements. It is impossible for the people to hold their government responsible for its actions in ASEAN or to comprehend the reasoning behind particular policies due to a lack of public consultation and information flow.

Additionally, the political socialization of ASEAN cultures inside the regional organization itself has been hampered by the lack of transparency surrounding meetings and decisions. In contrast to open meetings in the European Union, the ASEAN Charter's transparency chapter lacks clarity regarding the kinds of papers that must be released and the degree to which meeting details must be made public.

The adoption of policy documents and agreements without their formal release to the public and their subsequent withholding from them for a number of years is indicative of ASEAN's commitment to document confidentiality. For instance, the official public release of the finalized ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) agreement in 1992 took longer than nine years. Comparable procedures are used when it comes to security matters, as official agreements and documentation related to settling delicate regional security issues are frequently kept secret from the public. This has complicated objective evaluation and impeded civil society organizations' ability to participate in some topics in order to determine whether they are good for the public good and satisfy ASEAN communities' expectations.

The lack of transparency in the decision-making process is a source of democratic deficit in ASEAN. Transparency is a weak part of ASEAN governance. Three major aspects can be identified to elaborate on the lack of transparency in decision-making

processes, namely confined access to official documents, insufficient revelation on meetings and decisions, and the failure to cultivate a culture of consultation.

ASEAN Charter underlines the commitment of member states to strengthen the role of civil society organizations and the importance of people in ASEAN community building endeavors. Despite the positive signs, the advance is still hindered by the perception of civil society organizations towards ASEAN and constraints within ASEAN itself.

Civil society organizations play essential roles as checks and balances to the states and their actors in any democratic systems. They act as intermediaries, aggregating and articulating the interest and values of the society to be transmitted to the decision-making bodies. They also function to socialize and monitor the implementation of the decisions made by the states. The participation of civil society organizations in ASEAN has been confined to Functional Cooperation since the 1970s. The approach focusing on the implementation has put civil society organizations aside from the decision-making processes. This condition is considered worsening in the post-Cold War era when the awareness of democratization and regionalization begins to bloom in the region. Terminating the existing practices and moving into another higher level of relationship has become an impetus for ASEAN to engage more comprehensive civil society organizations.

Human rights and democracy have finally been legally recognized and integrated into ASEAN's organization through the signing of the ASEAN Charter on November 20, 2007, paving the way for future ASEAN initiatives. This showed how ASEAN's mindset has changed to accept that these ideas are universal and that ASEAN must take a unified stance on them. On the other hand, some contend that merely including democracy and human rights in a legal instrument does not ensure that these ideals will be upheld. There is no indication of enforcement procedures or corrective measures for violations.

The term "Asian democracy" was coined, and because of the intensely religious nature of civil society and the "chaos" and "divisiveness" that are sometimes

connected to electoral politics, it is perceived as a distinctive “western” idea. This clearly deviates from the liberal democratic framework, which was then largely accepted and gave rise to a more nuanced and contentious definition of democracy. It may be stated that these regimes, which refer to their systems of government as “guided democracy” in Indonesia and “disciplined democracy” in Singapore, are using a mild form of authoritarianism as a useful tool for preserving stability as their countries recover from decades of unstable history.

Currently, a few ways have been proposed to address the issue of democratic deficit within the context of ASEAN integration in an attempt to close the gap between the sort of favored style of ASEAN governance and democracy. First, in order to ensure that governments are answerable to the people and the execution of state programs, it has been proposed that transparency and accountability procedures need to be strengthened. Forcing accountability can also be achieved by fortifying the ASEAN parliamentary framework. While these initiatives to improve regional accountability and transparency would be beneficial, it's vital to consider their viability in light of the fact that they would necessitate changes that would need to be made by sovereign states and could have an impact on strong notions of state sovereignty.

At the regional level, ASEAN must continue to engage its many stakeholders in a more meaningful and methodical manner and offer more opportunities for involvement and consultation. Establishing a shared feeling of responsibility in creating an ASEAN that benefits all can be facilitated by holding regular meetings through official ASEAN channels with business associations, labor unions, and other interest groups. By doing this, the frequently criticized top-down approach of ASEAN would be avoided, whereby policies are thought to have been imposed rather than developed with input from member nations and stakeholders.

The latest efforts to hold the ASEAN Peoples Forum (APF) concurrently with the ASEAN Summit are a welcome shift in this regard. It gives civil society organizations a forum to interact with the official ASEAN and with each other on matters of shared interest. Since then, the APF has developed into a welcoming and inclusive platform, and while ASEAN has not formally endorsed it, it has been

recognized for its progressive role in promoting an ASEAN that is socially conscious and people-oriented.

The involvement of non-state actors and the general public in the ASEAN regional public sphere has received little to no importance in the context of government-centered collaboration. The fact that civil society organizations are not included in the official ASEAN decision-making procedures is even more concerning. A strong base of support from its people and other stakeholders is essential for ASEAN to be robust and long-lasting.

Unfortunately, Civil Society Organization (CSO) participation in ASEAN is currently mostly restricted to state-initiated and controlled initiatives. The general public, especially NGOs and CSOs, does not have easy access to information regarding the ASEAN procedures. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are important for advancing both increased public participation in democratic processes and good governance. Their participation in a range of issue-based initiatives and their ability to sway public opinion can help to promote greater unity and an ASEAN identity.

3.7. Shortcomings of the ASEAN integration process

The constraints and difficulties that ASEAN has do not, and should not, be used as an excuse to completely reject norms and identity from any analytical framework that might be applied to evaluate the organization's impact on Southeast Asian regional order. Conversely, adding these ideational elements provides a more comprehensive and ultimately satisfactory account of ASEAN, its shortcomings as well as its successes. The analytical depth of the security community notion stems from its ability to take into account both material and ideational factors while constructing regional order (Acharya, 2005, p.108).

3.7.1. Limited inclusivity and engagement

The process of shaping an effective and harmonious ASEAN community cannot be the sole undertaking of the organization and governments. Civil society, non-state

actors, and the general public all have a stake in regional socialization. It therefore follows that their exclusion from the ASEAN Charter consultation process demonstrates that integration is still a state-driven endeavor. Although this is an indication of member states' recognition of the primacy of their role in shaping ASEAN, bypassing consultation with society at large is problematic. If community building is ultimately about improving the lives of people in the region, then it is essential to ensure that their voices are heard. Furthermore, the ASEAN Charter provides for a consultative relationship between the organization and civil society, and the eventual inclusion of non-state actors into the consultative process. While these are positive steps and may herald a more inclusive approach to community building in the future, it does not erase the fact that AIPA as the regional parliamentary organization as well as civil society and non-state actors were not consulted in the Charter writing process. This represents a short-term sacrifice of inclusivity for expediency, and there is no assurance that these actors will have significant input in Charter implementation and future integration initiatives.

Failure to address the issue of exclusion with non-state actors represents a shortcoming in inclusive governance that is substandard to international norms and practices within the ASEAN framework as well. The 'culture of consultation and discussion' refers to consultation with business interests, of which considerable progress has been made by encompassing key stakeholders and ongoing development of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council. However, for all other civil society and non-state actors, the opportunity to act as a consultant in regional policy and decision making is limited and confined to reactive and event-driven instances where only select groups are invited to give input on specific issues. This is largely due to the fact that the majority of engagement between ASEAN and non-state actors remains informal and ad hoc in nature, and hence such groups are often proven to be excluded as they are hard to track and have no clear representation.

3.7.2. Insufficient consultation with stakeholders including AIPA

The main problem with the consultation process in ASEAN is that it has been based largely on ad-hoc procedures. Although there have been many developments in

enhancing the consultation process such as the introduction of NAMCs, the sectoral ministerial bodies and meetings, and the Task Force on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing its Charter, these have not been effective due to the lack of implementation in regards to agreements on consultation. In addition, a lot of the consultation processes have been informal in nature and have not involved any structured mechanisms.

Insufficient consultation with stakeholders has been another shortfall in the ASEAN integration process. As has been discussed above, the consultation process has been very state-centric, which has resulted in the skipping over or ignoring of important domestic consultation processes on the implications of regional agreements in several member countries. This is due to the fact that states are still the main drivers of ASEAN and that the top leadership in most states has traditionally used consultation methods that are closed and exclusive in nature.

3.7.3. Limited public awareness and understanding of ASEAN integration

The general population has a poor awareness and comprehension of ASEAN integration. The average student in Jakarta understands almost little about ASEAN other than its name, according to a poll conducted among ASEAN students from several universities on the topic of ASEAN integration. The general public and grassroots in the region have very little knowledge of and comprehension of ASEAN integration.

Most people view ASEAN as an intergovernmental body and talk shop with little practical value or influence on people's lives. The only reference to integration is in relation to free trade in tangible goods. Not many people are aware of the concepts of integrating skilled labor mobility, opening up the service sector, and allowing capital and investment to flow more freely. Furthermore, little is known about how integration would affect the desire for higher productivity and efficiency as well as the level of competitiveness. Regional integration is frequently viewed with aversion or fear because of perceived disparate consequences on people and different business sectors in each member state. It is admirable that NGOs, civil society, and the

commercial sector are being involved in efforts to educate the public about the goals and identity of ASEAN through the national ASEAN Community Councils and the ASEAN People's Assembly, which was established during the Bali Concord II phase.

The peculiarities and main characteristics of ASEAN integration process especially the ASEAN Way, democratic maturity of the member countries, low level of institutionalization, reluctance towards deeper integration, exclusion of civil society and non-state actors, limited inclusivity and engagement have significant repurcussions on the parliamentary dimension as far as the weak status of AIPA and its limited role in the ASEAN integration process is concerned.

CHAPTER 4

ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)

This Chapter contains a comprehensive analysis of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) by concentrating on the purpose of its establishment, structure, organs, modes of conduct and functions.

As the hub for information exchange and communication between the parliaments of the ASEAN member states, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, AIPA is a regional parliamentary organization. AIPA seeks to promote close ties, understanding, and collaboration between member parliaments, as well as between observers and other parliamentary organizations. Additionally, AIPA is crucial in familiarizing Southeast Asian people about policies meant to hasten the establishment of an ASEAN Community in 2025.

The primary goals of AIPA are to facilitate the achievement of ASEAN's objectives and to encourage greater collaboration between the parliaments of ASEAN member states. AIPA is not the ASEAN Parliament because it lacks the ability to enact laws, its decisions are not legally binding, and it has no influence over the ASEAN budget process. But since it offers national parliamentarians a parliamentary forum for interaction and information sharing on matters of shared concern, AIPA is important for the evolution of the political landscape in Southeast Asia (Vandewalle, 2015, p.1).

4.1. Historical Background

The heads of the parliamentary delegations from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand who were present at the Third ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Manila, Philippines, on September 2, 1977, established

AIPA, initially known as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO). Vietnam joined in 1995; Lao People's Democratic Republic joined in 1997; Cambodia joined in 1999; Brunei Darussalam joined in 2009; and Myanmar joined in 2011. AIPA was established in 2007 after the organization's name was changed from AIPO to AIPA, after an agreement at the 27th AIPO General Assembly in the Philippines in 2006 to become a more efficient and cohesive institution. However, as Rüland and Bechle argue, this step had no tangible results since:

> As a result of the low level of public trust that legislatures and legislators meet in most ASEAN countries, AIPO has been rarely mentioned in public debates as vehicles for democratising regional governance. The renaming of AIPO thus had few practical consequences and did not significantly change the body's operation (Rüland, 2014, p.73).

Parliamentarians realized that ASEAN is rooted in the societies that make up the region when the ASEAN Declaration was ratified in Bangkok, Thailand, on August 8, 1967. A compelling environment was established in Southeast Asia in the 1970s by developments that supported the creation of a regional parliamentary organization. The notion of developing parliamentary cooperation among the ASEAN parliaments was sparked by early interactions, such as the visits to Indonesia by the parliamentary delegations from Malaysia and Singapore in August and November of 1973, respectively. In order to get support for the creation of an ASEAN inter-parliamentary forum, the Indonesian House of Representatives despatched a special mission to Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand in May of the following year. The expedition was met with encouraging feedback. The inaugural meeting of the ASEAN Member States' parliaments was decided to take place in Jakarta in order to further debate the notion of forming a platform for parliamentary cooperation. The notion to form an organization made up of the parliaments of the ASEAN member nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand was first proposed by the House of Representatives in Indonesia. Indonesia was selected to host the First ASEAN Parliamentary Meeting (APM) from January 8–11, 1975

The aim is to enhance collaboration between the five legislatures and their parliamentarians, as well as to leverage increased involvement from the ASEAN

populace in realizing the organization's three primary initial goals: promoting the region's social, cultural, and economic advancement; preserving the political and economic stability of the region; and acting as a platform for resolving intra-regional conflicts. The primary driving force was to make a major inter-parliamentary contribution to the realization of ASEAN's ambitions and aims.

With the passage of the AIPO Statute on September 2, 1977, during the Third APM Meeting in Manila, the Philippines, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) came into being. This date signifies the establishment of the ASEAN member states' regional legislative forum.

The parliaments of Viet Nam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Brunei Darussalam, and Myanmar joined AIPA in the 1990s and early 2000s, as the organization's membership increased in tandem with the number of ASEAN member states. All ten (10) ASEAN member state parliaments were present at the 33rd AIPA General Assembly, which took place in Indonesia, as full members of the organization.

The Philippines first proposed the creation of an ASEAN Parliament in 1980 during the third AIPO General Assembly in Jakarta. This General Assembly endorsed a resolution on the formation of a Study Group to investigate the feasibility of an ASEAN Parliament. The notion put up by the Philippine delegation was accepted in principle by the member parliaments; but, because of the distinct parliamentary systems and diverse historical backgrounds of the ASEAN Member States, they unanimously felt that the timing was not right to create an ASEAN Parliament. Thus, establishment of an ASEAN Parliament remained as a long-term objective.

A Study Committee was also formed to carry out an initial investigation and assigned the task of carrying out a concurrent study on the establishment of an AIPO Permanent Secretariat. Nonetheless, the broad consensus was that the idea of creating an ASEAN Parliament should be maintained since it would serve to further the region's unity and is a desirable goal.

The General Assembly in Malaysia in 1982 passed a resolution proposing to study the establishment of an ASEAN Parliament in 1982. It was decided that the

Committee believed the creation of an ASEAN Parliament was a long-term goal and that a comprehensive research needed to be done in order to achieve this goal.

The Thai parliamentary delegation offered to hold another AIPO Study Committee Meeting in Bangkok the following year, and the AIPO General Assembly in Thailand in 1991 accepted this invitation. The purpose of the conference was to go over the Thai Study Report in depth once more, as well as the many processes and actions that need to be performed in order to finally create an ASEAN Parliament or any other body with comparable duties.

From 1991 to 1993, the possibility of establishing an ASEAN Parliament was still on the agenda for AIPO General Assemblies, and the study of the Merit and Demerit of the Establishment of an ASEAN Parliament continued for several years. It is important to note that from 1994 to 2002, discussions on the formation of an ASEAN Parliament were not brought up in AIPO meetings or General Assemblies.

It is rigtly pointed out that in the event that AIPA chooses to play a more significant role in ASEAN, it might need to reevaluate the creation of an ASEAN Parliament. Other regional parliaments in Europe, Africa, and the Americas have a variety of procedures and models that AIPA can use. The willingness and ability of ASEAN to accept a regional parliament with an institutionalized role is equally important in this regard (Deinla, 2013, p.26).

The establishment of an Ad-hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a More Effective and Closely Integrated Institution at the General Assembly in Vientiane, Lao PDR in 2005 marked the beginning of the progressive process that transformed AIPO into AIPA. This Committee took on the responsibility of creating an AIPO transformation process to guarantee its efficacy and relevance. It was determined that this kind of change was necessary for AIPO to function more effectively as a company capable of handling the opportunities and difficulties in the area, especially with regard to the creation of the ASEAN Community.

AIPO was aware of the growing role of national parliaments in ASEAN member states as a catalyst for ASEAN integration and reaffirmed the collective action of

AIPO Member Parliaments to strengthen AIPO and steer AIPO towards a more closely integrated parliamentary institution. In this regard, AIPO recognized the significance of ASEAN integration to cope with the challenges and uncertainties in the globalized era and to empower ASEAN to remain competitive in the globalized world.

'The Resolution on Approving the Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Transformation of AIPO into a more Effective and Closely Integrated Institution' was adopted at the 27th AIPA General Assembly in the Philippines in 2006. The 28th General Assembly, which was held in Malaysia in 2007, was the first to use the new name, ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), when the Statute was amended to formally convert AIPO to AIPA (History of AIPA, AIPA website).

During the 13th AIPA General Assembly in Singapore in 2008, an overwhelming number of the delegates adopted the ASEAN Charter which called for the institutionalization of the relationship with AIPA. The coming into force of the ASEAN Charter marked a defining moment for the designation of AIPA as an associated entity of ASEAN, thus setting into motion the clarification of the legal status of AIPA within ASEAN for the first time. Although AIPA is designated as an associated entity, its role and functions are not clearly defined at the ASEAN Charter. AIPA at its Statute determined its mission as to support the purposes and principles of the ASEAN, contribute to the promotion of the objectives of the ASEAN, enhance understanding and closer cooperation among parliamentarians and the people of the ASEAN, and provide a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the ASEAN agreements and accords. However, this is a one-sided formulation as ASEAN has not recognized AIPA as a legislative body and has not endowed it with clear powers and capabilities at the ASEAN integration process.

Originally, AIPA is designed to be a regional parliamentary institution modeled after the European Parliament. It is envisaged that the development of ASEAN into an EU-like structure in years to come will be matched by the development of its parliamentary institution into a fully-fledged ASEAN Parliament. In the medium term, it is expected that AIPA will be given consultative rights on ASEAN policy

issues, and in the long term AIPA would be given powers similar to European Parliament by adopting region-wide legislation and a range of other parliamentary functions. However, the idea of the establishment of the ASEAN Parliament has rarely come to the fore and has never been brought to the official agenda in a serious manner. Lenz puts forward the rationale behind the inability to re-organize AIPA into an ASEAN Parliament as follows:

> Yet, despite recurrent calls and initiatives, little progress was made regarding the formalization of AIPO as an integral part of ASEAN over the next 20 years. As Rüland and Bechle bluntly note, such proposals 'never received serious con sideration' by governments (Rüland and Bechle 2014: 73). Why? The reluctance to attend to EU- inspired calls for the establishment of a parliamentary institution is, at least partially, due to the fact that the intergovernmental mode of co oper ation in ASEAN, which rests on the nature of ASEAN's founding contract, left no room for participation by actors other than governmental ones (Lenz, 2021, p.169).

Lenz further elaborates on the distinction between ASEAN and EU in terms of their purpose as another reason for the difficulty in forming a parliamentary body akin to that of the EU by stating that:

> active voices for the establishment of an EU-type parliamentary body were unable to construct a credible case for their demands because the nature of ASEAN's contract, and thus its fundamental social purpose, was distinct from that of the EU. Cooperation revolved around confidence-building among elites; it was not seen as a form of community-building that involved citizens (Lenz, 2021, p.170).

Rüland identifies the Asian Financial Crisis as an important development for the transformation of the political regimes in Southeast Asia which had significant repercussions on the parliamentary cooperation by underlining that:

> The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/1998 was a traumatic experience for Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, the most severely affected country, the currency depreciated by 80%, the GDP shrank by almost 14%, inflation surged and, bankruptcies and unemployment skyrocketed. The crisis not only discredited the region's authoritarian regimes which had built their legitimacy on economic performance, but also brought into disrepute their alternative political and economic model based on Asian values (Rüland, 2012, p.250).

As a result of the democratization pressures emanating from the society affected by the financial crisis which:

> was the catalyst for Indonesia's transition to democracy, it facilitated major constitutional reforms in Thailand and it gave birth to a democracy movement in Malaysia. First, democratization pressures no longer emanated primarily from outside the region. And, second, even more importantly, for the first time the democratic challenge also explicitly targeted ASEAN's regional mechanisms of decision-making. The contagion effect of the financial crisis had highlighted the increasing interdependence of the region. Three factors subsequently shifted the attention especially of non-governmental groups to regional governance: first, ASEAN largely failed as a crisis manager; second, NGOs had begun to organize regional networks; and, third, their clientele, the poorer sections of the population, suffered most under the crisis (Rüland, 2012, p.251).

Rüland argues that ASEAN was faced with a difficult task on responding this challenge by putting forward that:

> The intensifying domestic debate heralded increasing difficulties for ASEAN member governments and ASEAN officials to either completely reject the renewed normative challenges or to neutralize them through isomorphic responses. Aware of the growing pressures, ASEAN opted for a third response, that is, localization. Localization allows it to retain the core of its organicist and corporatist system of interest representation, while accommodating the normative challenge through partial procedural and institutional concessions (Rüland, 2012, p.251).

It was predicated on normatively sanitized notions like 'people-orientedness' and 'people-centeredness' neither of which are meant to encourage people's active participation in regional decision-making. Instead, they are borrowed from the technocratic New Public Management literature. More importantly, they suggest that ASEAN policies should be formulated so as to win over the public and avert opposition and protest (Rüland, 2012, p.251).

According to Rüland, the parliamentary body's participative role has likewise not changed all that much. The 2007 renaming of the organization as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) was primarily symbolic. However, AIPA is still a long way from becoming a regional parliament, a notion that is opposed by most governments in ASEAN. Like many other ASEAN intermediary organizations, it is

bound by the ASEAN Charter's primary goal of enhancing ASEAN's effectiveness, and its latest papers have not deviated from the organization's corporatist background. Since there was no public discussion about lawmakers' participation in regional governance, unlike in the case of civil society organizations, ASEAN could afford to limit itself to mimetic change in this instance. Legislators have poor levels of institutional trust across much of Southeast Asia, and they are frequently portrayed in the media as dishonest and unable (Rüland, 2012, p.255).

4.2. Categorization

AIPA can be defined as an international or regional parliamentary organization on the basis of the categorization presented by Kissling. According to Kissling:

> International or regional parliamentary organisations are institutions whose members are official in the sense that national or regional parliaments dispatch delegations to them. Parliamentarians cannot join freely except as members of such a delegation. They can be distinguished from international governmental organizations by the actor who approves the founding act on the part of the state: in case of parliamentary organizations, this is the legislature, not the executive (Kissling, 2011, p.15).

Kissling puts forward the differences between parliamentary organizations and other types as follows:

> Parliamentary organizations are not part of any international or regional governmental system. They are so-called stand-alone institutions. Although there might be an intergovernmental organization (IGO) or a governmental cooperation to which they feel related, and although some even have working ties with a governmental organization or cooperation, the parliamentary organization remains completely independent. Compared to pure organs of IGOs, parliamentary organizations – as specialized agencies – have more independence and, as a rule, possess freedom regarding membership selection and authority over their own budget (Kissling, 2011, p.16).

The process by which parliamentary organizations endow themselves with various features is presented by stating that:

> Parliamentary organizations acquire a completely novel status over time through the following features, which they possess as a rule i.e. the adoption of statutes and rules of procedure, the setting up of organs, the delegation of

> representatives by national parliaments or by officially set-up member groups within national or regional parliaments, and a budget (Kissling, 2011, p.17).

With regard to the relationship between the parliamentary organization and the IGO, it can be argued that:

> Despite their special international parliamentary status, the parliamentary organizations under this category do not legally belong to an intergovernmental organization (IGO). They are stand-alone institutions, which makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to develop any legislative or oversight functions with regard to governmental institutions at the international level. Nevertheless, some of them have quasi-official ties with intergovernmental organizations while they otherwise have remained completely independent (Kissling, 2011, p.20).

AIPA as an 'Associated Entity' of ASEAN, has certain modalities that enable the participation of the two organizations in their respective meetings such as the meeting of ASEAN-AIPA Leaders Interface. Thus, regular cooperation channels exist between ASEAN and AIPA, although in a relatively symbolic manner without concrete output.

> Apart from ties at the working level, some of the parliamentary organizations of this category have similar subject-related integrative aims as intergovernmental cooperation. Thus, AIPA has the aim to advance regional, economic, political, and cultural integration. With this general view in mind, these organizations mostly try to do preliminary work for the related intergovernmental organizations or to be catalysts for bringing intergovernmental cooperation into being. Thus, AIPA aims inter alia at facilitating the achievement of the goals of ASEAN and at offering parliamentary contributions to ASEAN integration. In this context, AIPA General Assembly can propose legislative initiatives to ASEAN governments in all matters related to the regional integration in the form of resolutions (Kissling, 2011, p.21).

As these resolutions are non-binding and advisory in nature acting only as recommondations to ASEAN, AIPA has not acquired legislative and oversight powers vis-à-vis ASEAN.

4.3. The rationale and driving forces behind the formation of AIPA

Nuttin emphasizes how widely different Asian nations' governing systems are from one another. Authoritarian, communist, democratic, and monarchical political

systems continue to coexist. There are two-party states, multiple-party states, and one-party states, which are the most common. The primary visible aspect of democracy in Asia is frequently elections, and national parliaments typically play a little, if not nonexistent, role in society. It takes time and effort to establish parliaments that are functional. The executive is in command and wants to stay that way in Asia. The majority of parliaments have restricted authority, and it might be challenging for them to increase it. Few people have the authority to supervise their nation's foreign policy, which is still primarily under the control of the executive branch. Because national parliaments still play a relatively small role in the region—a reflection of the democratic flaws present in many Asian countries—parliamentary diplomacy is consequently uncommon (Nuttin, 2015, pp.14-16).

It is suggested, based on norm diffusion theory, that the legislative body in ASEAN was primarily developed in response to local and external normative pressures, rather than being drivers of regional integration and constitutionalization. To adopt these new norms without altering the "cognitive prior" of each regional organization, government leaders established regional legislative bodies. (Acharya 2009). In the case of ASEAN, the cognitive prior combines indigenous organicist conceptions of authority and statehood with imported European corporatist views from before World War II. (Rüland and Bechle, 2014, p.62).

Rüland and Bechle further argue that regional organisations largely composed of non-democratic member countries as is the case in ASEAN would set up an IPI as this decision increases the grouping's and its member countries' legitimacy (Rüland and Bechle, 2014, p.63). In line with this argument, the reasons for the establishment of AIPA can be analysed by utilizing the norm diffusion theory:

> What then accounts for the formation of AIPA? Why, after all, would members of a regional organisation, which at the time of AIPA's formation were governed by authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes of varying shades, support the creation of a regional parliamentary body? Moreover, what accounts for AIPA's considerable deviation from its self-stated objectives and those of the trend-setting European parliamentary bodies? Norm diffusion theory offers a persuasive answer to our puzzle, explaining the initiative to create AIPA as mimetic isomorphic behaviour (Rüland and Bechle, 2014, p.69).

In the view of ASEAN governments, more European capital could be attracted and economic relations intensified, if the association succeeded in boosting its legitimacy and respectability; hence the imitation of European structures of economic interest representation through the formation and accreditation of regional business organisations and the establishment of a regional parliamentary body (Rüland nad Bechle, 2014, p.70).

Rüland and Bechle presents the establishment of AIPA as an isomorphic behaviour by stating that:

> the formation of AIPO was driven by isomorphic behaviour can also be gleaned from the fact that it did not go hand in hand with even a partial normative transformation among ASEAN government elites. The formation of AIPO was an exclusively elitist decision, without even a modicum of public debate, and largely addressed to an international audience. It left ASEAN's cognitive prior largely unaltered. ASEAN's cognitive prior differs markedly from the liberal-pluralist model of interest representation to which ASEAN seemed to tilt with the accreditation of interest groups and the formation of a legislative body. The operation of AIPO was devised in a way that kept largely intact the organicist and corporatist mode of interest representation, which ASEAN's authoritarian regimes had imported from Europe since the 1920s, localised with organicist elements of local political culture (Reeve 1985; Simanjuntak 1989; Bourchier 1999), and from the domestic domain transferred to AIPO and ASEAN's other mechanisms of interaction with interest groups (Rüland and Bechle, 2014, p.72).

Rüland and Bechle emphasize the relevance of the norm diffusion theory in explaining the formation of AIPA once again by stating that:

> The establishment of the legislative body in ASEAN can be explained by concepts derived from norm diffusion theory. The strength of this approach is that it blends rationalist and ideational research perspectives and that it allows evaluating non-Western IPIs through a less Eurocentric analytical lens. Thus, the formation of AIPO was a strategic response of government elites to external and domestic normative challenges, who at the same time tried to retain core elements of their organicist and corporatist cognitive prior (Rüland and Bechle, 2014, p.81).

Rationale behind the establishment of AIPA and its role in the ASEAN integration process is put forward as follows:

> Since no parliament was embedded in ASEAN's structure, the inception of AIPA attempted to legitimatize the regional organization. The incentives to create an inter-parliamentary assembly were international and domestic with growing pressure to democratize ASEAN. In 2006 AIPO was renamed ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), which included changes oriented towards the goals of creating an ASEAN Community by 2015 and stronger implementation capacities for AIPA. The creation of an ASEAN Parliament was stated as a long-term goal, once the community had integrated further and AIPA was more effective. The Assembly, thereby, tries to bridge the gap between intergovernmental decisions taken by the executive at the level of ASEAN and legislative bodies at national level. AIPA's main purpose is to assist cooperation among parliamentarians of the ASEAN member countries. Not only is an exchange of information facilitated, but solutions to common problems are discussed. AIPA is mainly concerned with supporting the goals of ASEAN to bring the region closer together, harmonizing laws, and ensuring peace in the region (AIPA VIPCO Factsheet, 2023, p.1).

Rüland poses a pertinent query by asking what motivated the formation of these regional intermediary groups in the 1970s and 1980s? While looking for answers, it is difficult to ignore the significant geopolitical shifts that occurred in the early to mid-1970s, which were a major cause of unease for the governments of the ASEAN. In 1969, the US declared a reduction in its military presence in Southeast Asia under the Nixon Doctrine. The British forces' withdrawal east of Suez, which was finished in 1971, coincided with this. It was also predictable at that point that the United States would lose the Vietnam War. Following North Vietnam's triumph over South Vietnam in 1975, ASEAN had to contend with a unified Vietnam and a communist Indo-Chinese bloc. Communist insurgencies became stronger at home, and China was predicted to have more influence in the region. From an economic perspective, Singapore and Malaysia were deprived of their exclusive access to the British market with the UK's 1973 entry into the European Economic Community (EEC). In this uncertain environment, ASEAN imitated European interest representation systems, helped along by closer ties with the EEC (Rüland, 2012, p.246).

With the exception of Thailand (1973–1976), all ASEAN countries were autocracies in the middle of the 1970s; this was concealed by the establishment of a regional parliamentary body. The eventual formation of AIPO coincided with the Helsinki Accord, Jimmy Carter's election as US president, and the emergence of transnational

advocacy networks, which elevated democracy and human rights to significant international themes and increased external pressure on ASEAN's autocracies. However, the other members' initial response to Indonesian overtures was characterized by disagreements over the body's statute. The comments made by the chiefs of delegations during the AIPO preparatory sessions, which emphasized democracy and public engagement as crucial goals for the establishment of a regional parliamentary body, support this. These speeches also imply that the governments of ASEAN were taught their referent model(s) by Europe. In January 1975, Indonesian President Suharto challenged delegates to 'observe the progress of various regional organizations in other parts of the world' during the opening address of the inaugural AIPO preparatory conference held in Jakarta. It is impossible to imagine Suharto did not consider Europe to be a key referential region, considering the continent's position as the most integrated region in the world.

Rüland highlights a crucial point that the esablishment of AIPA and other changes to the ASEAN regional governance framework satisfy the requirements for isomorphic behavior as they mostly addressed a global audience, took occurred in an extremely unpredictable context, were imposed from above by member nations without any public debate, and did not even slightly change the personalities of the parties involved. Even while, for the most part, they may be better defined as mimetic isomorphic behavior, the establishment of a parliamentary organization was allegedly also motivated by coercive isomorphism due to external pushes toward democratization. The fact that ASEAN's emerging associational structures had little in common with the predominantly pluralist and inclusionary liberal system of the EEC and that AIPA could hardly be more different from European Transnational Parliamentary Assemblies (TPAs), particularly in light of the European Parliament's 1979 introduction of direct elections, illustrates the decoupling characteristic of isomorphic adaptation (Rüland, 2012, p.247).

4.4. Organizational Structure

The General Assembly (GA), the Presidency, the Executive Committee, the Committees, the Secretariat, the Secretary-General, and the National Secretariats

comprise the composition of AIPA. English is the working language of AIPA. The GA is the highest policy-making body of AIPA and convenes at least once a year. It is made up of delegations from each member parliament, led by its speaker, and cannot exceed fifteen members. The fact that participation is frequently limited to members of ruling parties can be attributed to the lack of restrictions on the selection criteria for representatives chosen by the national parliaments, save from the need that each delegation has three female members. The President of the AIPA and the GA is the Presiding Officer of the national parliament of the nation where the GA is to be held. The Speaker of Parliament presides over the Executive Committee, which is composed of no more than three representatives from each member parliament. In order to plan the program, the Executive Committee convenes at least three months before to the GA. The Secretariat is AIPA's governing body. It needs to be situated in the same city as the ASEAN Secretariat. It is situated in Jakarta and was founded in 1990. (Vandewalle, 2015, p.5)

Its committees prepare the General Assembly's decisions, which are then forwarded to the governments. It should be noted that the resolutions and suggestions of AIPO have served as a foundation for a significant portion of the current laws in the member nations. AIPO places a strong emphasis on aspects of the peoples' shared identity in an effort to foster a sense of community going forward (Puig, 2004, p.42).

The head of the Secretariat is the Secretary General. With the GA's consent, the President appoints him for a three-year term in alphabetical order and on a rotating basis. The primary responsibility of the national secretariat is to present an annual report to the GA on their parliamentary activities connected to AIPA, with a focus on the resolutions' implementation. Similar to ASEAN, AIPA operates under the tenet of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of its member nations. AIPA is not the ASEAN Parliament; among other things, it lacks the authority to enact laws, its decisions are not legally binding, and it does not cast votes on the ASEAN budget. It serves primarily as a forum for interactions, information sharing, debate of issues of shared interest, and cooperation-building among members of national parliaments. AIPA guarantees a "docile supportive function" rather than criticizing governments (Vandewalle, 2015, p.6).

4.4.1. General Assembly

The AIPA General Assembly is the supreme organ of AIPA. The General Assembly is the formal arena where interaction between AIPA Member Parliaments takes place. The General Assembly is AIPA's parliamentary session and it meets at least once every year in the country of the AIPA President rotating according to the English alphabetical order of the names of the member states. The General Assembly is held to provide policy directions for the development of AIPA's objectives and as a forum for interchange among its members. AIPA does not have formal legislative powers, however, its General Assembly can adopt non-binding resolutions and recommendations by consensus. Article 9 of the AIPA Statutes states that;

1) There shall be a General Assembly of AIPA consisting of delegations from each member Parliament comprising not more than fifteen (15) members, headed by the Speaker or his representative. At least three (3) of the members shall be women parliamentarians.
2) The General Assembly shall be the policy-making body AIPA and shall meet at least once a year, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Committee.
4) To ensure continuity, each member parliament, wherever possible, shall nominate at least five members who have attended the immediate past General Assembly to participate in the next General Assembly.
5) The General Assembly may adopt policy initiatives and provide inputs to policy formulation and propose legislative initiatives on issues of common concern for recommendation to the respective Governments of ASEAN Member States for their consideration.
7) Decisions by the General Assembly on any subjects shall be made by consensus. Matters on which consensus cannot be attained shall be dropped (AIPA Statutes, Article 9).

4.4.2. Executive Committee

AIPA Executive Committee consists of several leaders of parliamentary groups in the General Assembly. They are the President of AIPA, Vice President of AIPA from the members of the previous host country and the future host country, the AIPA Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General, and the Chairman of the Committee of Administrative and Financial Management. AIPAEC has the authority to organize the activities of AIPA between General Assembly meetings. It shall

implement policies and measures approved by the General Assembly, promote cooperation and forge relations with other organizations for the benefit of its members, and promote the aims and objectives of ASEAN.

The Executive Committee is the policy-making body of AIPA. It comprises 10 members, with each being representative of a member country. Meetings are held at least twice yearly and are rotated between member countries. This is to ensure that the AIPA viewpoint on ASEAN matters will be made known to the public and governments of their respective countries.

The Executive Committee would develop an effective and dynamic relationship with the Standing Committees through various programs and meetings to ensure ASEAN and AIPA are working in the same direction.

The Executive Committee, as the name suggests, is responsible for the executive and administrative functions of the assembly. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President of AIPA, who will also be the President of the Executive Committee, and one representative from each Member Parliament who are the leaders of the respective delegations. The composition of the Executive Committee opted for a small group which promotes consultation and quick decision-making, and also has the broad representation and legitimacy of being elected by the Assembly. The term of office for the Executive Committee shall be three years.

Powers and functions of the Executive Committee have been put forward as follows:

1) to consider and recommend membership in AIPA and the participation of Observers and Guests to the General Assembly;
2) to develop new initiatives for AIPA activities;
3) to monitor the implementation of resolutions approved by the General Assembly;
4) to prepare the agenda and program as proposed by Member Parliaments for the approval of the General Assembly;
5) to propose the setting up of standing, study, ad hoc committees or sub-committees of a standing committee whenever necessary;
6) to formulate its own rules of procedure;
7) to consider the Annual Report of the Secretary General on the work of AIPA;

8) to consider the report of the Secretary General on the functions and operations of the AIPA Secretariat; and
9) to undertake other tasks provided in this Statutes or such other functions as may be assigned by the President of AIPA and the General Assembly (AIPA Statutes, Article 12).

4.4.3. Committees

4.4.3.1. Standing Committees

AIPA currently has six standing committees. These are the committees on Political Matters, Economic Matters, Social Matters, Organizational Matters, Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) Matters and Young Parliamentarians of AIPA. Each standing committee may establish sub-committees or working groups to deal with specific issues.

4.4.3.1.1. Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA)

Because of their gender, social and cultural origins, and life experiences, women legislators offer valuable, distinctive perspectives. As bridges and catalysts between their constituents and the government's executive branch, they are hence indispensable. In addition to holding the executive branch responsible and monitoring its operations, women parliamentarians also persistently bring up and highlight issues pertaining to ASEAN and global concerns, particularly those concerning women's empowerment and gender equality that transcend local and regional issues and should be addressed by the government.

4.4.3.1.2. Young Parliamentarians of AIPA (YPA)

The 44th AIPA General Assembly in Indonesia in 2023 saw the official announcement of transformation of the Meeting of the Young Parliamentarians of AIPA (YPA) into a standing committee. This move is indicative of the YPA's unwavering commitment to empowering youth in Southeast Asian countries in general and parliaments in particular. Young AIPA lawmakers have a forum through

YPA to discuss political issues and address the underrepresentation of young people in political processes. It also helps them play a bigger part in building a safe, strong, and welcoming ASEAN Community.

In order to empower young leaders and prospective youth candidates, YPA encourages AIPA Member Parliaments to work with political parties to implement capacity-building and mentorship programs, develop leadership skills, and provide targeted support throughout election processes. By incorporating democratic citizenship education into formal curricula, the Young Parliamentarians of AIPA also implore the AIPA Member Parliaments to support the creation and implementation of educational programs on democratic values and human rights in accordance with their respective national constitutions and international conventions. As agents of positive change, YPA also calls on AIPA Member Parliaments to designate adequate funds to support the implementation of youth empowerment programs and initiatives in the digital economy, work with pertinent stakeholders, including financial institutions, and establish dedicated funds and financing mechanisms. This is because YPA recognizes the growing significance of youth entrepreneurship in the digital economy and the urgent need for youth empowerment within the people-oriented ASEAN Community.

4.4.3.2. Ad-hoc Committees

Apart from the standing committees, there are ad-hoc committees as well. The most notable of them are AIPA Caucus and AIPACODD.

4.4.3.2.1. AIPA Caucus

The AIPA Caucus consists of three members from each country, one member from special observer countries, the Secretary General and one official from each AIPA National Secretariat. It seeks to enhance AIPA's power and harmonization of laws, particularly, laws concerning drugs and human trafficking. The Caucus, moreover, oversees implementation of AIPA resolution in member countries (AIPA VIPCO Factsheet, 2023, p.3).

Establishment of AIPA Caucus in 2007 has enabled AIPA to have a better cooperation and coordination in the realization of ASEAN Community. Main objective of AIPA Caucus is to serve as a mechanism to develop common legislative initiatives in order to harmonize the laws of ASEAN Member States. As one of AIPA ad-hoc committees, it also functions as a platform for regular interaction amongst AIPA Member Parliaments as well as AIPA and ASEAN in monitoring the implementation of AIPA resolutions which has been adopted by the AIPA General Assembly. In its development, working group discussions have been included with an aim to conduct in-depth and focus discussion. Hence, a more effective and efficient information sharing and exchanges on the implementation of resolutions with the objective to harmonize laws amongst members can be materialized. (AIPA web page)

AIPA Caucus stands out as a unique mechanism that has an important function in terms of harmonization of legislation and monitoring the implementation of decisions taken within the AIPA. Although it was established somewhat late, AIPA Caucus plays a significant role as far as the contribution of AIPA to the ASEAN regional integration process is concerned, especially in terms of harmonization of legislation.

AIPA Caucus monitors the implementation of AIPA resolutions and the records for the status of implementation is kept from 2017 onwards. As of 15th meeting of the AIPA Caucus dated 11-12 June 2024, a total of 194 resolutions have been adopted by AIPA and 91.4% of them are fully implemented while 4.76% partially implemented and 3.55% not implemented.

Although adopting resolutions and monitoring their implementation are very important for the effectiveness of AIPA, it is far from being a concrete indicator since the unilateral declaration by the member countries is taken as the sole basis in measuring the status of implementation. ‘AIPALync: Synchronizing Legislations Across ASEAN’, launched in 2024, serves as a regional policy monitoring platform that encompasses three tiers of legal documents: ASEAN Instruments, AIPA Resolutions, and National Legislations.

4.4.3.2.2. AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs (AIPACODD)

AIPACODD is a unique mechanism in the form of an ad-hoc committee which aims to work beyond fact-finding into taking concrete action for better efficiency and coordination on the drug menace across the region and also to strengthen its role and mandate as a parliamentary tool to combat the drug menace. In fact, the idea of establishing a parliamentary committee on the prevention of the use of dangerous substances with narcotic properties dates back to 1990s. However, the establishment of such a structure, albeit late, and the fact that parliamentarians take the initiative on such an important issue that concerns the region and its people, stands out as a strong aspect of AIPA.

4.4.3.2.3. Dialogue with observers

One of the most significant aspect of AIPA is the high number of observers and the mechanism titled 'Dialogue with observers' which is introduced as a unique platform to engage with observers on a structured basis.

> "Observer" means any Parliament other than a Member Parliament who is conferred a formal status of an Observer by a letter of accreditation by the General Assembly and shall be a national or regional parliament of a state or states having diplomatic recognition from all ASEAN Member States. Observer delegations are permitted to attend and make statements at the General Assembly on matters of mutual concern and common interest (AIPA Statutes, Article 8).

AIPA has a total of 23 observer parliaments from different parts of the world including Europe, Asia and Australia. This shows the attractiveness of the region in general and regional institutions in Southeast Asia in particular. Parliaments are eager to develop working relations and different modes of cooperation with AIPA. And dialogue with observers is a unique mechanism developed by AIPA in order to engage with the observers in a more institutionilized and streamlined manner.

The dialogue between observer delegations and the AIPA are included in the business of the General Assembly in the form of a joint meeting where the

representatives of the observer parliament delivers a presentation on the foreign policy of their respective country with a special emphasis on regional issues and different aspects of relations with ASEAN and AIPA.

4.4.4. Secretariat

The Secretariat is primarily responsible for assisting the AIPA President in ensuring that his mandate and the decisions of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, and the committees are duly carried out. It is headed by a Secretary-General who is elected by the General Assembly for a term of three years on the basis of rotation among the member parliaments.

The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary General who is elected for a three-year term. To assist the Secretary General in carrying out the work and responsibilities of the AIPA, there is a Deputy Secretary General and other supporting staff. The Secretariat is responsible for administrative, financial, publication, information, and documentation work relating to the activities of the AIPA.

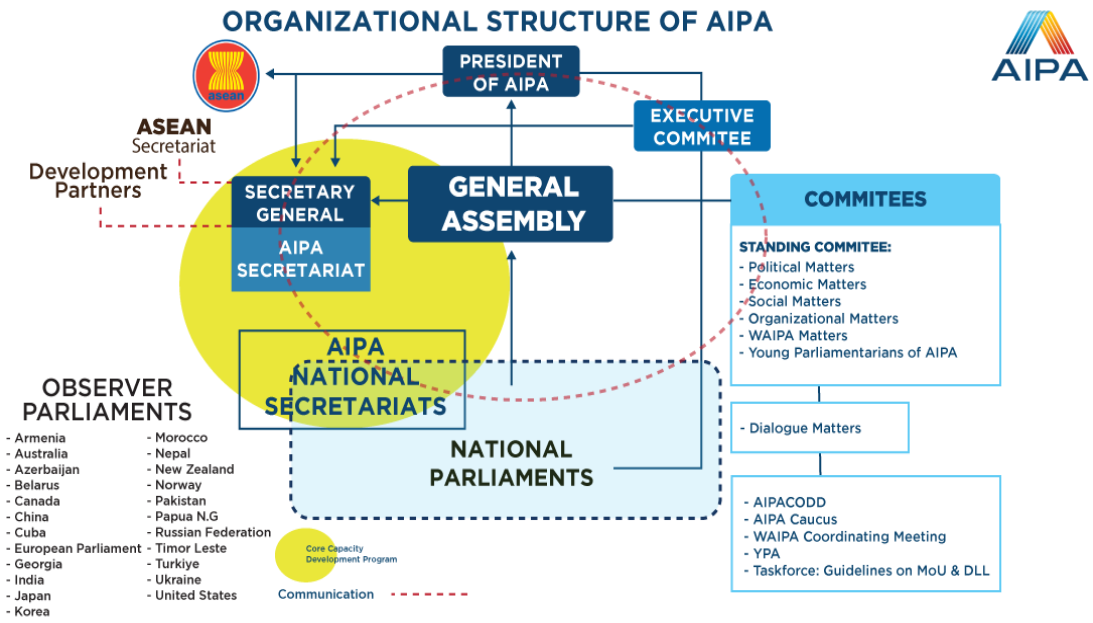

Figure 2. Organizational Structure of AIPA

Source: AIPA web-site

Secretariat's main tasks and duties are to provide support to the President of the AIPA to carry out his duties throughout his term and to plan and coordinate the implementation of his activity plan, assist the tasks of the Executive Committee and the Standing Committees, plan and implement the decisions of the AIPA and validate and maintain communication and dissemination of the said decisions to the appropriate parties, to give support in the organization and implementation of the AIPA meetings and activities, to plan and supervise the implementation of the AIPA budget efficiently and responsibly and to set up cooperation and liaise with other institutions.

4.5. Objectives

The aims and purposes of AIPA have been outlined in Article 3 of the AIPA Statutes as:

> 1) to promote solidarity, understanding, cooperation and close relations among parliaments of ASEAN Member States, other parliaments and parliamentary organisations; 2) to facilitate the achievement of the goals of ASEAN as constituted in the ASEAN Declaration of August 1967 made at Bangkok, Thailand, as well as the ASEAN Vision 2020 taking into account Bali Concord II 2003 leading to the realization of an ASEAN Community based on three pillars: ASEAN Security Community (ASC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC); 3) to establish and maintain exchange and dissemination of information as well as coordination, interaction and consultations with ASEAN to offer parliamentary contributions to ASEAN integration and familiarizing the peoples of ASEAN with policies aimed at accelerating the realization of an ASEAN community; 4) to study, discuss and suggest solutions to problems of common interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action and timely response by the members of AIPA; 5) to keep all AIPA member Parliaments informed of steps taken and progress achieved by each Parliament in realization of the aims and purposes of AIPA; 6) to promote the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, security and prosperity in ASEAN (AIPA Statutes, Article 3).

AIPA made various contributions to furthering the cause of ASEAN's regional integration, including its proactive role over the years in providing an active platform for the parliamentarians and initiating measures to harmonize and coordinate the legislative activities in support of regional cooperation and development.

4.6. Main Roles and Functions of AIPA

The main role of AIPA within the ASEAN Community is that of providing a catalyst through which the various national parliaments can assist, support and supplement the work of the respective Heads of State and Government, and the various ASEAN sectoral bodies that constitute the decision-making mechanism, in the establishment of an ASEAN Community. From this general role, AIPA is expected to add value in several specific ways, including facilitating the goals of "ASEAN unity and identity" in a variety of ways; promoting greater awareness and understanding among the peoples of ASEAN about the vision of an ASEAN Community; obtaining popular support and input for an ASEAN Community, and reflecting the aspirations and concerns of the ASEAN peoples; drawing on the experience of the ASEAN national parliaments, and their constituencies, in considering and formulating the policies and legislation that will underpin a law-based ASEAN Community.

Steps are being taken to enable AIPA to play a role in the ASEAN Community by harmonising laws and regulations between AIPA Member Parliaments in order to move towards formulating best practices in the form laws that will be acceptable in the various ASEAN Member States. This will require a significant increase in the capacity and activity of AIPA in promoting regional legislative harmony and integration, with a view to facilitating active engagement with the various ASEAN sectoral bodies and policy making at the regional level. The goals and targets set for joining AIPA with ASEAN are to continue the formation of ASEAN as a Southeast Asian region that is outward-looking, peaceful, stable, and constitutes a dynamic development area. A complete internalization of ASEAN, so as to make it fully felt by the people of the region, means there can be no turning back from the ASEAN project. All of this will be realized by establishing a common polity that is guided by an entire sanguine spirit, a culture of peace, and a joint identity. The AIPA activities can be a part, a catalyst, a parallel to speed up the ASEAN process.

4.6.1. Legislative Cooperation

Firstly, in terms of legislative cooperation, the forum provides a regular opportunity for ASEAN parliamentarians to interact, share experience, and harmonize their

legislative strategies for the betterment of their respective national societies. Since ASEAN societies have varied political development, parliamentarians' network will be able to foster a climate of understanding about the needs for participatory democracy through building and strengthening the institution of parliament itself. The networking will be able to promote togetherness between the various political parties in every member country to espouse the spirit of democracy and build a better society for ASEAN citizens.

The Assembly does not have any legislative power over the policies of ASEAN in the sense that it is not associated with the legislative process in ASEAN and can not present policy proposals and amendments on legislative acts. AIPA's involvement is through the adoption of resolution and transmitting them to relevant ASEAN bodies as the embodiment of contribution of views on various issues in a structured and organized manner so that it can help ASEAN better understand different political and social issues in member states and develop policies and actions that are acceptable to all member states.

Albeit taking broader regional and international perspectives on issues affecting ASEAN member countries, AIPA has advanced policy recommendations to ASEAN governments in the form of resolutions. While some recommendations have been more fruitful than others, the submission of recommendations to ASEAN has given AIPA the real opportunity to present an input to the decision making at the highest level of ASEAN. Over the past decade, AIPA has been committed to increasing its effectiveness and credibility in advancing policy recommendations and resolutions to ASEAN. This has been demonstrated by the drafting of clear and concise policy recommendations and resolutions that address specific issues at both national and regional levels. One of the weaknesses of ASEAN has been the failure to implement agreements and decisions which was identified in the Vision 2020 document as an obstacle for maintaining the efficiency of ASEAN in realizing its objectives in the regional framework. AIPA has committed itself to the realization of an ASEAN community by coordinating with the leaders of the respective ASEAN Member Parliaments in supporting the objectives of creating a more integrated and united ASEAN.

4.6.2. Supporting Regional Integration

AIPA is a grand platform for national parliaments of ASEAN Member Countries to synergize and to build a close partnership to increase mutual understanding and the spirit of cooperation among each other. This would enable national parliaments to support the regional spirit and pave the way for the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and good governance in the ASEAN Community through evaluating various dimensions of regional integration in committees and the General Assembly and provide parliamentary input to the policy making at the regional level in ASEAN.

4.6.3. Facilitating Dialogue and Exchange

Facilitating dialogue and exchange by AIPA among parliaments and parliamentarians in Southeast Asia facilitates communication and exchange of ideas. This indirectly fosters better understanding and eventually closer ties among the parliamentarians. The idea of having regular meetings in the form of General Assemblies and committee meetings provides a platform for parliamentarians to discuss various issues, whether in a formal or informal way. As such, AIPA serves as a forum for regular dialogue to enhance inter-parliamentary relations, leading to better understanding and closer ties among the countries in the region.

Parliamentary diplomacy has taken on new meaning and significance in Southeast Asia with the establihment of AIPA. It is no longer confined to interactions between members of parliament in inter-state relations, but has assumed a multi-level and multi-faceted dimension including non-state actors in regional and global fora. AIPA in this respect provides a convenient platform for law-makers to utilize the opportunity to undertake parliamentary diplomacy in order to evaluate various regional issues of common interest.

4.6.4. Promoting Democracy and Human Rights

Democracy and human rights have become an integral and important part of the ASEAN integration process especially with the adoption of the ASEAN Charter and

the establishment of ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in order to achieve the goals of promoting and defending fundamental freedoms and human rights in 2009 and the The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) in 2012. One of the aims and purposes of AIPA in this regard is its dedication 'to promote the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, security and prosperity in ASEAN' (AIPA Statutes, Article 3) and AIPA regularly takes these issues as subject matters of resolutions adopted within the standing committees and the General Assembly in order to provide parliamentary support to ASEAN in its endavours.

4.6.5. Harmonization of Laws and Policies

Efforts have also been made to harmonize and synchronize the work of member parliaments to support the work of ASEAN. This includes having member parliaments allocate special deliberation time for ASEAN-related matters, enacting specific legislations to implement ASEAN agreements, and also to prepare parliamentarians to represent their countries at the various ASEAN organs and meetings.

Legislative capacity and expertise are also prerequisites for harmonization of laws and policies, which is a more specific objective of legislative cooperation. Although it is a long-term program, harmonization aims to align laws and policies of member countries in various sectors to a point where they are deemed compatible to facilitate activities between ASEAN countries.

ASEAN member parliaments consist of different political systems, legislative development, and procedural practices, translating to varying legislative capacity and expertise that can be shared for mutual benefits. This is important because policies and programs carried out by ASEAN are implemented at the national level. Exchange of information and best practices is a cornerstone for such cooperation by providing a platform for member countries to share legislative experiences and knowledge. It facilitates the understanding among ASEAN countries on how a particular law is devised or policy formulated and its implication on the people, consequently enhancing the capacity of national implementation.

4.6.6. Legislative Support and Capacity Building

AIPA supports its members with a range of capacity building measures aimed at enhancing the ability of member parliaments to fulfil their role in addressing the many issues and challenges facing the region. These cover all levels of parliamentary activity and involve a variety of methodologies including seminars and workshops, internships and secondments, twinning arrangements between more and less experienced parliaments, and specialist attachments for parliament staff. AIPA views these activities as an investment in the future of the region. Through these various capacity building schemes, AIPA seeks to assist the development of responsive legislation, effective oversight, and representative parliamentary institutions that are better able to contribute to the development aspirations of the people of ASEAN.

4.6.7. Promoting Public Engagement

In order to create a positive relationship among the people of ASEAN and enable greater understanding of ASEAN and its regional initiatives and policies, AIPA organizes various attachment and engagement programs. On the other hand, AIPA Standing Committees on women and young parliamentarians evaluate various issues relevant to the empowerment and engagement of women and young population in Southeast Asia in order to raise their awareness of ASEAN policies and programs in the regional level as well.

Nuttin skilfully analyses the reasons behind the limited role of the people in ASEAN integration process by stating that:

> Much of Asia is identity-based or even ethnicity-based nation building. This is also true for the ASEAN countries where there is little sense of regional belonging and common identity among the citizens. As said before the region is very diverse in language, religion, culture, traditions, economy and political systems. As a top-down, elite-run organisation ASEAN has been very slow in promoting an ASEAN identity despite the fact that ASEAN proclaims that it is people-oriented (Nuttin, 2015, p.25).

Through the work of AIPA parliamentarians from across Southeast Asia have been building connections beyond the government level and they promote policies that

concern people across the region. This parliamentary dimension of ASEAN is important because it gives broader legitimacy to the ASEAN project by bringing decisions and the exchange of ideas beyond the work of ministers and civil servants. By building up its network character and through trainings for its internal capacities AIPA parliaments want to increase their capacity as political actors in the future – both on the domestic level and in cooperating with each other (Seifert, 2015, p.V).

Nuttin is not optimistic in bridging the gap between the people and institutions as he argues that:

> There is hardly any ASEAN mind-set, except among policymakers, academics and journalists. The gap between the institution and the people must be bridged but resurgence of aggressive nationalism, commitment to the nation-state, and concentration of ASEAN institutions in only one country (Indonesia) do not help in developing ASEAN-minded citizens (Nuttin, 2015, p.26).

4.7. Deepening institutional cooperation between ASEAN and AIPA

AIPA's relations with ASEAN carries significant importance in realization of the objectives of AIPA and efficiency of its activities within the regional integration framework. There is, however, a seeming disparity in how ASEAN and AIPA regard each other: to AIPA, ASEAN is a 'partner', while to ASEAN, AIPA is only an 'associated entity'. Implicit in this terminology are elements of equality and hierarchy. And, as the current working relationship between the two regional organizations shows, it is more reflective of ad hoc consultation than active collaboration. This problematic relationship is put forward by Vandewalle as follows:

> There is no provision for a formal regional parliament in the ASEAN Charter; however, the Charter does recognize the importance of AIPA as a major force in establishing the ASEAN Community by 2015. The membership of AIPA was progressively enlarged as ASEAN's membership expanded, although the role played by national parliaments differs greatly from country to country. Membership is open to all national parliaments of ASEAN member states, and all ten members of ASEAN are full members of AIPA since 2011 (Vandewalle, 2015, p.4).

Deinla puts forward the advantages to AIPA's independence that could potentially act as an effective countervailing function to ASEAN as:

> Firstly, AIPA is not overly constrained by the principle of non-intervention that has prevented ASEAN from taking a critical stand toward a member's internal practices and policies, particularly those that contravene basic values of democracy, good governance and human rights. Secondly, while it adopts the policy of decision making by consensus, AIPA does not seem to be too tied to the culture of the 'ASEAN Way', which on many occasions has prevented ASEAN from taking more decisive action on critical issues. AIPA has so far shown some flexibility and openness to diversity in members' views and has expressly declared its willingness to work with state and non-state actors. Working from the outside should enable AIPA to provide fresher perspectives and inputs than those of ASEAN, and perhaps contribute to shaping its agenda (Deinla, 2013, p.22).

Vandewalle underlines the motives behind the lack of power of AIPA vis-à-vis ASEAN and the weak status of AIPA within the institutional framework as follows:

> While ASEAN acknowledges the usefulness of AIPA, it fails to give it any power. Parliaments of the ASEAN Member States were not involved in the writing of the ASEAN Charter. The AIPA contribution was limited to a short exchange of views in May 2007 between an AIPA delegation and the High-Level Task Force that was drafting it. The Charter, signed in November 2007, fails to make any reference to parliamentary activity let alone to the establishment of an ASEAN Parliament. Instead of being an integral part of the institutional structure, AIPA is only listed in Annex 2 as an 'entity associated with ASEAN' along with business associations or civil society organizations. Those are major gaps that contribute to the democratic deficit of ASEAN. At best ASEAN Member States see AIPA as a transmission belt for government-decided ASEAN policies, and AIPA representatives mostly agree with that viewpoint (Vandewalle, 2015, p.9).

AIPA's passive role emanating from its status within the framework of ASEAN integration process is underlined by claiming that:

> Most AIPA parliamentarians see their role in bringing ASEAN closer to their citizens and 'assist' in the implementation of ASEAN objectives. AIPA does play a crucial role in promoting regional networks, not least in providing a forum where members of ASEAN national parliaments can engage with members of parliaments that have an observer status to AIPA's General Assembly, such as the EP. The main channel between the ASEAN and AIPA is the exchange of views held during each summit between the

> speakers/presidents of the national parliaments and the heads of state and government of the ASEAN countries, called the 'AIPA-ASEAN Interface' (Vandewalle, 2015, p.7).

4.8. Past Achievements

AIPA has contributed significantly to promoting the consolidation of representative democracy in Southeast Asia. AIPA has provided a forum for parliamentarians in the member states to discuss and work together on issues they have in common. In this way, the organization has, in recent years, contributed to promoting the role of the legislature in the state as a check and balance on the role of the executive, something that is essential in ensuring good governance and observing the rule of law. AIPA has facilitated a number of interactions between parliaments and parliamentarians of the region towards fostering understanding and closer relations among the member states.

AIPA has had many past achievements, notably through the implementation of AIPA General Assembly Resolutions, but none so important as the institutionalization process of AIPA. The significance of the implementation of General Assembly Resolutions was to legalize the word of AIPA, as prior to this, the high percentage of resolutions passed were not followed through by the member country governments and parliaments. This was paramount as resolutions reflect the political aspirations of the people in the ASEAN region, and now that the resolutions are taken more seriously, it helps to close the development gap between ASEAN countries in fostering regional peace and prosperity. These resolutions are, in effect, the collective political will of AIPA and reflect the aspirations of the people in the ASEAN region.

4.9. Current Challenges

Despite its achievements, AIPA has constantly faced the problems endemic to parliamentary organizations, namely a lack of credibility and ability to have a real input on significant issues in the region. The organization has been an afterthought in ASEAN activities, and its effectiveness has been questioned.

AIPA was not intended to function as a regional representative body, in contrast to European IPIs. The organization is still deeply rooted in organicist traditions. AIPA is a body that is solely intergovernmental and has advisory authority. Thus far, most of the attendees of its yearly general assembly have been carefully chosen lawmakers who support government. Usually, the resolutions it passes are non-binding and affirm previously agreed ASEAN policy retroactively. They either "endorse," "welcome," "reaffirm," or "support" ASEAN initiatives. Speaking on unity, harmony, leadership, and ASEAN family, corporatist buzzwords are prevalent in the speeches delivered at AIPA assemblies and in AIPA materials. More than just a venue for defining agendas, communicating views and ideas from constituents, or holding ASEAN governments responsible, AIPA serves as an auxiliary organization with transmission belt functions that support ASEAN's legitimacy by bringing regional policies within the reach of national legislators (Rüland, 2012, p.248).

The main focus is on how AIPA must prioritize legal coordination and harmonization in order to ensure the future ASEAN integration process is successful. Now, ASEAN has the challenge of transforming Southeast Asia into a respectable regional community of shared wealth, cooperative peace, and cultural and social development. Generally speaking, ASEAN has changed over time to become more concentrated on the integration process, which is very different from its more modest beginnings of promoting cooperation (Chirathivat, 1999, p.29).

AIPA was established to promote communication among ASEAN lawmakers and recognized the importance of striking a balance between the various national viewpoints and a regional perspective. Therefore, it is in a position to develop strategies and tactics to offer workable legal solutions that would speed up the integration process. Due to a lack of information on the implementation of the ASEAN economic framework agreements and ASEAN's progress towards deeper and wider economic integration, parliamentary oversight and monitoring of ASEAN economic cooperation is comparatively weak. AIPA ought to actively participate in the growth and integration of ASEAN (Chirathivat, 1999, p.46).

> AIPA's role in the ASEAN community can go beyond the mere symbolic act of representing the ASEAN people, so that ASEAN can claim proper

> democratic legitimacy. Through more diverse membership, AIPA has shown openness and flexibility in discussing differences of interests and contentious issues affecting the peoples of ASEAN and has called on effective participation of civil society in the regional process. Inherent, however, in this plurality and diversity in ideologies and practices among member countries and parliaments lies the challenge of how AIPA can promote and uphold representative democracy in each of the member countries and thus be a genuine pillar of democracy in ASEAN community building (Deinla, 2013, p.27).

Deinla asserts that:

> AIPA has shown its potential to contribute significantly in the work of the three community pillars of ASEAN as well as in the various commissions through its role in speeding up ratification of ASEAN agreements, identifying priority areas for legal harmonization, conducting thematic studies and fact-finding missions, providing advice on issues affecting ASEAN and its members, and facilitating engagement among various state and non-state actors at the national and regional levels. From other existing regional parliaments such as the MERCUSOR Parlamento and the ECOWAS Parliament, as well as from the parallel inter-parliamentary networks in the region, AIPA can learn how it can play an enhanced and more effective role in performing a range of advisory, oversight and deliberative functions (Deinla, 2013, pp.27-28).

AIPA's ambition to become an established institution and be acknowledged as a regional parliamentary body is fraught with numerous obstacles, both internal and external. The position and function of AIPA itself are mostly to blame for these difficulties. AIPA does not carry out mandates on its own outside of resolutions and is subject to ASEAN decisions. All of these elements work together to limit AIPA's autonomy and creativity by continuously imposing decisions on the organization instead of allowing AIPA to decide how to help ASEAN.

4.10. Future Objectives

In dealing with the expected rise of ASEAN-related legislations, AIPA can also seek to attain a greater role in the future ASEAN Community. It is seen that currently there has been an increased number of ASEAN cooperation projects and initiatives that have legislative implications. Ideally, AIPA can be the platform which will be consulted for all ASEAN-related laws and policies. Coming from a body that

represents the voices of the people, the Assembly may render a constructive residence for the drafting and deliberation of legislation with the purpose to ensure that it resonates with the genuine aspirations of the ASEAN peoples.

For future endeavors, the role of AIPA can be further enhanced in ensuring that the purpose and principles of the ASEAN Charter become an integral part of the ASEAN Community. In realizing the vision of an ASEAN Community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated, and socially responsible, the Assembly can play a pivotal role in entrenching the concept of a people-centric ASEAN.

Nuttin on the other hand has positive views with regard to the future role of AIPA in ASEAN integration process by mentioning that:

> With progress being made towards economic integration and recognition of the need to be more people-oriented, discreet reflection is on-going in ASEAN on the ways to enhance its legitimacy. There are growing signs of a wider regional interest, and maybe of more ambition, to study and understand how democracy can work at the regional level. AIPA's role is indeed likely to grow in the future, albeit slowly, to eventually become the parliamentary arm of ASEAN, an outcome which has been strongly and repeatedly supported by the EP. (Nuttin, 2015, p.38)

Furthermore, the regular interaction among parliamentarians of the region has seen AIPA play a positive role within the context of the regional and international parliamentary relationships. The Assembly has also served as catalysts in influencing national policies and laws in the sense that those parliaments have to take into consideration when designing national policies or laws that it must be in line with the national interest of the ASEAN people.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF AIPA IN ASEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS

In this Chapter, an institutional analysis of AIPA will be conducted in the light of the template developed by Franklin De Vrizie (De Vrieze, 2015) on the basis of the seminal work of Jofre Rocabert (Rocabert, 2014) in order to better grasp and present the role of AIPA in ASEAN integration process by revealing its strengths and weaknesses.

In light of all these analyses, the main argument of the thesis is, despite having important functions in many respects including the provision of a platform for parliamentary engagement in region-wide issues; its institutionally weak and blurred relations with ASEAN which results in the absence of legislative, oversight and budgetary powers, especially the lack of participation in decision-making processes regarding regional policies within the ASEAN framework, limits AIPA's role in the ASEAN regional integration process.

5.1. Role of AIPA in the ASEAN integration process

AIPA as a parliamentary platform offers a chance for members of parliament from the ASEAN countries to have discussions regarding regional issues, share ideas and contribute to the making up of regional policies. Major objectives of AIPA include promoting peace stability and prosperity within the ASEAN area by its parliamentarians' mutual understanding and collaboration while supporting objectives as well as principles of ASEAN.

AIPA is an important mechanism for parliamentary engagement within the framework of ASEAN; it fosters cooperation, dialogue and understanding among parliamentarians towards regional integration. Annual gatherings of AIPA bring

together MPs from all over ASEAN member countries who congregate on various regional issues. Legislators are be able to exchange views on various regional issues with a view to harmonize policies and legislation.

AIPA is important with regard to the evolution of the political environment in Southeast Asia, even though its significance at the regional level is still relative. A number of academics and members of civil society have criticized ASEAN for being elitist and have advocated for the creation of a 'social ASEAN,' an organization that would be more inclusive and benefit all of the region's residents. According to this view point, achieving outcomes that is visible to the citizens is the largest problem facing ASEAN and parliaments, as the representatives of the people, are crucial in this situation. It's argued that an increase in AIPA's involvement and enhancement of its role in regional integration process, although gradually, will become an inevitable reality in the future (Vandewalle, 2015, p.10).

By providing the legislatures of ASEAN member nations a forum for parliamentary cooperation and communication, AIPA contributes significantly to the integration of the region. Some of the primary roles that AIPA plays in the ASEAN integration process can be presented as follows:

Legislative Participation: The ASEAN integration process is facilitated by parliamentary participation through AIPA. Legislators from ASEAN member nations convene to deliberate and share perspectives on matters pertaining to regional integration. In order to ensure that legislative viewpoints are considered, AIPA gives legislators a forum to participate in the creation and evaluation of regional agreements and policies.

Dialogue and consensus-building: AIPA serves as a platform for sharing of ideas and consensus-building amongst ASEAN member country legislators. Open dialogue information exchange and cooperative decision-making are all made possible by it. AIPA increases parliamentarians understanding of one another their cooperation and the harmonization of their points of view all of which contribute to the success of the ASEAN integration process.

Harmonization of Legislation: AIPA advocates for the harmonisation of national laws with the objectives of regional integration. In order to support the implementation of ASEAN agreements and initiatives it encourages member nations to enact or amend domestic laws. By providing a forum for legislators to exchange experiences and best practices in legislative alignment AIPA can promote legal convergence and harmonization throughout the ASEAN area.

Public Awareness and Participation: AIPA interacts with the general public to encourage public awareness and participation in the ASEAN integration process. Public awareness of the advantages, difficulties and ramifications of regional integration is increased through information dissemination, public consultations and other processes. By involving legislators AIPA ensures that the public can offer feedback on issues related to regional integration and helps close the information gap between ASEAN institutions and the public.

Capacity-Building: To improve parliamentarians' comprehension of ASEAN integration issues AIPA offers capacity-building programs to ASEAN parliaments. To assist legislators and parliamentary staff in their involvement with the ASEAN integration process it provides workshops training and educational resources. AIPA helps parliaments become more capable of supporting ASEAN initiatives and taking part in regional integration-related legislative processes. ASEAN integration process can become more inclusive transparent and democratically governed with the help of AIPA.

Concerning the future potential of AIPA with regard to the fulfilment of its role in ASEAN integration process, Deinla puts forward the road map by stating that:

> For AIPA to fulfil its enhanced role in the ASEAN Community, the current challenge lies in resolving both its practical and its substantive capacities, rather than in the perception of disparity in the status of relationship between AIPA and ASEAN. Practical considerations refer to AIPA's own institutional capacity and the establishment of institutional linkages between AIPA and ASEAN. AIPA's substantive challenge pertains to how it can be a genuine peoples' representative in ASEAN and how it can likewise embody the values of inclusive participation and deliberation in its practices in both regional and national processes (Deinla, 2013, p.28).

Through parliamentary involvement, AIPA can guarantee that decisions regarding regional integration align with democratic principles and take into account the views and interests of the public. It can act as a link between ASEAN institutions and member nations legislative bodies enhancing the authority and efficiency of ASEAN's regional integration. However, due to the lack of effective channels including the decision-making processes for direct parliamentary input, AIPA's role in ASEAN integration process is limited. AIPA exercises mainly recommendatory and transmission belt functions in assisting the implementation of regional policies decided by member governments (Rüland and Bechle, 2014, p.82).

5.2. Institutional Relations between AIPA and ASEAN

> There is increasing recognition on the part of AIPA and ASEAN of the necessity to strengthen their relationship and cooperation. However, there is likewise a need to re-examine the existing basis of the relationship and the capacity required to develop a more effective mode of engagement. AIPA wants a voice in ASEAN community building, and ASEAN acknowledges that it should have one. The mutual recognition of this necessity from both entities means that there is a more enhanced and visible role for parliamentarians in ASEAN and thus improved prospects for more inclusive representation, participation and deliberation in regional governance and decision-making. The current legal frameworks in ASEAN and AIPA have their limitations in that AIPA is not be in a position to play a formal legislative and oversight function in the ASEAN Community. There is no impediment, however, from moving beyond the current ad hoc and informal consultative relationship into a more robust and effective collaboration (Deinla, 2013, p.27).

AIPA as an international parliamentary organization adopts resolutions that are not binding in nature and has established a working relationship with ASEAN, although a limited one, which gives AIPA some sort of a say albeit in a symbolic manner. However, more strengthened relationship is needed with well-established channels as put forward by Habegger by stating that:

> in order to provide effective parliamentary control, certain institutional and procedural prerequisites are needed: institutional links between the parliamentary body and the intergovernmental bodies must exist, and these links must allow the development of mechanisms that enable and facilitate forms of parliamentary control such as demanding and obtaining information, being consulted on political matters or being involved in the organization's decision-making process. The participation of parliamentary bodies may then

> stimulate public debate, strengthen the transparency of intergovernmental processes, influence the policy outcome of an international organization and therefore contribute to improved democratic governance (Habegger, 2010, pp.191).

Based on the ASEAN Charter and AIPA Statute, it can be observed that the institutional relationship between AIPA and ASEAN is quite problematic. ASEAN Charter designates AIPA as an associated entity and only reference to AIPA is at Annex II titled 'Entities Associated with ASEAN' among other business organizations, think tanks and academic institutions and civil society organizations (ASEAN Charter). Obviously, the absence of a clearly-defined status of AIPA as a legislative organ of ASEAN is an important factor in the overall performance of AIPA and as well as the level of the relationship between the two organizations. AIPA, on the other hand, has reserved a special section for ASEAN in Article 18 of its Statute, titled 'Partnership with ASEAN', and foresee the establishment of:

> regular communication, interaction and consultation with ASEAN to ensure better coherence and cooperation between the ASEAN governments, the National Parliaments of ASEAN Member States, and stakeholders in ASEAN, as well as to enhance relationships with ASEAN bodies (AIPA Statutes, Article 18).

Therefore, when we compare the internal regulations of the two organizations, AIPA Statutes has a stronger reference to ASEAN whereas ASEAN diminishes the role of AIPA by mentioning it at the Annex of the ASEAN Charter among other associated entities such as NGOs and think tanks. As far as the practical side of the relationship between the two organizations is concerned, 'ASEAN-AIPA Interface' comes forward as the only institutionalized relationship which goes not further than a symbolic gathering between the heads of governments and speakers of parliaments and falls short of providing a platform for the law-makers to deliver their priorities and concerns to the executive branch in an effective and detailed manner.

5.3. Main reasons for the limited role of AIPA in the ASEAN integration process

AIPA has so far played a limited role in the ASEAN integration process as it has not presented a satisfactory performance and has not fulfilled its promises in areas such

as strengthening democratic governance in ASEAN, enhancing democratic accountability of ASEAN and help in remedying the democratic deficit, promoting people-centered and inclusive regional development and fostering greater transparency and accountability in ASEAN decision-making,

It is asserted that if parliamentary assemblies have the required structural and functional conditions, they can exercise some degree of influence over intergovernmental bodies. However, a comprehensive evaluation of their work also has to conclude that they seldom achieve their own goals and frequently fall short of the expectations they set for themselves. The reasons could be many, but the most significant ones have already been addressed: the absence of institutional ties to intergovernmental organizations; the absence of a system that works well to hold them accountable; the loss of energy caused by taking on too many tasks without establishing clear priorities; or the incapacity to raise enough public awareness to exert enough political influence (Habegger, 2010, p.199).

ASEAN is still solely a governmental organization; although it recognizes the value of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, it does not provide it any power and authority. The ASEAN Charter was not drafted with input from the parliaments of the ASEAN member states. ASEAN Charter does not include anything about legislative action or the creation of an ASEAN Parliament. AIPA is merely included in Annex 2 as an entity associated with ASEAN alongside business associations and civil society groups, rather than being a fundamental component of the institutional framework. These are significant deficiencies that add to ASEAN's democratic deficit. As a result, it's claimed that ASEAN Member States view AIPA as a transmission belt for ASEAN policies set by their governments. AIPA has contributed relatively little to policy. It might also be added that it is only a consultative body with very little control. It has very little authority on legislation or oversight (Nuttin, 2015, p.31).

The limits of the EU as a model for the introduction of parliamentary dimension in different regional contexts and the affect of the internal and exernal factors in this process is put forward as follows:

> The intergovernmental and presidential structures of the regional political contexts in Southeast Asia, as well as the reduced level of parliamentary agency have shaped the development of the parliamentary assemblies over time, hindering the EU mimetic potential worldwide. These differences produced fundamental limitations in the accomplishment of EU normative diffusion in regions marked by distinct political and historical traditions. In this sense, prominence is given to the level of agency of parliaments and parliamentarians themselves, and their influence on the institutional evolution, internal organisation and the demand of more decision-making influence within the integration projects. Hence, the parliamentarisation of these institutions can be understood as an overall product of a simultaneous and permanent combination of the external and internal dimensions of parliamentary agency over time (Luciano, 2019, p.10).

It's important to consider that AIPA's limited role in the ASEAN integration process is influenced by various factors, including institutional design of AIPA, and its status vis-à-vis ASEAN, the support and cooperation of member countries, the level of resources allocated to its activities and the broader political dynamics within ASEAN. The limited role of AIPA in the ASEAN integration process can be attributed to several reasons:

Lack of Authority and Powers: In comparison to other similar institutions, AIPA has comparatively little authority and power vis-à-vis ASEAN. Its legislative authority to enact legally-binding statutes or rules is lacking. Rather than using enforcement methods AIPA's influence mainly comes from advocacy and persuasion. This constrained power limits its capacity to shape or influence programs and policies pertaining to regional integration.

Non-Binding Nature: AIPA's recommendations and decisions are not legally binding which reduces its ability to influence the ASEAN integration process. Member nations are not required to put AIPA's resolutions into practice even though it is free to offer advice on issues pertaining to regional integration. The fact that AIPA's involvement is voluntary limits its capacity to guarantee that its recommendations are carried out or to bring about meaningful change.

Executive-Led Integration: Historically member countries' executive branches have spearheaded the ASEAN integration process. In contrast to decision-making headed

by the executive branch the function of parliamentary institutions such as AIPA has diminished. AIPA's ability to influence and participate in the decision-making process is also limited by the executive bodies predominance in forming regional integration policies and negotiations. The decision-making process within ASEAN is based on a consensus-based approach necessitating unanimity among its member countries which is known as the 'ASEAN Way'. Although reaching an agreement on important matters through consensus-building is an essential ASEAN principle, it can also result in delays in decision-making process. This consensus-based approach affects AIPA's role and makes it more difficult for it to advocate for major changes or to assert certain positions.

Differentiating Levels of Legislative Empowerment: The ASEAN member nations have different degrees of legislative empowerment. While some nations have more constrained powers others have stronger parliamentary systems and more oversight from the legislature. The inability of AIPA to effectively represent the legislative viewpoints of its member nations is impacted by this disparity. Parliamentarians' ability or authority to participate in the regional integration process through AIPA is restricted in weaker parliamentary systems.

Limited Institutional Support and Resources: Lack of institutional support and resources influences and restricts AIPA's activities and roles. AIPA depends on the resources contributed by member nations and the AIPA Secretariat's current financial and human resource capacity is insufficient to allow AIPA to perform its duties in an efficient manner. AIPA's capacity to arrange outreach initiatives, carry out research and analysis on regional integration issues and organize capacity-building programs is restricted by this lack of funding and human resources.

In order to overcome these obstacles and increase AIPA's influence in the ASEAN integration process, coordinated actions are needed to strengthen AIPA's legislative empowerment throughout member nations, increase its power and authority in relation to ASEAN especially with regard to decision-making, guarantee equal representation, provide adequate funding and promote increased communication and collaboration between AIPA and other ASEAN institutions.

5.4. Theoretical underpinnings of the establishment and limited role of AIPA

The assessment of the explanatory power of a number of theories applied to the study of regionalism and International Relations show that most of them have difficulties of explaining persuasively the formation, ideational roots, functions and performance of regional parliamentary body in ASEAN. This thesis argues that sociological institutionalism is better equipped than variants of realism, liberal institutionalism, neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism to explain the formation and role of AIPA in ASEAN integration process. Norm diffusion theory will also be utilized in analysing various aspects of the establishment and role of AIPA.Rüland claims that sociological institutionalism provides a more thorough explanation of how regional legislative bodies are formed. These organizations don't boost the political clout of regional powers or act as tools of institutional balancing. Furthermore, they are not meant to support the democratization of regional governance or assist in resolving issues related to collective action, in contrast to AIPA. It is thought that in these kinds of situations, normative forces from the outside and/or inside the region led to the creation of regional legislative bodies like AIPA as institutions that offered regional organizations respectability, validity, and modernity (Rüland, 2011b, p.3).

Lenz (2012) focuses on how ASEAN's parliamentary body came to be and demonstrates how political leaders looked to the EU to imitate its parliamentarization process. Rüland and Bechle (2014) use norm diffusion theory and sociological institutionalism to explain how the ASEAN legislative body came to be. In line with Dri and Lenz, the establishment of the AIPA is interpreted as an effort by ASEAN to emulate the EU, which is thought to be the most successful regional institution, in order to enhance its standing, win respect, and ultimately receive outside recognition.

Additionally, Rüland and Bechle (Rüland and Bechle, 2014) offer proof of "decoupling," indicating a discrepancy between official institutional frameworks and real-world behaviors. As a result, regional parliaments serve only as democratic fronts, and the representational democracy standard that underpins them is more of a catchphrase than a solid foundation. It is claimed that AIPA does not introduce parliamentary democracy into the ASEAN's operations. Rather, it endorses the

endeavor of political elites to uphold a more conservative interpretation of democracy and human rights. (Rüland, 2013 and Rittberger, 2016)

Strong pressure has been applied to ASEAN to reconcile old and new regionalism. The old regionalism is seen as a byproduct of the Cold War, with its sole goals being introversion, isolation from outside influences, and the establishment of government for unique military, political, or economic objectives. Conversely, the new regionalism is multilateral in nature, inclusive of all, and open to the outside world. A new regionalism has a complicated and multi-layered nature since transnational ties are developed with other international organizations or groups of states.

States and non-state entities, such commercial associations and non-governmental organizations, whose objectives transcend national boundaries, are both in demand of the new regionalism. The conclusion of the Cold War raised new expectations for regionalism and caused it to spread to other spheres of activity, particularly the economy. As a result, ASEAN's leaders were forced to reorient the organization to address more significant economic challenges and to increase the scope of its operations by involving the business community and civil society organizations and adding a parliamentary dimension through the designation of AIPA as an ASEAN entity.

Why does ASEAN create organizations that it doesn't utilize? Why is there a transition gap? According to the sociological institutional explanation, it is suggested that major cooperative impulses have originated outside of Southeast Asia, primarily from Europe. Member states of ASEAN have essentially established an isomorphic organization by emulating the European integration process. The concern for international legitimacy is more evident in the institutional growth of the Association than in the objective functional requirement resulting from the unique interactions of member states. The organization’s network governance is the result of this copying process (Jetschke, 2009, p.407).

Jetschke presents a detailed and well-substantiated analysis of the relevance of the sociological instiutitonalist view-point with regard to ASEAN, which has comprehensive repercussions on AIPA as well, by stating that:

> ASEAN’s record of inefficiency and implementation failures is an outcome of its nature as an institutional organization in a sociological institutional sense (March and Olsen 1989; DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Institutional organizations are systems that ‘reflect the myths of their institutional environments instead of the demands of their work activities’ (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 341). They are created to conform to successful models of organization that are considered legitimate, and their behaviour is driven by a concern for legitimacy rather than a preoccupation with efficiency. By designing a formal structure that adheres to a legitimate model, organizations demonstrate that they act on collectively valued purposes in an appropriate and adequate way (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 349). Very plainly, Southeast Asian governments have mimicked the steps of the European integration process since the European Economic Community (EEC) began in 1957. This copying explains ASEAN’s ‘oversized’ projects and its subsequent implementation failures—an outcome also known as ‘decoupling’ (Jetschke, 2009, p.409).

For ASEAN, it is necessary to reintroduce diffusion dynamics in addition to demand-driven explanations of rational institutionalism. Demand-driven explanations contend that ASEAN's light design reflects the member states’ independent and logical thinking as well as the practical requirements of the issues that need to be resolved. As a result of institutional imitation, ASEAN's light design, however, is a product of a social and cultural diffusion process. On the other hand, despite the fact that ASEAN's institutional structure is unable to assist the group in achieving its objectives of rhetorical collaboration, its survival can be attributed to the advantages of network organization.

Despite significant differences in content, ASEAN's networked structure has enabled its member states to sustain an organization that superficially resembles the European integration project. The member states of ASEAN felt that for their organization to thrive, it needed to be adaptable; nonetheless, even the network structure performed the tasks that we anticipate from more bureaucratic institutions, particularly stability in the region. Lastly, the long-running arguments between constructivists and realists regarding ASEAN's place in international relations can be avoided thanks to the network governance idea. Analyzing ASEAN's future obligations may be made easier by understanding the sources of its rhetoric. However, contrary to what realists often say, the network method allows one to problematize order-related issues without discounting the significance of ASEAN (Jetschke, 2009, p.422).

Rüland presents a comprehensive analysis of the involvement of the organicist and corporatist ideas in Southeast Asia and their impact on the formation and development of ASEAN by stating that:

> Organicist and corporatist ideas directly or indirectly imported from Europe since the beginning of the last century have been crucial in reviving, reproducing, modernizing and re-legitimizing the region's 'cognitive prior'. (Rüland, 2012, p.241) They imported or inherited organicist ideas either directly from Europe or indirectly by emulating corporatist institutions of countries which — like Japan and, after World War II, developmental states in East Asia and Latin America — had earlier adopted European organicism. They have localized these influences to varying degrees and thereby modernized and re-legitimized older local variants of organicist political elite culture. (Rüland, 2012, p.243) With the organicist cognitive prior deeply entrenched in the region, ASEAN governments have transferred domestic organicism and its corporatist system of interest representation to regional governance. The latter tallies well with Southeast Asia's intergovernmentalist regionalism based on Westphalian sovereignty norms, which is less an institutional device for solving cross-border problems through collective action, than for strengthening the region's nation states through regional resilience. ASEAN responded very flexibly to the normative challenges it faced over the years, keeping largely intact its state-corporatist system of interest representation (Rüland, 2012, p.245).

The EU did not directly encourage or induce the establishment of major regional organizations including the ASEAN. Nor have these organizations and their reforms been a response to critical interdependence with the EU. But all of them have emulated EU institutions and policies. The uncertainty of the emulators and the legitimacy of the EU appear to be the main conditions for the imitation of EU institutions. Embracing the apparently successful EU model is perceived as a way to overcome crises of multilateral cooperation and integration in the regions (Schimmelfennig, 2012, p.14).

How ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) fits into ASEAN's integration process can be explained by viewing the International Relations (IR) theories on regional integration and International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs). In contrast to other instances, ASEAN is unique in that parliamentarization takes place outside of a democratic or democratizing environment and within an institution that is not authoritative. It is argued that in these circumstances, a combination of three factors

is sufficient to induce parliamentarization: a governance crisis that generates demand for legitimation, combined with general-purpose governance and diffusion, both of which induce the parliamentary institutional form as an appropriate way to meet this demand.

The parliamentarization experience in ASEAN closely aligns with the general thesis that governments purposefully establish IPIs in response to a loss of organizational legitimacy. By claiming to strengthen democratic governance within ASEAN, the establishment of AIPA allowed governments to gain recognition from significant internal and external stakeholders, including significant international donors and partners as well as domestic civil society and parliamentary audiences. They also wanted to benefit from these advantages without jeopardizing their own sovereignty or the "efficiency" of ASEAN decision-making. The history of AIPA is thus a useful illustration of strategic legitimation.

The absence of participation from other stakeholders, including elected lawmakers and members of civil society, and a top-down approach are the main causes of the democratic deficit that frequently plagues regional integration efforts. This is a serious defeat that reinforces the public's acceptance of regional integration and its lack of legitimacy. Representative assemblies need additional power and prerogatives in order to respond to the many challenges posed by regional integration and achieve greater degrees of legitimacy, even as governments are frequently reluctant to give up power. Despite the unique constraints posed by the non-participatory decision-making process and the intergovernmental nature of regional cooperation in Asia, it is maintained that there is a general tendency towards increasing democratic accountability (Nuttin, 2015, p.33).

Thus, concepts derived from norm diffusion theory can be used to explain why ASEAN established a legislative body. This approach's value lies in its ability to combine ideational and rationalist research views, allowing for a less Eurocentric analytical lens to be used for analyzing non-Western IPIs. Using this method, it is feasible to demonstrate how government elites in Southeast Asia strategically responded to internal and external normative constraints by forming IPIs while also

attempting to hold onto important aspects of their organicist and corporatist cognitive priors. Such a conclusion would not have been possible with a purely rationalist approach. Because it considers the normative foundations of these decisions, norm diffusion theory provides a more thorough analysis of the reasons behind the institutional design of regional parliamentary bodies by regional elites than merely rationalist theories.

Thus, by applying norm diffusion theory, it is underlined that regional parliamentary bodies have primarily been established to retain the respective regional organization's "cognitive prior", which restricts decision-making to a small bureaucratic elite (Rüland, 2011b, p.1). This cognitive prior is in the case of ASEAN an amalgamation of imported European pre-Second World War corporatist ideas and local organicist notions of power, kingship and statehood (Rüland, 2011b, p.2).

The establishment of the regional parliamentary body in Southeast Asia can be understood as a deliberate reaction to a functional shortcoming of ASEAN, specifically its lack of democratic legitimacy, according to rationalist institutionalist perspectives as they have been used in the European context. One may then justify the establishment of regional parliamentary bodies as a move toward the greater legalization and constitutionalization of regionalism. Still, it is clear that the reality of regionalism in Southeast Asia is hardly closer to that picture. Here, regional elites have created regional parliamentary organizations to bolster the legitimacy of a political system that is predominantly illiberal. (Rüland, 2014, p.81) Though the diffusion theory provides helpful theoretical traction, researchers focusing on IPIs have just lately begun to employ it, particularly to investigate potential processes of norm spread between the European Parliament and other legislative organizations like the AIPA (Cofelice, 2019, p.13).

5.5. Strengths and Weaknesses of AIPA concerning its role in the ASEAN integration process

In order to analyse the role of the AIPA in ASEAN integration process, we have to put forward the major srengths and weaknesses of AIPA as an IPI by referring to the functions of the IPIs

5.5.1. Strengths and Achievements

5.5.1.1. Institutionalization of Parliamentary Cooperation

AIPA has exhibited a significant performance as far as the institutionalization of the parliamentary cooperation in Southeast Asia is concerned by providing an excellent platform for parliamentarians to gather under different formats and exchange views and take decisions in the form of resolutions regarding various regional issues.

AIPA has played a high-profile role as a platform for parliamentary cooperation in ASEAN region and realized the institutionalization of the parliamentary cooperation through regular meetings of its organs especially the General Assembly, Executive Committee and the Standing Committees as well as the ad-hoc committees such as the AIPA Caucus and AIPACODD. While AIPA Caucus serves as a mechanism to develop common legislative initiatives in order to harmonize the laws of ASEAN member states and foresee the implementation of the AIPA resolutions, AIPACODD has provided parliamentary input in finding solutions to a region-wide problem of the threat of dangerous drugs.

One of the most significant aspect of AIPA is the high number of observers and the mechanism titled ‘Dialogue with observers’ which is introduced as a unique platform to engage with observers in a more institutionilized and streamlined manner. The dialogue between observer delegations and the AIPA are included in the business of the General Assembly in the form of a joint meeting where the representatives of the observer parliament delivers a presentation on the foreign policy of their respective country with a special emphasis on regional issues and different aspects of relations with ASEAN and AIPA. ‘AIPA Strategic Plan 2023-2030’, on the other hand, is an important novelty that will undoubtedly be beneficial for AIPA to implement its work in a more institutional framework by guiding the parliamentarians in channelling the voice from the grassroots while reinforcing legislative measures for the people of ASEAN. The above-mentioned characteristics and frameworks are obvious signs of AIPA’s success in institutionalization of the parliamentary cooperation within the ASEAN integration process.

5.5.1.2. Transparency

Functional and user-friendly web page of AIPA plays a very important role in terms of reaching all segments of society, especially young people, through the effective use of social media, by presenting all AIPA activities in different areas to the public. Having a comprehensive database and an opportunity to access all resolutions transparently is useful in terms of informing the public about AIPA activities and receiving feedback.

5.5.1.3. Synergy and Cooperation with Other Organizations

AIPA is a permanent observet at the IPU. The largest IPI in the world with more than 180-member countries, IPU is an important mechanism for AIPA. AIPA regularly attends IPU General Assemblies held twice a year and uses this significant platform as a means to deliver its message to the wider parliamentary society as well as other activities organized by the IPU such as the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.

Inter-Regional Parliamentary Dialogue between the European Parliament and AIPA is also an important mechanism that demonstrates the two organizations' mutual commitment to foster deeper ties and create dynamic exchanges on the issues of global economy, green and digital transition, as well as peace and security challenges.

The AIPA Secretariat has also been involved in joint projects and programs with various institutions on issues of common concern. AIPA, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized an event to enhance the effective implementation of the ASEAN Guidelines on Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry (ASEAN RAI) which aims to foster collaboration on promoting responsible investment in food, agriculture, and forestry, to further deepen these efforts by carrying out a stakeholders' dialogue and enhancing the implementation of the ASEAN Guidelines on Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry (ASEAN RAI).

5.5.2. Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement

5.5.2.1. Vagueness of Legal Status

AIPA does not have a clear and strong institutional bond with ASEAN due to the absence of a legal basis defined at the statutory documents of the respective organizations. AIPA does not possess relevant and strong mechanisms to introduce parliamentary input to governmental processes within the ASEAN on regional issues.

The lack of democratic control and oversight of ASEAN especially concerning the decision-making which results in the non-existence of democratic accountability of ASEAN also downgrades the role of AIPA in regional integration process.

5.5.2.2. Lack of Mechanisms to Contribute to ASEAN Decision-Making Process

As AIPA has no official status within the ASEAN Charter apart from being designated as an associated entity, it has no clearly defined powers and authorities with regard to the participation of AIPA in the ASEAN decision-making process. Without active involvement of AIPA, ASEAN will suffer from the lack of democratic accountability as its decisions and policies in the regional level is not processed at the parliamentary realm.

The ASEAN-AIPA Interface during the ASEAN Summit is the only vehicle in this regard which provides a platfrom to realize dialogue between ASEAN leaders and AIPA representatives at the highest level. The event supports the interaction between the legislative and executive branches, exchange of information, and discussion on the works of ASEAN at all levels.

ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface, which was held firstly in 2009, serves as a mechanism to exchange views on how executive and legislative branches of ASEAN can work effectively for the betterment of the region. AIPA President delivers AIPA Message which highlights important points for regional integration in the form of recommendation to ASEAN leaders for consideration. However, this mechanism is

far from having an effective function for the regional integration process since it has no firm legal basis and is only advisory in nature.

5.5.2.3. Outreach to the Public and Bringing the Demands of the Public Into the Work of AIPA

Parliamentarians, as the representatives of the people, have a strong potential in terms of conveying the demands of the people to the executive branch. However, since AIPA's influence and role in the ASEAN integration process is limited, and since there is no official channel other than the ASEAN-AIPA Interface, what they can do in this regard is limited despite its potential.

The inability to bring the voices and demands of the Southeast Asian people into the working procedures of ASEAN results in the failure of ASEAN to close the democratic deficit.

In addition, we can say that AIPA and the AIPA Secretariat use social media effectively in presenting AIPA activities to the people and receiving feedback from them. 'AIPA Roadshow' is a unique interaction mechanism to engage the youth in the region and familiarize them with AIPA and its activities. Generally held in one of the significant universities of the AIPA member and observer states, AIPA Roadshow provides a platform for the youth to get to know about AIPA and raise their ideas and priorities to be transmitted to the law-makers.

'Model AIPA' is another significant mechanism in this regard which serves as an educational simulation of the AIPA General Assembly for university students to learn about parliamentary diplomacy, regional integration and AIPA itself as a regional parliamentary organization.

Model AIPA is an educational simulation of AIPA General Assembly, in which students can learn about diplomacy, regional relations, public speaking, and also critical thinking through role-playing. More than that, they also can learn how to lead the discussion in the meetings by role-playing as chairperson in each committee meeting.

5.5.2.4. Election-observation

As one of the most important activities of IPIs as far as democratic legitimacy is concerned, AIPA does not have a structured and institutionalized election-observation mechanism supported by firm legal basis. As AIPA Statute does not include election observation as an integral part of its activities, election observation is being carried out on an ad-hoc basis by the coming together of different national parliamentary delegations with the diplomatic staff members of the Secretariat.

5.5.2.5. Formation of AIPA National Delegations

Formation of the national delegations does not reflect a true democratic character as mostly the delegations are determined by the speaker of the respective parliament and does not necessarily reflect the composition of the national parliament. There are no clear guidelines at the AIPA Statute concerning the representation of the opposition parties apart from the gender clause which requires the existence of at least 3 women parliamentarians at the national delegations.

5.6. Attitude of Law-Makers and Diplomats Towards the Role of AIPA

As the Secretary of the Delegation of Türkiye to AIPA, I had the opportunity to attend the 44th General Assembly of AIPA held in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, on August 5-9, 2023 as well as the 45th General Assembly held in Vientiane, the capital of Lao PDR, on October 17-23, 2024. In this context, I held meetings with the members of parliament from AIPA member countries and the AIPA Secretariat staff, including the AIPA Secretary General. During the working visit to Jakarta as the AIPA Türkiye delegation on May 15-19, 2024, we also met with the members of parliament from the AIPA delegation of the Indonesian Parliament. I also had the opportunity to visit the ASEAN and AIPA Secretariats and exchange views on the various issues relevant to my thesis with diplomats from the Secretariat. During these meetings, I have received first-hand answers to my questions on certain issues regarding my PhD topic from my interlocutors. As members of parliament and diplomats have busy agendas, some of them have sent their answers in written form.

As a result, some conclusions have been drawn regarding the role of AIPA in the ASEAN integration process based on the approaches of the MPs and diplomatic staff of the AIPA Secretariat.

Based on the outcomes of the interviews, lawmakers' and diplomats' overall assessment of the role of AIPA in the ASEAN integration process come out as 'satisfactory'. On the other hand, they consider the structure of the relationship between ASEAN and AIPA as 'a good working relationship'. Interestingly, almost half of the respondants do not agree with the proposition that 'AIPA so far played a limited role in ASEAN integration process'. Parliamentarians and Secretariats' diplomatic staff evaluates the institutional strength of AIPA especially with regard to its Secretariat and budget in general as 'adequate'. They do not see a problem with AIPA's lack of official legal status within ASEAN as a legislative organ. The fact that national parliaments are not represented by permanent delegations at AIPA is not considered as a shortcoming that hinders continuity in AIPA.

Concerning the current status of AIPA within the AIPA member countries and in the eyes of the people in South East Asia, participants think that AIPA enables people's participation in achieving ASEAN's objectives and serves as an important channel for the people to make their voices are heard. As far as the role of AIPA in the ASEAN integration process is concerned, they consider AIPA as a significant mechanism for strengthening parliamentary cooperation which enables people's participation in achieving ASEAN's objectives as well as playing a vital role in harmonization of legislation. AIPA's status as a center of gravity in international arena as reflected in the growing number of observer parliaments, AIPA's mission to enable people's participation in achieving ASEAN's objectives and being a significant mechanism for strengthening parliamentary cooperation are expressed as the strengths of AIPA. As far as the weaknesses of AIPA as a parliamentary organization that limits its role in the ASEAN integration process are concerned, AIPA's mission as an advisory organ with non-binding resolutions, AIPA Secretariat's lack of required financial means and human resources and the fact that AIPA is not considered as the legislative organ of ASEAN and lacks relevant

mechanisms to reflect its position on issues of concern are regarded as important weaknesses of AIPA.

When it comes to the steps that should be taken in order to strengthen the role of AIPA in ASEAN integration process, they think that AIPA should be incorporated into the structure of ASEAN as a legislative organ, AIPA Secretariat should be strengthened in terms of financial and human resources and AIPA should have a role in approval of ASEAN budget and ASEAN Secretary General. With regard to the prospects for a greater role for AIPA in the ASEAN integration process, MPs and diplomats think that AIPA should develop new mechanisms to strengthen democracy and human rights in the region, financial and human resources of the AIPA Secretariat should be strengthened in order to diversify its activities and increase visibility and AIPA should be designated as the legislative branch of ASEAN so that it can increase its effectiveness in the ASEAN integration process.

5.7. Conceptual framework for analyzing the role of AIPA

I will analyse the effectiveness of AIPA by utilizing an analytical framework developed by Rocabert et al in his work on the institutionalization and authority of IPIs. (Rocabert et al, 2014) The analysis of AIPA will be realized on four dimensions: constitutional status, institutionalization, institutional authority, and synergies with other initiatives. There are certain criteria and indicators for each dimension which have been rearranged and broadened in order to capture the particularities of the Southeast Asian region.

The first dimension, constitutional status, refers to AIPA's relationship with ASEAN together with the information regarding the initiator of the establishment of the AIPA as well as the objectives of AIPA. The second dimension, institutionalisation, refers to the extent the AIPA operates effectively. The third dimension, institutional authority, refers to the powers and competencies of AIPA as well as its autonomy of operation. In terms of powers and competencies, I will analyse the extent to which AIPA has decision-making powers vis-à-vis ASEAN as well. The fourth dimension will explore AIPA's relationship with different IPIs (De Vrieze, 2015, pp.22-24).

5.7.1. Constitutional Status

AIPA was established on 2 September 1977 in order to build closer cooperation among member parliaments and to realize greater participation by the peoples of ASEAN in the effort to achieve ASEAN's primary objectives i.e. to promote economic, social and cultural development in the region; to safeguard the political and economic stability of the region; and to serve as a forum for the resolution of intra-regional differences. (AIPA Statutes) AIPA is designated as an associated entity of ASEAN (ASEAN Charter).

5.7.2. Institutionalization

AIPA consists of parliamentarians who also sit in the national parliaments of each ASEAN member state. There are currently 10-member states. Each member state has one vote and seats are assigned on an equal footing i.e. at most 15 members for each parliament. There is a maximum of 150 full members of AIPA. There exists no regulation concerning the fair representation of the political parties or groups in their national parliaments at the national delegations apart from a quoata for women parliamentarians i.e. at least 3 members of each delegation should be women. Thus, delegations are mostly determined by the Speaker and mainly from the members of the governing party which is not in line with democratic character of representation. 23 parliaments from all over the world including USA, Australia, European Parliament and Türkiye participate in the work of the AIPA as observer. There is also another status which is called 'guests', referring to those countries invited to the General Assemlies by the host parliament on an ad-hoc basis. The governing structures of the AIPA are the General Assembly and Executive Committee. The Assembly takes decisions by adopting resolutions. AIPA has six standing committees in addition to a number of ad-hoc committees. The General Assembly and the committees meet at least once a year.

AIPA has a comprehensive web-site with information on the establishment of AIPA, the composition of delegations and committees offered to the general public. The site also includes the final versions of the resolutions as well as all statutory documents.

Preliminary versions of the documents can be reached via web-sites formed by the host parliament of the General Assemblies. Calendar of past and upcoming meetings can also be easily accessed through this website.

5.7.3. Institutional Authority

AIPA has a substantial autonomy vis-à-vis ASEAN, the executive branch. It is free to consider any issue, adopt its own statute, elect its President and select its Secretary General. However, AIPA has very little power and authority vis-à-vis ASEAN. AIPA cannot raise any demand for action from member governments on a certain issue. It has no authority to raise written or oral questions to the governmental representatives. It has no say on the admission of new members to the ASEAN. AIPA resolutions are not binding and its powers are mostly limited to deliberation. The Assembly does not have a specific role that enable the involvement in the signature and ratification of aggrements by ASEAN. It does not have a say even in the form of a recommendation in the determination of the budget of the ASEAN. AIPA has no formal rights to oversee the other bodies of ASEAN nor the election of the bureaucrats such as the Secretary General of ASEAN.

5.7.4. Synergies With Other Initiatives

AIPA has a historically rooted relation with other IPIs such as the European Parliament as well as national parliaments including USA, Australia, Canada and Türkiye by designating them as observer parliaments. 'Dialogue with Observers' is a unique and institutionalized mechanism which gives the parties the opportunity to exhange views of common concern during the meetings held at the margins of the General Assemblies. The Assembly has also developed regular contacts with a certain number of IGOs such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other specialised agencies of the United Nations. AIPA has a permanent observes status at the Inter Parliamentary Assembly (IPU) and has been attending the IPU General Assemblies regularly utilizing this platform to deliver a speech and inform the participants from 180 countries representing the world parliaments on the work of the AIPA.

5.8. Benchmarking: A Comperative Analysis of AIPA with other IPIs across regions

In order to make a comparative analysis, IPI's from different geographical regions will be analysed. These are PACE from Europe, ECOWAS Parliament from Africa, PARLATINO from America and TURKPA and AIPA from Asia. I have deliberately ignored the European Parliament as it would not be a correct and healthy comparison unit as a supranational organization consisting of directly elected deputies with extensive powers in the European integration process. Therefore, I have picked up PACE as a benchmark at this point as PACE has some advanced powers defined in its statutory documents and regarded as one of the oldest and developed IPIs.

5.8.1. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

The Council of Europe (CoE) was established in 1949 after the Second World War to ensure respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law in European countries. The CoE currently has forty-seven members. The CoE has contributed to the establishment of many international norms on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, monitors the implementation of these standards and carries out cooperation programmes to assist member states in implementing the standards. Two of the significant organs of the CoE are the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

The Committee of Ministers is composed of the foreign ministers of the member states or their representatives and is the main decision-making body of the CoE. PACE, on the other hand, was established by the CoE Statute as a consultative body. The CoE Statute states that PACE may discuss and decide on any issue within the scope of the CoE's objectives and submit its recommendations to the Committee of Ministers.

> PACE consists of parliamentarians who are sent from respective member national parliaments. The number of representatives and votes is determined according to a number of criteria, including the size of the country. The balance of political parties within each national delegation must ensure a fair

> representation of the political parties or groups in their national parliaments. The Assembly adopts three types of text: 1. Recommendations – these are addressed to the Committee of Ministers and require a two-third majority to be adopted; 2. Resolutions – are addressed to any other recipient and require a simple majority of voters to be adopted; 3. Opinions – on membership applications and Council of Europe draft conventions. The PACE has eight committees, with related sub-committees (De Vrieze, 2015, pp.81-82).

As long as budgetary control is concerned, the financial affairs of the CoE remain the responsibility of the Committee of Ministers, and PACE sought a long time to get greater influence over this area. Even though PACE had been repeatedly requesting a greater say in budgetary matters, the Committee of Ministers consistently resisted such demands. Moreover, in respect to supervisory powers, PACE does not have formal rights of supervision over the activities of other CoE bodies. However, members of PACE have the right to put oral and written questions to the Committee of Ministers, to which it is obliged to respond and make reports of its activities. This questioning-reporting mechanism guarantees, to a degree, the possibility for PACE to exercise supervisory powers over the Committee of Ministers, at least in the absence of formally granted powers. More importantly, PACE elects a number of key personalities in the CoE, such as the Secretary General, his or her Deputy, the judges of the European Court of Human Rights, and the Commissioner for Human Rights. In this respect, these elections underpin the importance of PACE's role in constituting the leadership and setting the course of the most prominent institutions of the Council of Europe. For the better part of its history, PACE has acted as a critical driver of change within Europe, especially in the aspect of acting as an international watchdog for human rights. It played a major role in ending the death penalty in Europe by making the abolition of it a condition for accession to the CoE. Up to now, PACE has played an important role in the transition process of ex-Communist countries toward democracy, urged the elaboration of new conventions about key issues, and offered a platform for debating controversial social and political issues.

PACE's role as a "human rights watchdog", a motor of ideas and a forum for debate has triggered positive change and helped to steer the continent towards a set of shared values. PACE has realized significant achievements throughout its history

especially “by ending the death penalty in Europe by making it an accession condition; helping ex-Communist countries move towards democracy; endowing Europe with common symbols: the European flag and anthem; inspiring a host of national laws also by pressing for new conventions and acting as a forum for debating controversial social or political issues.” (De Vrieze, 2015, p.85).

Nevertheless, the decisions of PACE are largely non-binding, notwithstanding these powers, and thus it exercises largely deliberative and advisory powers. Its recommendations and opinions can influence policy but, as a general rule, their decision-making powers have been left with the Committee of Ministers. However, the strength of PACE in influencing policymaking within CoE cannot be belittled. It is generally accepted that over one-third of the conventions adopted by the Council of Europe originated as recommendations from PACE. Moreover, PACE takes part in the accession procedures of new member states. Although PACE does not have the formal right to veto the decisions of the Committee of Ministers, it has succeeded in delaying or shaping certain decisions over practice by delaying its opinion on applications for membership and thus exercising a consultative role as a means to ensure that new members comply with CoE standards. All in all, PACE has extensie power and authority vis-à-vis the CoE which is not the case in other IPIs in general.

5.8.2. ECOWAS Parliament

The ECOWAS Parliament is one of the institutions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is a forum for dialogue, consultation and consensus for representatives of the people of West Africa with the aim of promoting integration. It was established under Articles 6 and 13 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty of 1993. The initial Protocol establishing the Parliament was signed in Abuja on August 6, 1994. The Parliament is composed of one hundred and fifteen (115) seats. Each Member State shall have a guaranteed minimum of five (5) seats. The remaining forty (40) seats shall be shared on the basis of population.

ECOWAS Parliament, which consists of 15 member parliaments, has extensive powers and authorities vis-à-vis the executive branch. Although it aims to be

composed of directly elected deputies, this has not yet been realized. Therefore, it carries out its work with the participation of delegations consisting of MPs determined by the parliaments.

The main objectives of the ECOWAS Parliament are to facilitate the free movement of people and goods by increasing communication between member states, to make rural areas more accessible, to interconnect energy networks, to increase cooperation in the media sector, to develop common public health and public education policies, to revise the ECOWAS Founding Treaty and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The ECOWAS Parliament's relationship with the Commission and other Community bodies is regulated by a separate protocol adopted in 2006. This protocol states that the ECOWAS Parliament may send a recommendation, regulation or decision on a matter it deems relevant to the Commission, and that the Commission will then send the Parliament proposed amendments, if any. If one of the Community bodies requests Parliament's opinion, the Community bodies prepare the recommendation, regulation or decision and send it to Parliament. Parliament sends its opinion to the Commission for transmission to the Council of Ministers. With an additional protocol adopted in 2016, the powers of the ECOWAS Parliament vis-à-vis the Community bodies were significantly increased (Supplementary Act Relating to the Enhancement of the Powers of the ECOWAS Parliament, website of ECOWAS Parliament).

The objectives of the ECOWAS Parliament are to contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of objectives and policies of the Community; strengthen representative democracy in the Community; ensure the right of scrutiny and involvement of the West African populations in the process of integration of the region; contribute to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region; promote and defend the principles of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, transparency, accountability and good governance.

The Parliament shall be involved in the enactment of all Community Acts relating to ECOWAS Economic and Monetary integration policies or the Treaty; shall be

involved in the adoption of the Community Budget; shall exercise Parliamentary oversight functions over the activities of the Community and adopt the appropriate Resolution; may consider issues relating any matter concerning the Community, in particular to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and make recommendations to the Institutions and Organs of the Community; may in collaboration with the Council and the Commission propose model and uniform laws to the Community.

Referral to Parliament is mandatory in the following areas: community budget; revision of the Treaty and its annexes; annual audit reports of Community organs and institutions; adoption or review of all Community Acts relating to ECOWAS Economic and Monetary Integration. An opinion of Parliament is required on the consideration of the Community budget and annual audit reports. The Mandatory Assent of Parliament is required fort he revision of the Treaty and its annexes; promotion and protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and adoption or review of all Community Acts relating to ECOWAS Economic and Monetary Integration. (https://www.parl.ecowas.int/, website of the ECOWAS Parliament) The Parliament shall have financial autonomy over the execution of its own budget and gives its Opinion on the Community budget. Representatives shall be elected by direct universal suffrage by the citizens of Member States and each Member State shall ensure at least 30% female representation in their Parliamentary delegation. Parliamet members may submit written or oral quesions to the Council and Commission.

Natural or legal persons who are citizens of ECOWAS member states may, either alone or together with other citizens or persons, submit petitions to the ECOWAS Parliament on matters that directly or indirectly affect them and fall within the scope of ECOWAS activities. The responsible Committee may consult other Community bodies on the petitions accepted, and may organize hearings and fact-finding visits. The Committee shall inform Parliament of the measures taken on the petitions. The proceedings on the petitions are made publicly accessible in a database.

The ECOWAS Parliament’s internal rules also include rules governing relations with other community bodies. Accordingly, the chairpersons and officials of other

community bodies may speak in parliament. The President of the Parliament shall regularly inform the other community bodies about the activities of the parliament. The Council of Ministers shall also be obliged to submit regular annual reports to the Parliament on its work. The Parliament may request the opinion of the Court of Justice for the interpretation of Community legal texts. This opinion is binding on the Parliament. The Chairperson of the Commission shall address the ECOWAS Parliament after his/her appointment and answer questions put to him/her. Members of Parliament may ask the Chairperson of the Commission questions in writing or orally (Ozansoy, pp.27-29).

5.8.3. The Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO)

The Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) is a regional, permanent parliamentary organization composed of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a consultative assembly similar to the early European Parliament. Currently the institution is being considered to become the legislative organ of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

> PARLATINO does not have an organic link with the the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and does not have any power or authority vis-à-vis the executive branch. PARLATINO gathers once a year in its permanent location in Panama. It has no decisional authority and limits itself to passing agreements, recommendations and resolutions that are not binding upon any other body or organization. PARLATINO is not the representative, deliberative or decisional body of any regional organization, but has rather had an independent status since its very inception. This characteristic is unique, as parliaments are generally institutions which belong to some wider encompassing entity (Malamud, 2007, p.91).

The establishment of the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) was decided in December 1964; however, the founding treaty was adopted in 1987. The members of PARLATINO are the parliaments of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Netherlands Antilles (Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten), Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela. PARLATINO's objectives are the defence of democracy, the promotion of regional integration and the

strengthening of cooperation among parliamentarians and parliaments across Latin America.

Its main bodies are the General Assembly, the Executive Board and the Standing Committees. The General Assembly is the main decision-making body and has the authority to decide on the establishment of other bodies. The Secretariat consists of the Secretary General, his deputy and the executive secretary. The general duty of the Secretariat is to support the activities of PARLATINO. When the legal documents and activities of PARLATINO and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States are examined, it is seen that there is no connection between the two institutions. In this context, PARLATINO aims to be the legislative wing of the Community; however, there has been no development in this regard to date (Ozansoy, pp. 117-118).

Malamud evaluates the peculiar status and role of PARLATINO by stating that:

> PARLATINO is a symbolic rather than an operative body, capable of hosting deliberation on regional and inter-regional affairs but with no prospect of ever becoming a decisional organ. It lacks both political significance and social roots. Its main historical merits have been to provide a beacon for democratic aspirations and parliamentary procedures during the dark era of Latin American dictatorships; its main shortcomings have possibly originated in its not belonging to any significant, more encompassing organization (Malamud, 2007, p.92).

5.8.4. Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA)

The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA) was established by the Agreement signed by the Heads of Parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye on November 21, 2008 at the Dolmabahçe Palace in İstanbul. On September 29, 2009, the First Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (formerly known as the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries) was held in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Rules of Procedure of TURKPA, Regulations of the Secretariat and the Baku Declaration were adopted at this Plenary Session. It was also decided that the

TURKPA Secretariat would be permanently located in Baku. (About TURKPA, TURKPA website)

The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States is committed to respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of state borders, non-interference in internal affairs and equality; takes as a base the cooperation of the member states with each other and the third parties under these principles. TURKPA contributes to strengthening the existing ties between the member states in all fields through the development of parliamentary diplomacy. The main objectives of TURKPA include strengthening of political, legal and economic capacities of the member states, increasing prosperity by ensuring full and efficient use of natural resources and advancement of relations in social and cultural spheres. According to Article I of the Rules of Procedure (RoP), TURKPA shall provide a legislative basis for the development of cooperation between the parties in the legal, economic, socio-cultural, environmental and other fields of common interest. The Assembly shall develop inter-parliamentary cooperation; accept recommendations on the approximation of national legislation; carry out an exchange of information and experience; collaborate to provide a legislative support on the areas of mutual importance for the Parties; contribute to the development of relations between Turkic countries by means of strengthening the parliamentary diplomacy between Parties (TURKPA Rules of Procedure).

TURKPA's main bodies are the Council of Assembly, Plenary Session and the Commissions. The Council of Assembly carries out the coordination of the Assembly's activities. The Plenary is the main decision-making body. Each parliamentary delegation shall have equal rights and one vote. All the decisions during the Plenary Session shall be adopted by consensus.

TURKPA has so far developed a structured and working mechanism for election observation in member countries which strengthens democratic legitimacy. TURKPA's increasing efforts in the preparation and adoption of model laws has also paved the way for harmonization and approximation of legislation among member states.

TURKPA is designated as a related organization of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), the intergovernmental organization of the Turkic states. However, TURKPA does not have any power or authority vis-à-vis the executive branch i.e. Organization of Turkic States (OTS). It has no decisional authority and only adopts declarations and recommendations with non-binding status which are sent to relevant governmental bodies. Article XIV of the RoP on the other hand states that the Assembly shall pursue cooperation with other Turkic cooperation organizations, through the Secretariat, in order to realize a legislative support to the undertakings and initiatives of Turkic cooperation and to put in action own recommendations and decisions (TURKPA Rules of Procedure).

Table 3. Comparison of institutionalization and authority of various IPIs

	PACE	**ECOWAS Parliament**	**PARLATINO**	**TURKPA**	**AIPA**
I. Constitutional Status					
1.1. Year of establishment	1947	1994	1987	2008	1977
1.2. Affiliation to international organization	Part of	Part of	None	Related organization	Associated entity
1.3. Initiative of establishment	Gov	Gov	Parliaments	Parliaments	Parliaments
1.4. Objectives of the IPI					
1.4.1. Regional cooperation	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
1.4.2. Political dialogue	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
II. Institutionalization					
2.1. Membership, Composition					
2.1.1. Total full member parliament	47	15	23	4	10
2.1.2. Guests, observers?	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes
2.1.3. Guaranteed women participation	yes	yes	yes	no	Yes
2.1.4. Seat distribution	degre	mixed	equal	equal	Equal
2.2. Governing structures					
2.2.1. President elected by IPI	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes
2.2.2. Collective bureau	yes	yes	yes	no	No
2.2.3. Rotating chairmanship	no	yes	no	yes	Yes
2.2.4. Written RoP exist?	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes

Table 3. (continued)

2.3. Secretariat of the IPI					
2.3.1. Fixed or rotating?	fixed	fixed	fixed	fixed	Fixed
2.3.2. Permanent staff?	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes
2.3.3. Parliaments' budget contribution	gov	parliament	parliament	parliament	Parliament
2.4. Committee structure					
2.4.1. Number of committees	8	14	13	4	6
2.4.2. Committees have rappourteurs?	yes	Yes	yes	yes	Yes
2.5. Frequency of meetings/year					
2.5.1. Minimum of plenaries	4	2	1	1	1
2.5.2. Minimum of committee meetings	4	2	2	1	1
2.6. Decision-making rules					
2.6.1. Written rules on decisions	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
2.6.2. Consensus rule?	no	no	no	yes	yes
2.7. Factions in the IPIs					
2.7.1. Number of factions/del	47	15	23	4	10
2.7.2. Political groups or not?	yes (5)	yes	no	no	no
2.8. Level of transparency					
2.8.1. Own web-site	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
2.8.2. Draft documents public?	yes	no	no	no	yes
2.8.3. Final documents public?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
2.8.4. Plenary meetings open?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
2.8.5. Committee meetings open?	no	no	no	yes	no
III. Institutional Authority					
3.1. Autonomy					
3.1.1. Free to consider issue	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
3.1.2. Free to determine RoP	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
3.1.3. Free to elect President	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
3.1.4. Free to select SG & staff	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
3.2. Powers and competencies					
3.2.1. Decision making int. gov. Org	no	no	no	no	no

Table 3. (continued)

3.2.2. Agenda-setting int. gov. org.	yes	yes	no	no	no
3.2.3. Oversight power	yes	yes	no	no	no
3.2.4. Appointments in int. gov. org	yes	no	no	no	no
3.2.5. Decision own budget IPI	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
3.2.6. Influence budget int.gov. org	yes	yes	no	no	no
3.2.7. Approve treaty changes	no	yes	no	no	no
3.2.8. Accept new member IPI	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
3.2.9. Accept member int. gov. org.	yes	no	no	no	no
IV. Synergies w other initiat.					
4.1. Formal status at UN	yes	no	no	no	no
4.2. Observer to other IPIs	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
4.3. Instit. coop. w. other IPIs	yes	yes	yes	yes	no

(Taken from De Vrieze, 2015 and adapted by the author)

In conclusion, while PACE and ECOWAS Parliament have higher power and authority vis-à-vis the international organization belonging to the executive branch, AIPA, PARLATINO and TURKPA have almost no power or authority. Therefore, when it comes to the role and power of IPIs, different situations arise across different geographical regions. This shows that it is not possible to reach clearly-defined generalizations regarding the roles of IPIs in the regional integration processes. In order to analyse the empowerment of the AIPA as an international parliamentary organization, a survey developed by Cofelice will be incorporated and applied to AIPA which consists of the measurement of the consultative, oversight, budgetary and legislative powers of AIPA vis-à-vis the ASEAN. I will include the PACE as a benchmark in this analysis in order to present a comperative view-point towards the powers and authority of the IPIs. 1 represents the weakest form of power and 4 the strongest one in understanding the results of the survey:

Table 4. Powers of AIPA vis-à-vis ASEAN

	AIPA	**PACE**
I. Consultative Power		
1. The international parliamentary organ may deliver non-binding opinions only upon requests by the inter-governmental / supranational branch		

Table 4. (continued)

2. The international parliamentary organ may deliver non-binding opinions on its own initiative, but only in some limited matters		
3. The international parliamentary organ may deliver non-binding opinions on its own initiative, in all matters of interest for the regional organization	**X**	
4. It is compulsory for the regional organization decision-making bodies to consult the parliamentary organ before taking a decision; these bodies subsequently deliver an opinion, substantiating their choice to accept or reject the parliamentary organ's amendment.		**X**
II. Oversight Power	**None**	
1. debate reports submitted by other bodies of the regional organization and express recommendation thereof		
2. appoint (or concur to the appointment of) members of other bodies of the regional organization		
3. express a veto over association or accession agreements		**X**
4. adopt motions of censure on the activities of other bodies of the regional organization		
III. Budgetary Power	**None**	
1. debate the budget proposal of the organization and express non-binding recommendations		**X**
2. propose modifications for some expenditure items (within a rate of maximum increase)		
3. propose modifications for all expenditure items		
4. reject the budget proposal		
IV. Legislative Power	**None**	
1. The parliamentary organ may request the decision-making bodies to submit appropriate legislative proposals on any matter of interest for the regional organization		
2. The parliamentary organ's assent is required in some specific matters		**X**
3. The parliamentary organ has a significant influence during the phase of proposal of a legislative act, including the right of proposal, in this way limiting the decision-making bodies' legislative autonomy; however, its amendments may finally be overruled by these bodies		
4. The parliamentary organ is fully associated with the legislative procedure, on an equal basis as other decision-making bodies: it may propose amendments during all the phases of the legislative process and veto the adoption of legislative proposals if its amendments are not accepted.		

(Cofelice, 2013)

5.9. AIPA's Role in Remedying the Democratic Deficit

The role of the IPIs in general and that of AIPA in particular in remedying the democratic deficit inherent in the IGOs with which they are associated has been a contentious issue as far as their effectiveness is concerned. The difficulty in finding ways to overcome democratic deficit is fraud by the inherent characteristics of the IPIs as stated by Kraft-Kasack:

> International governance usually involves the coordination of national governments, but not the participation of parliaments. Representative parliamentary participation is, however, the most important channel for citizen participation in modern democracies. As international policy decisions are typically negotiated behind closed doors, it is difficult to attribute decisions to particular decision-makers and hence to hold them accountable. This 'democratic deficit' has often been described and lamented, both in political science and in the political world especially for the EU (Kraft-Kasack, 2008, p.535).

In order for the IPIs to overcome the democratic deficit, certain functions have to be associated with the parliamentary organizations and executed in a thorough manner as emphasized by Kraft-Kasack:

> The criteria of democratic legitimation for parliamentary institutions can be derived from the debates on democracy beyond the state and on parliamentary functions. The criteria for democratic legitimation of international governance consist of preconditions for the fulfilment of parliamentary functions (participation, information, attributability of decisions), parliamentary functions themselves (communication, decision-making, election, control) and properties of democratically legitimate polices (reversibility, furthering the common good). This enables the evaluation of the IPIs' current contributions to the democratic legitimation of international governance (Kraft-Kasack, 2008, p.536).

With regard to the criteria required for the comparison of the IPIs concerning their democratic potential, Kraft-Kasack identifies three sets as:

> First set: participation (1), information (2) and attributability of decisions (3) are prerequisites for democratic legitimation through IPIs. Second set: TPAs can contribute to democratic legitimation by fulfilling the classic parliamentary functions of communication (4), decision-making (5), election (6) and control (7). Third set: policies should be revisable (8) and further the common good (9) (Kraft-Kasack, 2008, pp.537-538).

Table 5. Fulfilment of Democratic Functions by AIPA

Function	**AIPA's Performance**
1. Participation	PF
2. Information	PF
3. Attributability	NF
4. Communication	PF

Table 5. (continued)

5. Decision-making	NF
6. Election	NF
7. Control	
7.1 International	NF
7.2 National	NF
8. Revision	NF
9. Common Good	LF

(NF) function is not fulfilled; (PF) function is only partially fulfilled; (LF) function is largely fulfilled; (FF) function is fully fulfilled

(Taken from Kraft-Kasack, 2008 and adapted by the author)

IPIs in general and AIPA in particular make only a marginal contribution to the democratic legitimation of the regional executive organizations. AIPA contributes little to the aspects of participation, information and attributability in the first set of criteria. Its work is hardly known by the public and improving participation or to help citizens attribute decisions is difficult. AIPA members do not receive much information from their governments and they do not help national parliaments with checking their governments' international activities. On democratic properties of the political output, AIPA does not have the authority to revise policies. However, AIPA further the common good as it promotes transnational values among their members. Hence, parliamentary representation should be warranted at the international level, so that decisions could be influenced as they are being taken. Citizens should have a more direct chance to influence decision-making. In such cases only, the parliament type like the European Parliament may be needed to attenuate the democratic deficit. Two main problems lead to the difficulties AIPA face in fulfilling democratic functions: AIPA is hardly noticed by the public and its work is not integrated into the work of their national member parliaments. AIPA can only improve the quality and quantity of information if additional capacities for information-gathering exist on the international level. Greater public awareness of the work of the AIPA could improve the attribution of decisions to specific actors and it could make AIPA more representative of citizens' interests. Permanent delegations may improve the integration of the work of AIPA into national parliaments, depending on the initiative

of the individual members. Members should be selected according to the party seat allocation in the national parliament to improve representation in AIPA (Kraft-Kasack, 2008, pp.552-554).

5.10. Analysis of the Limited Role of AIPA in ASEAN Integration Process

After presenting the strength and weaknessess of AIPA and analysing its functions and roles in the ASEAN integration process, it is argued that AIPA so far has played a limited role in ASEAN integration process. There are a number of reasons for the limited role of AIPA in ASEAN integration process which will be discussed in a detailed manner based on a three-pronged analysis level.

First and foremost, the limited role of AIPA can be hugely accounted for by structural factors. As earlier noted, AIPA is an advisory body; as such, its recommendations are not binding. Inherently, it cannot have great impact due to the fact that the executive branch inside ASEAN normally becomes superior in decision-making processes. Legally, without enforcement powers for its recommendations, the contributions by AIPA normally lack the needed weight to shake regional integration. Besides, the absence of formal mechanisms to integrate AIPA's input into the core decision-making processes of ASEAN diminishes its capacity to influence policy outputs. Secondly, institutional and procedural limitations within ASEAN itself also restrain the capabilities of AIPA to become more active. ASEAN is based on consensus and non-interference principles, which tend to favor executive decision-making over parliamentary or legislative input. Such procedural rigidity provides AIPA with limited chances to claim its influence in particular regional integration projects that require broad political will on the part of the member states. Secondly, the absence of institutional mechanisms for AIPA to regularly interact with the key organs of ASEAN results in recommendations isolated from broader policy-making processes. Thirdly, political dynamics and unequal degrees of legislative development within the member states have their impacts on AIPA's restrictive function as well. Different political landscapes exist in every ASEAN country where, compared to the principle of legislative oversight, more political importance has been placed into the dominance of the executive. This makes the

quest of AIPA difficult in terms of being taken seriously or implemented at the national level based on its recommendations. It is the contrasts in parliamentary strength and authority that make the ASEAN countries have uneven commitment to AIPA's goals, thereby weakening its regional influence even further. All these put together can explain why AIPA is yet to come up with a stronger role in the regional integration process of ASEAN.

Fourthly, this limited role of AIPA within ASEAN's integration process is partly a result of financial and resource constraints. While the executive organs are consistently funded and supported, the AIPA itself often has to operate on shoestring financial resources and lacks the institutional capacity to formulate and advance its legislative recommendations. AIPA, as a result of a lack of funding, cannot commission or engage in detailed research, regional consultations, or capacity-building activities with members and national parliaments. These factors also make AIPA very inadequate in shaping the ASEAN regional agenda, since it cannot contribute to the same policy specifics and legislative expertise as executive-led bodies. The same resource constraints beset the AIPA Secretariat, which is supposed to coordinate the activities of the Assembly and support the interactions of the latter with other ASEAN bodies. The small number of personnel and lack of technical expertise needed to develop legislation have placed the Secretariat in a position where it is unable to support effectively the legislations which AIPA would like to advance. This institutional incapacity begets the inability of AIPA to establish itself as an equal partner vis-à-vis the more influential organs within ASEAN. Fifth, the so-called ASEAN Way-the principle of consensus-based decision-making and non-interference-is still a major factor in circumscribing the role of AIPA. Forasmuch as ASEAN operates based on consensus, it is usually the national governments that dominate the decision-making process while parliaments only play second fiddle. This governance model strengthens the executive-driven character of ASEAN, thus allowing very limited space for AIPA to influence strategic decisions on regional integration. Moreover, the principle of non-interference, by discouraging member states from criticizing internal politics of other member states, further decreases the space AIPA has for democratic governance or the drive for legislative harmonization across the region. The lack of political will among ASEAN member states to further

empower AIPA exacerbates these challenges. While AIPA might have a potential to serve as a forum of parliamentary diplomacy and bring some quasi-legislative input into the regional integration process, member states have been cautious in endowing it with more binding role or framing it more closely into ASEAN's core decision-making mechanisms. This is because many ASEAN governments would want regional policies to be kept within the ambit of the executive branch; hence, a more empowered AIPA raises potential demands for democratic accountability and legislative oversight at the regional level.

Sixth, unequal development of legislative institutions across ASEAN member states presents another challenge to the effectiveness of AIPA. Besides that, although some ASEAN countries have a relatively sound and independent parliament, the legislature is weak in other countries and functions tightly under the control of the executive. Because of this difference in the strength and function of their parliaments, AIPA cannot easily act as a strong and united legislative arm for the ASEAN discussions. Furthermore, the AIPA's parliamentary recommendations are also often viewed as non-essential or even irrelevant in countries where the executive has more power, further weakening its regional influence. Lastly, it is AIPA's limited visibility within ASEAN and among the member states themselves that further undermines its role that could be played in the regional integration process. While the executive organs of ASEAN are regularly reaching out to media, civil society, and business elites to help disseminate and advance ASEAN's work and stimulate regional debate, AIPA is still little known to most members of the general public, and even to some national legislatures. Without high public visibility and outreach, it is very difficult for AIPA to generate political will in support of its recommendations; it therefore has very weak potential to drive substantive legislative reforms within ASEAN.

AIPA has to start with building its internal capacity, especially investing more in its Secretariat and building research capacities. As discussed previously, the limited budget and minimal staff in AIPA hamstring its reach for comprehensive policy analysis, thorough legislative reviews, and quality recommendations. Secured resources and funding translate to an improved capacity for AIPA to provide evidence-based policy inputs in a timely and relevant manner to ASEAN's regional

agenda. Stronger, AIPA would thus be capable of producing legislative proposals reflective of the interests and concerns of the Parliaments of member states. It may also create an AIPA research unit or policy think tank that would concentrate on priority areas of regional integration, such as economic development, environmental sustainability, and human rights. This unit shall liaise with national parliaments, academic institutions, and external experts to undertake data collection, studies, and production of reports that would inform AIPA's legislative work. Effective preparation of AIPA for substantial involvement in the discussions of ASEAN policy and influencing regional decisions is a much-needed contribution to building a broader knowledge base.

AIPA should further try to formalize its role in decision-making processes within ASEAN. It should be interested in pushing for the establishment of consultation mechanisms that enable AIPA's recommendations to be integrated systematically into ASEAN policies and initiatives. This could, for example, involve the establishment of a standing advisory capacity for AIPA representatives at key ASEAN meetings, such as the ASEAN Summit or the ASEAN Ministerial Meetings, wherein AIPA could contribute parliamentary input on key issues. Formalizing such consultative processes would afford AIPA early input into policy debates to enable it to contribute toward the formulation of ASEAN's regional policies. AIPA's potential to contribute to regional integration also has something to do with the type of relationship it will establish with national parliaments in ASEAN member states. This would first have to do with the fact that necessary harmonization at the national level of legislation, which is in congruence with the broader goals set by ASEAN, requires AIPA's close coordination with these parliaments. The latter might be achieved through regular channels of communication between AIPA and national parliaments, exchanging views, information on policies, and best practices. AIPA can also make capacity-building programs for national legislators available, especially in fields like regional governance, legislative harmonization, and policy evaluation. One, it may empower the national parliaments to effectively contribute to ASEAN's legislative agenda and thus ensure their recommendations are supported by the necessary domestic laws. Another plausible direction is that AIPA may trigger a regional network of parliaments where parliamentarians from various ASEAN

member countries get together to achieve shared legislative objectives. This would give more interconnectivity among national parliaments and spur further cooperation on significant trade policy, human rights, and environmental protection concerns. These relationships, if further strengthened, would provide an avenue for AIPA to more easily push through with the legislative reforms needed to realize the ASEAN ideals. Secondly, AIPA should also open its activities to engage civil society organizations, NGOs, and private sector actors in legislative work with the aim of raising the profile and the influence of AIPA. Public forums and roundtable discussions can be organized with those stakeholders where AIPA would understand the problems of different sectors in a larger perspective and ensure that its recommendations cover the concerns of the wider public. It would also help AIPA elicit public support for the initiatives taken by it and the likelihood of its proposals being implemented at both the regional and national levels. Engaging the private sector in discussion on economic integration, trade agreement, and infrastructure development would provide AIPA with the opportunity to also consider the feelings of businesses and entrepreneurs in its legislative proposals. The collaboration would go toward creating a more business-friendly legislative environment throughout ASEAN, further advanced than the region's economic integration initiative.

AIPA can also call for reforms within ASEAN that will enable parliaments to have a greater say in regional governance. The ASEAN Way is one key area of reform-the principles of non-interference and the consensus-based manner of decision-making that have traditionally circumscribed AIPA’s role. While these principles have been responsible for much of ASEAN’s stability, AIPA can push for adjustments that would allow flexibility in decision-making and a stronger parliamentary diplomacy. This might include demands for majority-based voting in select policy areas, such as economic cooperation or environmental protection, where rapid decisions are considered paramount. Even further, AIPA can advance reforms that strengthen democratic governance within ASEAN-for instance, periodic parliamentary scrutiny of the commitments of ASEAN with regard to human rights, or the drafting and exercise of legislative oversight mechanisms that monitor the implementation of regional agreements. These would counterbalance the executive dominance in ASEAN and turn AIPA into an active player in shaping the political panorama of the

region. All the impediments to AIPA's playing a greater role in the process of integrating ASEAN can be explained by many factors: structural constraints, political dynamics, and limitations of resources. Nevertheless, AIPA can be capable of overcoming these challenges through capacity-building exercises for its institution, advocacy of formal consultation mechanisms, closer ties with national parliaments, and close linkages with civil society and the private sector in playing a more substantial role in shaping the policies of ASEAN. Moreover, this would put AIPA in the lime light of the advanced reforms within ASEAN, where more parliamentary input and democratic oversight are exercised. In that case, AIPA would be more capable of making a serious contribution toward the long-term goals of ASEAN for regional integration, economic development, and political stability.

The factors that cause AIPA to play a limited role can be analysed under the following headings:

5.10.1. Structural Factors

Structural factors refer to the inherent characteristic of IPIs as advisory bodies, issuing only non-binding recommendations and the supremacy of the executive branch in decision-making process in ASEAN regional integration process. Since AIPA is an advisory body that take decisions in the form of recommendations, its role in the regional integration processes is limited and far from being effective.

5.10.2. Systemic Factors

Systemic factors refer to the low level of democratic maturity of the ASEAN region, the pragmatic rationale behind the establishment of AIPA in 1970s as a cosmetic step to cover the undemocratic nature of the regimes in member countries. Supremacy of the executive branch in ASEAN integration process, which is an apparent reflection of the political systems in ASEAN countries, leaves little room for the parliamentary dimension to assume greater powers and authority thereby restricting its role in the regional integration process.

5.10.3. Operational Factors

Operational factors which contains an analysis of the institutional and operational capacity of AIPA based on certain criteria e.g. ambiguity of relationship with ASEAN i.e. although designated as an associated entity in ASEAN Charter in 2008 still not defined as the legislative branch of ASEAN; institutional weaknesses such as the absence of fully permanent delegations at the General Assemblies and parliamentary delegations not representing the true composition of the national assemblies i.e. ruling and opposition parties to be represented according to the number of seats in national legislatures, and the limited budget and personnel of Secretariat which affects the institutional resilience of AIPA in general.

5.11. Pathways for Enhancement of AIPA's Role in ASEAN Integration Process

> As legislatures enjoy little popular trust in Southeast Asia, despite increasing pressures to transform ASEAN into a 'people-centred' organisation, a wholesale normative transformation of AIPA from a 'conference-type' to an 'assembly-type' of regional parliament is less likely. The region's organicist and corporatist cognitive prior is deeply entrenched and constitutes a powerful normative obstacle for the democratisation of regional governance in Southeast Asia. (Rüland, 2014, p.83)

AIPA aims to increase its legislative power and authority to enable greater influence on the decision-making process and contribute significantly to the implementation of ASEAN agreements which may require the harmonization of national laws. To achieve this, AIPA would need to seek an amendment to the ASEAN Charter to increase its role in the legal and judicial area in order to re-establish the original intentions of the ASEAN Founding Fathers that AIPA should play an active role in promoting adherence to the rule of law and good governance in ASEAN.

AIPA must figure out how to become involved and actively participate in ASEAN decision-making if it is to improve its position. The final decisions for ASEAN will undoubtedly be made by ASEAN policy and decision-makers, but AIPA must make sure that it successfully affects these choices for the sake of the ASEAN peoples. In order to effectively advise and collaborate with ASEAN policy and decision-makers,

AIPA must work to strengthen its relationships with them. AIPA and the ASEAN organizations might hold more regular and organized interface sessions or meetings to carry out this. This is crucial to guarantee that the ASEAN is giving the views and interests of the peoples its proper consideration.

> ASEAN needs to shed its image of being an elitist organisation comprising exclusively diplomats and government officials. More should be done to strengthen people-to-people ties among ASEAN Member States, and to develop channels to consult ASEAN institutions, Parliamentarians in ASEAN Member States (AIPA) and the people of ASEAN in all sectors of society. Their inputs can help strengthen cultural awareness, forge closer common ASEAN identity, and improve human social development in ASEAN. The EPG recommends to cultivate ASEAN as a people-centred organisation and to strengthen the sense of ownership and belonging among its people, including enhancing the participation of and interaction among Parliamentarians in ASEAN Member States (AIPA), representatives of the civil society organisations, the private business sector, human rights groups, academic institutionsand other stakeholders in ASEAN. The Principal Organs of ASEAN shall undertake regular consultations with all of the parties mentioned above through appropriate channels (Eminent Persons Group (EPG), 2006, p.6).

The realization of ASEAN Community at the Bali Concord II in 2003 has provided a new impetus and direction to ASEAN in its regional integration efforts. In the enunciated three pillars of the ASEAN community, i.e. ASEAN Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, it is apparent that the ultimate objective of ASEAN regional integration is to create a single cohesive and homogeneous regional community in the likes of the European Union. ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, being an integral and important institution of ASEAN, has to play a pivotal role in the realization of these objectives. AIPA has to advance and expand its roles and influence, so as to ensure that the interests and voices of the ASEAN peoples are being represented and well taken into consideration by the ASEAN policy and decision-makers in their pursuit of regional integration efforts.

AIPA has to figure out how to improve collaboration with other ASEAN organizations in order to support ASEAN integration. AIPA member parliaments must be unified in their commitment to increase AIPA’s power, authority, and

ability, considering the organization's current limited role in this process. Otherwise AIPA will be increasingly isolated from the larger ASEAN community and reduced to being a ceremonial association, which would severely inhibit its ability to contribute to the ASEAN integration process.

Getting individuals to join the community-building train and making the outcomes obvious to the avarege citizen is the main problem facing ASEAN, hence AIPA and its goals are very significant to the evolution of the political landscape in Southeast Asia. Parliaments have a significant role to perform as the representatives of the people in bringing people's voice to the regional policies formulated by ASEAN (Nuttin, 2015, p.37).

> ASEAN should engage representatives of civil society, think-tanks and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA, previously known as AIPO), among others, who can assist to better communicate the objectives and activities of ASEAN to the public, and to provide feedback on their current concerns. They could also be encouraged to participate in ASEAN activities and programmes revolving around the commemoration of key ASEAN activities to promote greater regional identity and consciousness, such as the ASEAN Day celebration, activities in culture, sports, arts, heritage, museum exchanges, exhibitions, publications, students and youth exchanges, and women programmes, etc. (Eminent Persons Group, 2006, p.22).

The biggest challenge to ASEAN is to reinvent itself as a responsive regional actor through the adoption of more inclusive/participatory approaches and bold reforms towards rules-based, formal mechanisms of decision-making (Nem Singh, 2008, p.2).

5.11.1. Strengthening Legislative Power and Authority

AIPA serves as a platform for discussion among its member parliaments. This situation results from AIPA's status as an advisory body whose sole purpose is to assist ASEAN efforts. To ensure that AIPA and the primary organs of ASEAN have the same legal standing, careful consideration of how to place AIPA in ASEAN's decision-making processes is required. AIPA should foresee the implementation of current agreements and following up on decisions taken at ASEAN Summits in order

to strengthen its legislative capacity. This is significant since, for a variety of reasons, many of the ASEAN accords have not been implemented successfully. AIPA may act as a control mechanism to make sure that decisions made at the ASEAN Summit and Sectoral Ministerial Meetings are successfully turned into a legal product in order to tackle many of the difficulties the ASEAN community faces.

> Parliamentary assemblies aim to establish a system of 'checks and balances' between a governmental and a parliamentary body in international organizations as it exists in democratic states (Slaughter, 2004: 255; Walter, 2006: 227-8). Owing to their 'double mandate' of serving both at the national and the international level, all elected parliamentarians represent the interests, ideas and values of their constituents not only in the national parliament, but also in the parliamentary assembly and are particularly suited to forging effective links between the different levels of governance (Habegger, 2010, pp.190-191).

5.11.2. Improving participation in policy-making processes

AIPA involvement may be increased and policy making procedures can be improved by a number of means. This include carrying out studies or alternatives assessments on topics submitted by other ASEAN organizations, conducting legislative effect assessments on national implementing laws, and stepping up communication with the ASEAN Secretariat and other ASEAN organs in the policy-making processes. This implies that when other ASEAN organs are formulating policies, they must take AIPA into account. Additionally, there will be occasions when AIPA must advocate for national constituents' concerns to be brought to the attention of other ASEAN bodies. This will undoubtedly necessitate a profound shift in ASEAN culture and perceptions of AIPA.

5.11.3. Enhancing Resources and Capacity Building

In order to keep up with ASEAN, AIPA needs to properly expand its capabilities both in material terms and human resources. This will allow the organization to produce high-quality inputs, set the agenda, and produce results that are useful when interacting with other ASEAN organs and participating in various ASEAN cooperation initiatives.

5.11.4. Promoting Greater Coordination and Cooperation

AIPA should organize contacts with the ASEAN bodies more often and on a regular basis to encourage better coordination and collaboration. AIPA standing committees and the corresponding ASEAN sectoral entities can communicate more closely. Preparing and debating an 'Action Plan for AIPA-ASEAN Cooperation' would be the most important task AIPA could do to improve collaboration with ASEAN. To strengthen AIPA's position in ASEAN and improve cooperation between the two organizations, this strategy should include precise initiatives, goals and deadlines. This will provide AIPA with a clear purpose and direction to enhance its position and role within ASEAN integration process.

5.11.5. Ensuring Effective Coordination With Other ASEAN Bodies

It is important for AIPA to develop a practice of regular communication with all ASEAN principle organs to know when and how it can provide direct input to ASEAN decisions and activities. It will also need to monitor and review the proceedings of ASEAN Summits to see if there are any areas where AIPA can improve its relations with ASEAN. This will make it possible for AIPA to upgrade its status to a consultative body. By doing so, it will be able to make sure that proposals and decisions made by AIPA are taken into full consideration by the ASEAN.

5.12. Steps to Empower AIPA

1- First and the most important step that should be taken is the clarification of AIPA's legal status vis-à-vis ASEAN and the provision of a strong legal basis i.e. AIPA as a regional parliamentary organization should be designated as the parliamentary organ of ASEAN at the ASEAN Charter. This designation as the parliamentary organ of the ASEAN will enable AIPA to assume full plethora of the powers attributable to IPIs i.e. consultative, oversight, legislative and budgetary powers which will endow AIPA with necessary tools to demonstrate a more active and effective role in ASEAN integration process.

2- Regulations for participation in decision-making processes regarding regional integration within ASEAN in different and appropriate ways and the provision of relevant and appropriate channels for the incorporation of the parliamentary input into the policy making process should be made mutually in the founding documents of both institutions. The necessary steps should be taken with determination for the implementation and effective application of these regulations in a way to guarantee the involvement of the input submitted by AIPA to the policy making in the regional level.

3- Committees should work more actively and hold multiple meetings throughout the year outside the margins of the General Assembly as well. Concrete issues regarding regional integration should be determined as the subject of the meetings and the resolutions and recommendations to be prepared should be shared with the relevant institutions of ASEAN and member countries.

4- Election observation should be included in the founding text of AIPA as one of the primary activities and election observation activities with institutional standards should be implemented in both member countries and neighboring countries in the immediate vicinity based on this legal basis which will increase the democratic legitimacy of both the AIPA and the elections held.

5- AIPA Secretariat should be strengthened in terms of financial and human resources by increasing the budget to a satisfactory level that will enable AIPA to increase its activities and providing necessary personnel to carry out this mission in a more efficient manner. AIPA budget is significantly limited when compare to the ASEAN budget and AIPA has for instance one deputy secretary general when compared to the four in ASEAN. The number of the officers assigned to the committees should also be increased by taking into consideration the wide range of committees on various issues in order to support their work in a more effective manner.

In conclusion, although the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly plays an important role in providing a platform for discussions on different aspects of the

ASEAN regional integration process for parliamentarians and ensuring that inter-parliamentary relations are institutionalized and sustainable at the regional level, it can be argued that it plays a limited role in the ASEAN integration process due to its deficiencies such as not being able to participate in decision-making processes of ASEAN, not having oversight and control over the intergovernmental organization, and not being able to participate in the budgetary process. The strengthening of the status of AIPA and increasing its effectiveness in the regional integration process depends on the designation of AIPA as the parliamentary organ of ASEAN and gaining consultative, oversight, legislative and budgetary powers. However, since it does not seem possible in the near future for the existing political regimes and governance systems in Southeast Asia and ASEAN member countries to evolve in a democratic direction and for the ruling elites to abandon cognitive priorities such as corporatist ideas and local organicist notions of power and statehood that they have maintained for many years, it seems unlikely that AIPA will become a parliamentary organ of ASEAN with comprehensive powers and authority.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. General Overview

Introductory Chapter of this study firstly puts forward the research problem and research questions. Then the conceptual and theoretical framework the thesis is presented. Conceptual framework consists of the notions of regionalism, parliamentary diplomacy and International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs). First the differences between old and new regionalism is presented in order to explore regionalism as a conceptual framework. The purpose is to demonstrate how, during the old era of regionalism, only governments were involved in regionalism; but, during the current one, non-governmental actors, including members of parliament, also participate in this process. Upon examination, the notion of parliamentary diplomacy encompasses all actions taken by parliaments and parliamentarians including International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) in support of the traditional foreign policy practiced by governments. A thorough examination of the IPIs, the fundamental analytical unit of the current study, is provided at the second Chapter including the purposes of its establishment, structures, objectives and the roles they play. The third section examines Southeast Asia's regional integration process within the ASEAN framework, focusing on the concept of the "ASEAN Way" as a distinct mode of operation, as well as its historical context, fundamental dynamics, institutional structure, and organs. Subsequently, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), which was founded in 1977 by the parliaments of ASEAN member nations, underwent an institutional and functional analysis, revealing its efficacy. AIPA's contribution to the ASEAN integration process has been limited thus far, as the analysis of its capabilities and limits in the fifth chapter made clear. The last section includes a general assessment of the study, a presentation of the

study's key findings and its contribution to the literature and some recommendations for potential future research in this area.

In conclusion, the thesis asserts that although the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly plays an important role in providing a platform for discussions on different aspects of the ASEAN regional integration process for parliamentarians and ensuring that inter-parliamentary relations are institutionalized and sustainable at the regional level, it can be argued that it plays a limited role in the ASEAN integration process due to its deficiencies such as not being able to participate in decision-making processes of ASEAN, not having oversight and control over the intergovernmental organization, and not being able to participate in the budgetary process. The strengthening of the status of AIPA and increasing its effectiveness in the regional integration process depends on the designation of AIPA as the parliamentary organ of ASEAN and gaining consultative, oversight, legislative and budgetary powers. However, since it does not seem possible in the near future for the existing political regimes and governance systems in Southeast Asia and ASEAN member countries to evolve in a democratic direction and for the ruling elites to abandon cognitive priorities such as corporatist ideas and local organicist notions of power and statehood that they have maintained for many years, it seems unlikely that AIPA will become a parliamentary organ of ASEAN with comprehensive powers and authority.

6.2. Major Findings

Some conclusions have been drawn from this study with reference to the principles that make up its conceptual framework as well as the study's primary subject, the International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs). Firstly, when discussing regionalism, it is important to highlight the distinction between the old and new conceptualizations. While non-governmental actors were not given a role in the regionalization process under the old regionalism framework, they began to do so under the new regionalism. As a result, in the years following World War II and particularly after the Cold War, parliaments and parliamentarians have also become active participants in regional integration processes. IPIs were created as the institutional reflection of these efforts and have grown in prominence and efficacy.

Despite the fact that IPIs have often been created within the framework of several regional organizations, their efficacy has been questioned and their powers and tasks have largely been limited. Given that this study offers a two-pronged explanation for the situation, it can be concluded that governments have, first and foremost, purposefully limited the influence of these IPIs in the process of regional integration by denying them the necessary powers and authorities, and that they have primarily preferred to conduct the process under the supervision and authority of the executive branch. On the other side, it has come to light that the IPIs, although possessing these restricted powers and authority, lack the institutional capacity necessary to carry out the envisaged responsibilities in regional integration processes.

Examining ASEAN as a model of regional organization in Southeast Asia reveals that it has certain traits that are particularly apparent in the notion of the "ASEAN Way," and that its institutions and operations have developed relatively slowly, primarily because of its reluctance towards institutionalization. Analysis of AIPA's role in the ASEAN regional integration process makes the issue even more clear. Some contend that AIPA was only a cosmetic measure to address pressure from abroad, particularly in light of the circumstances surrounding its creation, to involve the public in the integration process and advance causes like human rights. As a result, AIPA has been denied any jurisdiction or competence to impact decision-making process in the regional level within the ASEAN structure. Furthermore, within the ASEAN organizational framework, AIPA lacks a well-defined role as a body reflecting the legislative authority. It has been concluded that AIPA's function in the ASEAN integration process has been confined to that of an advisory body with no binding authority, given its weak institutional and human resource structure.

A three-pronged analysis explains the limited function of AIPA as resulting from structural, systemic, and operational factors. Because of their institutional characteristics as organizations that take non-binding advisory decisions in the form of resolutions, IPIs inevitably have a limited involvement in this process. Second, it is determined that AIPA's role is limited by systemic factors, such as the low level of democratic maturity in Southeast Asia, the prioritization of the executive branch's role in the formulation and application of regional policies and the devaluation of the

parliamentary dimension in this context, all of which are situated within a framework that highlights the distinctive features of ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries. Finally, an analysis of AIPA's institutional and operational capacity reveals that a number of factors, including its relationship to ASEAN, the ambiguity in its founding documents regarding its powers and authorities, and the Secretariat's limited resources in terms of both finance and personnel, keep it from contributing more effectively to the process of regional integration.

Moreover, as the political environment continues to evolve globally, IPIs such as AIPA will increasingly be expected to assume roles and responsibilities for challenges that transcend borders, including climate change, public health crises, migration, and digital governance. Each of these issues requires cross-border coordination and therefore a multi-national response. The parliamentary voices in crafting responses to such challenges are critical to assure that policies reflect citizen needs and concerns throughout the region. AIPA can work as a representative of the parliaments of ASEAN nations in facilitating dialogue and cooperation, since such issues emerge from beyond the borders, imbuing democratic legitimacy into the processes of regional policymaking.

This can happen, however, only if the ASEAN member states are willing to adopt a more inclusive model of governance that allows for greater parliamentary involvement in regional affairs. This would work to redress the executive dominance now marking the decision-making process in ASEAN and create an open, accountable, participatory framework for tackling the complex challenges facing the region. Furthermore, one important observation from the study is that democratic deficits in several member countries of ASEAN impede the effective development of parliamentary oversight at both national and regional levels.

Strengthening democratic institutions within individual member countries would create a more favorable environment for AIPA to take on a more substantial role. This, in turn, could make the parliamentary delegations to AIPA more representative of the varied political views within each country and therefore contribute to more lively debates and policy discussions within AIPA.

6.3. Contribution of the Study

IPIs and their role in the regional integration process can be considered as an understudied subject in IR discipline. Number of books and articles on IPIs are quite limited. Whereas few chapters exist on ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in books on IPIs, one cannot find a study on IPIs and AIPA in Türkiye as a post-graduate thesis or publication. This research also generally contributes to the understanding of IPIs, as it comprehensively covers AIPA's position within the framework of ASEAN. Looking at AIPA in a Southeast Asian regional integration context, this research will add new insights into how parliamentary diplomacy works in a region characterized by a unique political and cultural environment. The comparison used in this thesis, while analyzing various types of regionalism and the developing role of non-governmental actors, allows for a more critical analysis of the problems faced by the IPIs as a whole and by AIPA in particular. Moreover, it brings one very specific point of view from a country like Türkiye, which has always tried to make a very difficult balance in its foreign politics between the East and West. In the framework of the Asia Anew Initiative, among others, being pursued by Türkiye with a view to deepening diplomatic and economic relations in Southeast Asia, increased insight into the operations of regional institutions such as ASEAN and AIPA is very necessary. The thesis thus constitutes an important addition to the Turkish academic literature on IPIs and AIPA, setting the basis for further research and policy analysis coverage in Türkiye regarding regional integration processes in Southeast Asia in general and the role of the parliamentary dimension in particular. The study further reiterates that the research on IPIs and democratization processes should be extended across different regions. By presenting a case study centered on how political systems in ASEAN member states place limits on AIPA, the research will put forward arguments about the ways in which democratic governance can allow parliamentary institutions at the regional level to be more effective. Such an analysis can then be used as a comparative framework for analyzing the performances of other regional organizations and their respective IPIs, especially in regions where democratic practices vary significantly. Therefore, the current study, based on my academic and professional background, will be a valuable addition to the literature on IPIs in general and particularly in Türkiye.

6.4. Proposals for future studies

International Parliamentary Institutions (IPIs) have not yet been sufficiently and deeply examined as a unit of analysis within the discipline of International Relations. Similarly, studies on the roles of these organizations in regional integration processes especially at the post-graduate level are quite limited. One of the most crucial direction of future research on IPIs is comparative analysis between different regional parliamentary institutions in order to understand what contributes to their varying degrees of influence and effectiveness in the regional integration process. For example, studies on the European Parliament, the Pan-African Parliament, or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe would provide rich insight into the ways that different regional political, cultural, and economic milieus bear upon both the workings and effectiveness of IPIs. These would then be used for comparative studies in finding best practices applicable to less influential IPIs like AIPA for increasing their roles in regional governance. As far as Türkiye is concerned, studies on this subject are almost non-existent. Researchers who want to specialize in the field of international organizations in general and regional cooperation organizations in particular in Türkiye will contribute to filling the gap in this field by addressing IPIs from various aspects and within the framework of different regional dynamics. The formation, objectives and roles of regional parliamentary organizations established within the framework of regional cooperation organizations in regions such as Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, which are located in the close vicinity of Türkiye and are important in terms of the dynamics of Turkish foreign policy, can be analysed and their unique characteristics can be revealed.

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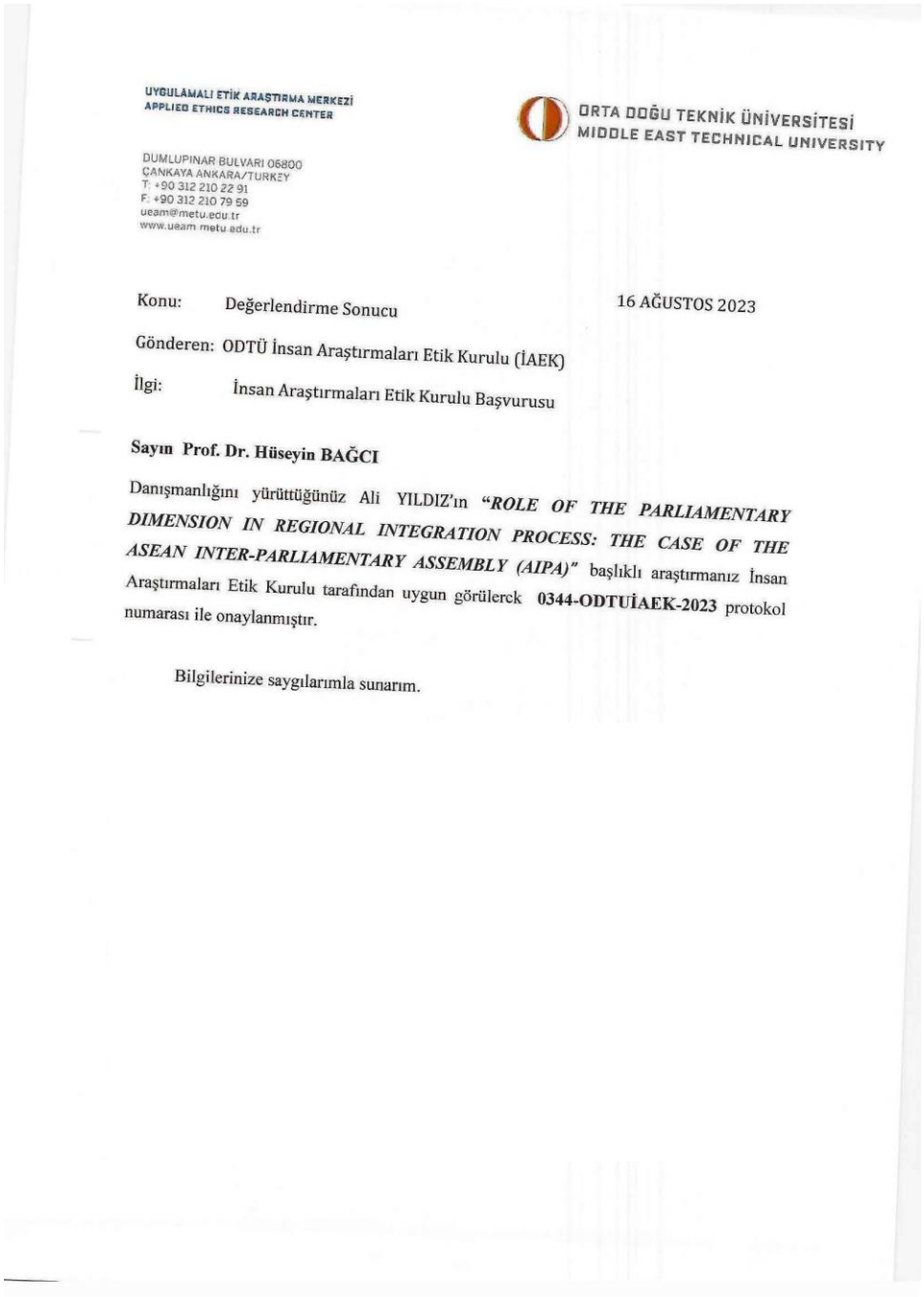
APPENDICES

A. METU APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER PERMIT



UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

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Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu — 16 AĞUSTOS 2023

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof. Dr. Hüseyin BAĞCI

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Ali YILDIZ'ın ***"ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)"*** başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek **0344-ODTUİAEK-2023** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

B. LIST OF INTERVIEWS

ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESS: THE CASE OF THE ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

PhD Thesis by Ali Yıldız

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Hüseyin BAĞCI

Name Surname	Title	Country
Interviewee 1	Member of Parliament	Brunei Darussalam
Interviewee 2	Member of Parliament	Brunei Darussalam
Interviewee 3	Member of Parliament	Brunei Darussalam
Interviewee 4	Member of Parliament	Brunei Darussalam
Interviewee 5	Member of Parliament	Brunei Darussalam
Interviewee 6	Member of Parliament	Brunei Darussalam
Interviewee 7	Member of Parliament	Cambodia
Interviewee 8	Member of Parliament	Indonesia
Interviewee 9	Member of Parliament	Indonesia
Interviewee 10	Member of Parliament	Indonesia
Interviewee 11	Member of Parliament	Lao PDR
Interviewee 12	Member of Parliament	Philippines
Interviewee 13	Member of Parliament	Thailand
Interviewee 14	Member of Parliament	Thailand
Interviewee 15	Member of Parliament	Thailand
Interviewee 16	Diplomat	AIPA Secretariat
Interviewee 17	Diplomat	AIPA Secretariat
Interviewee 18	Diplomat	AIPA Secretariat
Interviewee 19	Diplomat	AIPA Secretariat

C. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Yıldız, Ali

Nationality:

Date and Place of Birth:

E-mail:

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	Middle East Technical University, Department of International Relations	2002
BA	Middle East Technical University, Department of International Relations	1999

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Position
2000-2006	Middle East Technical University, Department of International Relations	Research Assistant
2006-2008	Prime Ministry, Directorate General of Press, Publications and Information	Clerk
2008- …..	Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, Department of Foreign Relations and Protocol	Chief of Unit
2017-2021	Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic States (TURKPA)	Deputy Secretary General

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English, Fluent

PUBLICATIONS

- 'Uluslararası Çatışmaların Seyri', in Nezir Akyeşilmen, *Barışı Konuşmak: Teori ve Pratikte Çatışma Çözümü* (Ankara, 2013: ODTÜ Yayıncılık,) (Turkish)

- 'Güvenlik: Kavramsal ve Kuramsal Bir Bakış', *Demokrasi Platformu* (Yıl 4, Sayı 16, Güz 2008) (Turkish)

- *Avrupa Birliği* (Ankara, 2006: METU Press) with M. Serdar Palabıyık (Turkish)

- 'Turkey and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): From Confrontational to Co-Operative Relationship' in Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu and Seyfi Taşhan, *The Europeanization of Turkey's Security Policy: Prospects and Pitfalls* (Ankara, 2004: Foreign Policy Institute) with Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Bağcı

- 'Turkey's Participation in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): Origins, Basis and Dynamics' in Per Cramer (ed) *Whither Europe?: The Development of a New European Security Architecture* (Göteborg, 2003: Center for European Research at Göteborg University)

- Turkey and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): Anatomy of a Problematic Relationship, Unpublished Master's Thesis. (Ankara, 2002: Middle East Technical University)

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, sayıları II. Dünya Savaşı sonrası dönemde ve özellikle Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinden sonra artmış olsa da Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininde bir analiz birimi olarak hak ettikleri ilgiyi görmemiştir. Bu tezin amacı, ASEAN Parlamentolar Arası Asamblesi'ni (AIPA) bir vaka çalışması olarak analiz ederek bölgesel entegrasyon sürecinde parlamenter boyutun rolünü ortaya koymaktır. Teorik ve ampirik tartışmalarla zenginleştirilecek olan bu analiz, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların bölgesel entegrasyon sürecinin evrimindeki rolünün doğru anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunacaktır.

Dünyamız, II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra başlayan ve Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesiyle ivme kazanan bir bölgeselleşme olgusu yaşamıştır. Bu süreçte bölgesel örgütler ortaya çıkmış, ancak aynı zamanda bir demokratik açıkla da karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. Buna karşılık, bu örgütler bu açığı gidermek ve bölgesel entegrasyon çabalarına parlamento boyutunu ekleyerek halk nezdinde meşruiyetlerini artırmak için kurumsal yapılarına Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşları dahil etmeyi seçmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, bölgesel entegrasyon bağlamında bu kuruluşların işlevi, çağdaş Uluslararası İlişkiler literatüründe önemli ancak sıklıkla göz ardı edilen bir konu olmaya devam etmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu tez kapsamında bu kuruluşların özellik, yapı, örgütlenme ve işlevlerini, bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerindeki eşsiz rollerine özel bir vurgu yaparak araştırmak yerinde olacaktır.

Bu doktora projesine rehberlik eden ana araştırma soruları şunlardır: Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar nedir? Bölgesel örgütler neden Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar kurar? Bölgesel entegrasyon sürecinde Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar için hangi işlevler öngörülmektedir? Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinde hangi rolü oynamaktadır? Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar bu rolleri ne ölçüde yerine getirmektedir? Uluslararası ilişkiler teorileri, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların bölgesel entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü nasıl

açıklamaktadır? ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinin kendine özgü özellikleri nelerdir? AIPA, ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinde hangi rolü oynamaktadır? AIPA, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar için öngörülen rolü ne ölçüde yerine getirmektedir? AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki sınırlı rolünün ana nedenleri nelerdir? AIPA'nın sınırlı rolü, bölgesel entegrasyon ve Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlarla ilgili uluslararası ilişkiler teorileriyle bağlantılı olarak nasıl açıklanabilir?

Bölgeselcilik, bölgeselleşme ve bölgesel entegrasyon kavramları önemli ancak tartışmalı kavramlar olarak kabul edilir. Bölgeselciliği "bölgelerin yaratılmasını amaçlayan politik bir girişim", bölgeselleşmeyi "organik olarak meydana gelebilen bir bölge oluşumu süreci" ve bölgesel entegrasyonu "ekonomik ve sosyal değişimi içeren daha kapsamlı ve karmaşık bir süreç" olarak tanımlamak mümkündür. Daha spesifik olarak, bölgeselcilik, belirli bir bölge için zenginlik, güvenlik, barış ve kalkınmanın dağıtımını kurmayı, sürdürmeyi veya dönüştürmeyi amaçlayan bir dizi fikir, ilke ve somut hedefi kapsar. Buna karşılık, bölgeselleşme, belirli bir coğrafi alan içinde göreceli çeşitlilik ve iş birliği eksikliğinden, siyaset, kültür, güvenlik ve ekonomik büyüme dahil olmak üzere birden fazla alanda gelişmiş iş birliği, entegrasyon, yakınsama, tamamlayıcılık ve paylaşılan kimliğe geçişle karakterize edilen deneysel süreci ifade eder. Bölgesel entegrasyon, davranışlarında değişiklik gerektirmeden iki veya daha fazla ulus arasında belirli konularda iş birliğini artırmaya odaklanan bölgesel iş birliğinden farklıdır. Bölgesel entegrasyonun temel amaçlarından biri, katılımcı devletler arasında politik, sosyal ve ekonomik boyutlar da dahil olmak üzere çeşitli alanlarda iş birliğini teşvik etmektir. Küresel olarak farklı bölgeleri temsil eden bölgesel entegrasyon örgütlerinin dikkate değer örnekleri arasında Güney Ortak Pazarı (MERCOSUR), Kuzey Amerika Serbest Ticaret Anlaşması (NAFTA), Afrika Birliği (AU), Avrupa Birliği (AB) ve Güneydoğu Asya Ülkeleri Birliği (ASEAN) yer alır.

Eski ve yeni bölgeselcilik arasındaki ayrım söz konusu olduğunda, eski bölgeselciliğin köklerinin İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın sonuna kadar uzandığı ileri sürülmektedir. Eski bölgeselcilik, yeni bölgeselciliğe kıyasla daha az teorik, örgütlü ve normatif olmasıyla karakterize edilir. Bu anlamda, eski bölgeselcilik ekonomik ve finansal entegrasyona dar bir bakış açısıyla odaklanması, Avrupa entegrasyon

süreçlerinden güçlü bir şekilde etkilenmesi, resmi kurumsallaşmaya aşırı vurgu yapması ve Soğuk Savaş dinamikleriyle olan bağları nedeniyle eleştirilmiştir. Buna karşılık, yeni bölgeselcilik, Soğuk Savaş döneminden sonra küreselleşmeye yanıt olarak ortaya çıkan daha kapsayıcı bir biçimi temsil eder ve parlamentolar ve sivil toplum da dahil olmak üzere çeşitli düzeylerde ve sınırlarda faaliyet gösteren hem devlet hem de devlet dışı katılımcıların artan katılımıyla tanımlanmaktadır. Bu bakış açısı, resmi kurumsal çerçeveler kadar gayri resmi entegrasyon biçimlerinin de önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Bu doktora çalışması açısından yeni bölgeselciliğin en çarpıcı argümanlarından biri, bölgelerin önceden belirlenmiş varlıklar veya resmi örgütler olarak görülmemesi, bunun yerine, küresel değişimin dinamikleri aracılığıyla ortaya çıkıp geliştikleri önermesidir. Bu nedenle, yeni bölgeselcilik ekonomik, politik, sosyal ve kültürel boyutları kapsayan çok yönlü bir entegrasyon yaklaşımıyla karakterize edilir. Bu bakış açısı, yalnızca bölgeye özgü serbest ticaret anlaşmaları veya güvenlik paktları oluşturmanın ötesine uzanır; bunun yerine, bölgesel birliği ve kimliği teşvik etmeye önemli bir vurgu yapar.

Bu yapılandırmacı anlayış doğrultusunda, Güneydoğu Asya bölgeselciliğinin dinamiklerinin yalnızca büyük güç ilişkileri merceğinden değil, aynı zamanda normlar ve kimlik politikaları gibi fikirsel etkiler de dikkate alınarak yorumlanabileceği ileri sürülmektedir. Normlar ve kimlik, Güneydoğu Asya bölgeselciliğini şekillendiren tek faktör olmasa da gelişiminde önemli bir unsuru temsil eder. Güneydoğu Asya'daki güvenlik düzeninin incelenmesi, yalnızca rejim dinamiklerine veya güç dengesine odaklanmak yerine topluluk kavramına odaklanarak daha iyi hizmet vermektedir. Bu nedenle, Güneydoğu Asya'daki bölgeselcilik, güç siyasetine sadece bir ek olarak görülmemelidir; bunun yerine, potansiyel olarak dönüştürücü bir gücü temsil eder. Güneydoğu Asya'daki bölgesel düzenin kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılması, normlar, kimlik ve kurumsal gelişim konusunda bir farkındalık gerektirir.

Modern dünyada karşı karşıya olduğumuz diplomatik ortam, çok sayıda devlet dışı aktörün, uluslararası örgütün ve diğer grupların varlığı nedeniyle daha karmaşıktır.

Dahası, yasa koyucular ve diğer parlamenter örgütlerin dış ilişkilere katılımı artmıştır. Diplomasi kavramı ve uygulaması, daha parlamento odaklı bir küresel sisteme doğru ortaya çıkan bu hareketten önemli ölçüde etkilenmiştir. Artık ulus-devlet düzeyinde parlamentoların daha fazla katılımı, dünya çapında parlamenter kurumların yaygınlaşması ve parlamenter diplomasinin kapsamının genişlemesi söz konusudur.

Parlamenter diplomasi terimi, parlamenter aktörlerin diğer ülkeler üzerinde etki yaratmak için kullandıkları çeşitli kanallar ve yöntemlere atıfta bulunur. Mevcut çalışma açısından, parlamenter diplomasinin bir bakıma parlamentoların ve parlamenterlerin dış politika alanındaki her türlü faaliyetini kapsayan genel bir terim olduğunu ve Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlara katılımı da kapsadığını vurgulamak önemlidir. Bu nedenle, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların kurulması ve işleyişi, çok taraflı bir bağlamda faaliyet gösteren parlamenter diplomasinin önemli ve vazgeçilmez bir unsurunu oluşturur.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, parlamenterlerin çıkarlarını formüle etmek, kararları, stratejileri veya programları benimsemek, bunları resmi ve gayri resmi olarak, ikna, savunuculuk veya kurumsal baskı gibi çeşitli yollarla diğer aktörlerle etkileşimler halinde uygulamak veya teşvik etmek amacıyla işbirliği yaptıkları kurumlar olarak tanımlanır. Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, özellikle II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra ve Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinin önemli bir unsuru haline gelmiştir. Parlamenter asambleler, platformlar ve ağlar kurumsal ve örgütsel yapılar, kurallar ve prosedürler, yasal statü, üyelik, kaynaklar, faaliyetler ve yetkiler açısından belirgin özellikler gösterdikçe; bölgesel entegrasyon sürecindeki rolleri uluslararası ilişkiler literatüründe giderek daha fazla ilgi görmeye başlamıştır.

Bu tez, ASEAN entegrasyonu bağlamında AIPA'nın oluşumunu ve işlevini analiz etmek için teorik çerçeve olarak sosyolojik kurumsalcılığı kullanmaktadır. Sosyolojik kurumsalcılığın temel öncülü, kuruluşların faaliyet gösterdiği kurumsal bağlamın hem eylem için gerekli maddi kaynakları hem de otoriteyi sağlayan meşruiyeti sağladığı için önemli olduğunu ileri sürmesidir. Bu bakış açısı, normların,

kuralların ve kültürün yalnızca davranışları değil, aynı zamanda dahil olan aktörlerin kimliklerini ve öz algılarını da şekillendirmedeki önemini vurgulamaktadır. Siyasi aktörlerin öncelikle faydayı en üst düzeye çıkarmaya çalışırken çevrelerine verdikleri rasyonel tepkilere dayalı kararlar aldığını ileri süren rasyonel seçim kurumsalcılığının aksine, sosyolojik kurumsalcılık aktörleri eylemleri kültürel özelliklerden etkilenen ve uygunluk kavramları etrafında inşa edilen sosyal ajanlar olarak görür. Sonuç olarak, sosyolojik kurumsalcılık, örgütler içindeki söylem, mit ve törensel uygulamaların ayrıntılı bir incelemesi yoluyla siyasi aktörlerin tercihleri, çıkarları ve eylemleri hakkında içsel bir bakış açısı sunar ve bu da yalnızca AIPA'nın kurulmasının ardındaki nedenleri değil aynı zamanda ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki sınırlı rolünü anlamak için uygun bir kavramsal zemin sağlar. Ayrıca AIPA'nın kurulması ve rolünün çeşitli yönlerini analiz etmede norm yayılım teorisi de faydalı bir analiz boyutu sunmaktadır.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların bölgesel entegrasyon sürecinde oynadıkları ve oynayacakları rol, Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininde yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu düşünceyle, mevcut çalışma, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların yapısının, bölgesel entegrasyona katkılarının ve en önemlisi AIPA'nın ASEAN içinde oynadığı rolün derinlemesine bir analizini sağlayarak bu eksikliği doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın yaptığı bir diğer önemli katkı karşılaştırmalı bir bakış açısıdır. Ana odak AIPA üzerinde olsa da, Avrupa Konseyi Parlamenter Meclisi (AKPM), Batı Afrika Devletleri Ekonomik Topluluğu (ECOWAS) Parlamentosu, Latin Amerika Parlamentosu (PARLATINO) ve Türk Devletleri Parlamenter Asamblesi (TÜRKPA) gibi diğer uluslararası parlamenter kuruluşlar paralel karşılaştırma için kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışma, bu kuruluşların farklı bölgesel bağlamlarda nasıl faaliyet gösterdiği sorusuna ve benzer şekilde bu kuruluşların ilgili entegrasyon süreçlerinde karşılaştıkları özel zorluklar ve fırsatlara daha derin bir anlam kazandırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, AIPA'nın yapısı ve işlevlerinin diğer benzer kuruluşlarla karşılaştırılmasını ve AIPA'nın ASEAN içindeki rolünü daha da güçlendirmek için uygulanabilecek herhangi bir kurumsal yenilik veya stratejinin uygunluğunu da araştırmaktadır.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, katılımcı ülkeler arasında ortak ilgi alanlarındaki konularda parlamenter diyaloğu, işbirliğini ve karar almayı kolaylaştırmak için çeşitli ülkelerden ulusal parlamentoların veya yasama organlarının temsilcilerini bir araya getiren uzmanlaşmış bir kuruluş olarak da tanımlanabilir. Bu kuruluşlar, demokratik hükümeti ilerletme, parlamentolar arası bağlantıları teşvik etme, yasama işbirliğini kolaylaştırma ve küresel sorunları ele almak için parlamenter diplomasisiyi kullanma hedefleriyle kurulmuştur. Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, yasama organlarına ortak hedefler üzerinde konuşma, fikir paylaşımı ve işbirliği için bir forum sağlarken, hükümetler arası kuruluşların çabalarını artırmaya da hizmet ederler.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların evrimi, üç ana dalga boyunca gelişen bir süreç olarak ele alınabilir. Birinci dalga, kökenleri 1889'da Parlamentolararası Birlik'in (PAB) kurulmasına kadar uzandığı için 1889'dan 1945'e kadar olan dönemi kapsar. İkinci dönem, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın sonu ile Berlin Duvarı'nın yıkılışı arasındaki dönemdir. Bu kuruluşların yaygınlaşması II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra başlamış olup, parlamentoları bölgesel bir iç sürecin parçası olarak içeren bölgesel entegrasyon olgusuyla ve bu sürecin meşrulaştırılması ve demokratik boyuta duyulan ihtiyaçla ilişkilendirilebilir. Üçüncü dalga, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların sayısında hızlı bir artışın görüldüğü Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesiyle 1980'lerin sonu ve 1990'ları kapsayan dönemi ifade eder. Bu dönemde Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların yaygınlaşması, artık parlamentolar arası işbirliğini engelleyen ideolojik duvarların kalkması, ulusal düzeyde demokratikleşme süreçleri ve daha güçlü bir parlamento desteğini gerektiren küreselleşme ve uluslararası bölgesel işbirliği süreçleri gibi uluslararası ilişkilerdeki önemli eğilimler ve gelişmelerle yakından bağlantılıdır. Bu yeni aşamaya sıklıkla 'yeni bölgeselcilik' adı verilir ve ekonomik, politik, sosyal ve kültürel yönleri içeren, birincil politik amacı bölgesel tutarlılık ve kimlik oluşturmak olan, bölgesel temelli serbest ticaret rejimleri veya güvenlik ittifakları oluşturma amacını aşan çok boyutlu bir bütünleşme biçimi olarak tanımlanmaktadır.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, (1.) yerleşik bir yasama veya danışma niteliğinde çok taraflı müzakereler için düzenli bir forum olan, (2.) uluslararası bir

örgüte bağlı olan veya kendisi bir örgüt oluşturan, (3.) en az üç devletin parlamenterler tarafından temsil edildiği, (4.) üyeleri ulusal yasama organları tarafından kendilerinin belirlediği usullere göre belirlenen veya üye devletlerin seçmenleri tarafından doğrudan seçilen uluslararası bir kurum olarak tanımlanmaktadır.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların gruplandırılması noktasında, çeşitli parlamenter asamblelerin, platformların ve ağların kurumsal ve örgütsel yapılar, düzenlemeler ve protokoller, yasal statü, üyelik, varlıklar, roller ve yetki dahil olmak üzere farklı özellikler sergilediği öngörülmektedir. Bu nedenle, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşları etkin bir şekilde analiz etmek için çeşitli parlamenter asambleleri, platformları ve ağları sınıflandırmak ve tanımlamak için kavramsal bir çerçeve geliştirilmiştir. Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar parlamentolar arası STK'lar veya parlamenter ağlar; uluslararası veya bölgesel parlamenter örgütler; uluslararası veya bölgesel uzmanlaşmış parlamenter ajanslar ve uluslararası veya bölgesel örgütlerin parlamento organları olmak üzere dört farklı kategoride, yasal statü, kurumsallaşma düzeyi, özerklik ve yetkilerine göre incelenebilir.

Bu sınıflandırma çerçevesinde, AIPA uluslararası bir parlamento örgütü olarak konumlandırılabilir. AIPA, uluslararası bir parlamento örgütü olarak, Genel Kurulların sonunda bağlayıcı olmayan nitelikte ortak bildiriler kabul etmektedir. Dahası, AIPA, mevzuatı uyumlu hale getirmek için üye parlamentoların katılımıyla toplantılar düzenlemekte ve üye ülkelerdeki seçimler vesilesiyle seyrek ve sınırlı katılımlı olsa da seçim gözlem misyonları oluşturmaktadır.

Bölgesel örgütler, özellikle bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinin etkinliğini, meşruiyetini ve demokratik yönetimini artırmak için çeşitli nedenlerle Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar oluşturmaktadır. Uluslararası örgütler ulusal parlamentolar tarafından etkili bir şekilde kontrol edilemediğinden, düşünülebilecek tek çözüm, yürütme üzerinde siyasi kontrol uygulama görevi olan uluslararası organların kurulmasıdır. Bu kuruluşlar, parlamenter demokrasiyi güçlendirerek uluslararası rejimlerin demokratikleşmesine katkıda bulunabilir. Tam parlamenter organlar olmasalar da, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar parlamenter demokrasinin çeşitli

ilkelerini hükümetler arası etkileşim alanına aktarırlar. Daha fazla şeffaflık, daha fazla tartışma, daha fazla hesap verebilirlik ve bu kuruluşlarda alınan kararların daha fazla kontrolü için olanak sağlarlar.

Bu nedenle, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar bölgesel entegrasyon girişimleri içinde demokratik yönetişimi, hesap verebilirliği ve parlamenter denetimi teşvik ederek bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadırlar. Bu kuruluşlar, üye ülkelerden parlamento temsilcilerinin işbirliği yapması, fikir alışverişinde bulunması ve bölgesel entegrasyonun karar alma süreçlerine katkıda bulunması için bir platform sağlamak üzere tasarlanmıştır. Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların ayrıca insanlar arasındaki ilişkileri kurmaya, geliştirmeye ve korumaya yardımcı olarak bölgesel entegrasyonu teşvik etmede önemli bir rol oynayabileceği ve ayrıca daha yüksek politika ve yasama uyumlaştırma düzeylerinde değişim sürecinde kritik bir dönüm noktası görevi görebileceği genel olarak kabul edilmektedir.

Bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinde, bölgesel örgütlerin etkinliğine ve demokratik yönetişimine katkıda bulunan çeşitli işlevlere sahip olan Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, demokratik açığı gidererek ve demokratik hesap verebilirliği, yasama ve denetim işlevlerini, diyalog ve fikir birliği oluşturmayı, kamuoyu katılımını, çatışma çözümü ve arabuluculuğu, danışma ve girdiyi, insan haklarını ve hukukun üstünlüğünü teşvik etmeyi, bölgesel politikaların ve anlaşmaların uygulanmasını izlemeyi, kapasite oluşturmayı, barış ve istikrarı teşvik etmeyi sağlar.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar sağlam bir tarihsel geçmişe ve kapsamlı bir role sahip olsalar da, sınırlı güç ve etkileri, yetersiz kaynak ve kapasiteleri gibi bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerindeki etkinliklerini kısıtlayan bir dizi sınırlama ve zorlukla karşı karşıyadırlar. Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar bölgesel örgütler içerisinde genellikle hükümetler arası karar alma organlarına danışmanlık yapma işlevine sahiptir. Ana hükümetler arası örgütün gündemindeki tüm konuları tartışma yetkisine ve üye hükümetler hakkında bağlayıcı kararlar alma yeteneğine sahip olmayabilirler. Oylama prosedürüne ilişkin kurallar ve oydaşma sağlama gerekliliği karar almada daha büyük bir rol arayan kurumu desteklemeyebilir. Tüm bu faktörler Uluslararası

Parlamenter Kuruluşların etkisini ve etkinliğini sınırlayabilir. Danışma organları olarak Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar, hükümetler arası örgüt üzerinde demokratik kontrol ve gözetim gerçekleştirmek için tam bir yetkiye sahip değildir. Zaman içerisinde yürütme örgütü tarafından kararlaştırılan isteklere ve politika önceliklerine tabi hale gelebilirler. Bu durum, AIPA'nın ASEAN'a bağlı olması ve demokratik kontrol ve gözetim gibi temel işlevleri yerine getirmesine imkan verilmemesi örneğinde de açıkça görülmektedir.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar bölgesel entegrasyonu teşvik etme çabalarında çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaşmaktadır. Bunlar: 1) yetersiz yetkiler ve güç paylaşımı düzenlemeleri; 2) üye devletler arasında bölgesel entegrasyona ilişkin politika hedeflerindeki farklılık; 3) görevlerini yerine getirmeleri için sağlanan kaynakların yetersizliği; ve 4) bölgesel entegrasyona yönelik olarak siyasi liderlerden ve kamuoyundan gelen desteğin yetersizliği olarak sayılabilir.

Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların bölgesel entegrasyon üzerindeki etkisi karmaşıktır ve büyük ölçüde söz konusu kuruluşun belirli özelliklerine, bölgesel örgütün doğasına ve bölgenin entegrasyon sürecine dahil olan devlet ve devlet dışı aktörlerin niyetlerine bağlıdır. Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların doğası, yetkisi ve etkinliği ve bölgesel entegrasyon projesinin kendisi gibi bir dizi değişken, bu kuruluşların bölgesel entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü etkileyebilir. Ayrıca, bu kuruluşların etkinliği, kurumsal yapıları, hükümetler arası örgüt içindeki yetki ve güçleri, üye devletlerin bu kuruluşları destekleme konusundaki siyasi iradeleri, bölgesel örgütlerden gelen destek düzeyi ve bölgesel entegrasyonun genel bağlamı dahil olmak üzere bir dizi faktörden etkilenmektedir. Bu nedenle, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların rolü bölgeler aralarında büyük ölçüde farklılık göstermekte ve yalnızca vaka bazında doğru olarak belirlenebilmektedir.

Güneydoğu Asya Ülkeleri Birliği'nin (ASEAN) tarihi geçmişi, yapısı ve temel öncülleri, özellikle ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinin temel özellikleri, özellikle 'ASEAN Yolu, üye ülkelerin düşük demokratik olgunluk derecesi, düşük kurumsallaşma düzeyi, daha derin entegrasyona karşı isteksizlik, parlamenter boyut olan AIPA'ya yansımaları olan özel bir önem taşımaktadır.

ASEAN, bölgesel bir örgüt olarak yaygın olarak tartışılsa da Güneydoğu Asya'nın ayrı bir bölge olarak ana örgütsel tezahürü olarak hizmet vermektedir ve bölgeselleşme süreçlerinin yanı sıra bölgesel düzeyin küresel ve ulus-ötesi süreçlere yanıt verme ve bunları hafifletmedeki fırsat ve sınırlamalarının özel bir odak noktası haline gelmiştir. Bazıları ASEAN'ı bölgede barış ve güvenliği sağlamanın bir yolu olarak görürken, diğerleri onu neredeyse işe yaramaz olarak nitelendirmiş ve üyelerinin boş yükümlülüklerini görmezden geldiğini söylemişlerdir.

2003'teki ASEAN Concord II Bildirgesi, ASEAN üyelerinin üç işbirliği alanını temel sütunlarla resmileştirmeyi kabul etmelerini sağlamıştır. Bu önemli yapısal reformla; yenilenmiş ve artırılmış faaliyetler getirecek güvenlik, ekonomik ve sosyo-kültürel topluluklar kurulmuştur. ASEAN liderlerinin 2007 yılındaki zirve sırasında bir ASEAN Topluluğu kurulmasına ilişkin resmi bildirgeyi imzalamaları önemli bir dönüm noktasıydı. ASEAN tarihinde ilk kez, ASEAN Topluluğu'nun üç temel direğine, yani ASEAN Güvenlik Topluluğu, ASEAN Ekonomik Topluluğu ve ASEAN Sosyo-Kültürel Topluluğu'na ulaşmak için net zaman çizelgeleri olan yasal ve kurumsal bir çerçeve oluşturulmuştur. Bu temel direklerin her biri için bir plan geliştirilmiş ve hedefler, önlemler ve ASEAN Topluluğu'na ulaşmak için zaman dilimleri belirlenmiştir.

1977 tarihli Dostluk ve İşbirliği Anlaşması'nın (TAC) ikinci maddesi, üye devletlere ve ASEAN'ın işleyişine rehberlik edecek altı ilke sunmaktadır: (1) Tüm ulusların bağımsızlığına, egemenliğine, eşitliğine, toprak bütünlüğüne ve ulusal kimliğine karşılıklı saygı; (2) Her devletin ulusal varlığını dış müdahale, yıkıcılık veya zorlamadan uzak bir şekilde sürdürme hakkı; (3) Birbirlerinin iç işlerine karışmama; (4) Farklılıkların veya anlaşmazlıkların barışçıl yollarla çözülmesi; (5) Tehdit ve güç kullanımından vazgeçme; (6) Kendi aralarında etkili işbirliği (ASEAN TAC, 1977, Madde 2).

'ASEAN Yolu' olarak bilinen bu fikirlerin benimsenmesinin ASEAN üzerinde önemli etkileri olmuştur. Bu nedenle, ASEAN, bölgesel sorunları ele alırken fikir birliğini, diyaloğu ve çatışmasızlığı vurgulayan ve 'ASEAN Yolu' olarak adlandırılan benzersiz diplomasi tarzıyla bilinmektedir. ASEAN Yolu, çatışma

çözümüne yapıcı ve düşmanca olmayan bir yaklaşımı ve üye devletler arasında iş birliğini teşvik eder. Ayrıca bölgede güven oluşturmayı ve istikrarı sürdürmeyi önceliklendirir. ASEAN bölgesel yönetimini tanımlamanın bir başka yolu da, birliğin bütünleşme oranını yönlendiren iki özellik olan hükümetlerin süreçteki liderliği ve elitlerin merkezi rolüdür. Öte yandan, ASEAN Merkeziyeti, ASEAN'ın bölge içindeki belirgin işlevine ve gelişen ASEAN çerçevesine atıfta bulunmaktadır. ASEAN'ın kurumsal yapısı ve esnekliği, örgütün gücüne katkıda bulunmaktadır. Uyum sağlama yeteneği nedeniyle, ASEAN her önemli tarihsel değişimden daha da güçlenerek çıkabilmiştir.

Güneydoğu Asya'daki farklı siyasi rejimlere katkıda bulunan çeşitli siyasi kültürler, Brunei'deki mutlak monarşiden Myanmar'daki askeri diktatörlüğe ve Endonezya ve Filipinler'deki demokrasiye kadar, bölgenin devletlerarası ilişkilerini de tanımlamıştır. Tüm ASEAN üye devletlerinde parlamentolar bulunsa da, bunların çok azı çok partili parlamenter demokrasidir. Güneydoğu Asya, son yıllarda demokratik yönetime doğru önemli adımlar atmış olsa da henüz istenilen seviyeye ulaşmış değildir.

ASEAN'a yönelik eleştirilerin ortak noktalarından biri, insan merkezli bir örgütün eksikliğidir ve bununla başa çıkmanın en iyi yollarından biri ASEAN entegrasyonundaki demokratik açığı ele almaktır. Demokratik açık, bir devlet içinde demokratik bir sistemin uygulanmasının yetersiz olduğu veya var olmadığı bir durumu tanımlamak için kullanılan nispeten soyut bir kavramdır. Demokratik bir sistem için kesin kriterler küresel olarak kabul edilmemiştir, ancak basitçe ifade etmek gerekirse demokrasi, halkın egemenliğe sahip olduğu ve bu gücü yönetiminde kullandığı bir hükümet sistemidir.

ASEAN'ın bölgesel entegrasyon hedefi, demokratik eksiklikten etkilenmiştir. Devam eden bölgesel entegrasyona rağmen, birkaç üye devlette demokratik ideallerin ve normların bozulması endişe vericidir. Üye ülkelerinde ulusal düzeyde demokratik yönetimi aktif olarak teşvik etme söz konusu olduğunda, ASEAN her zaman güvenilir olmamıştır. ASEAN, bir üye ASEAN ilkelerini ve tüzüğünü ihlal ettiğinde, mutabakatla karar alma ve içişlerine müdahale etmeme ilkesi nedeniyle kararlı bir

eylemde bulunamamaktadır. Sınırlı kapsayıcılık ve katılım, AIPA dahil paydaşlarla yetersiz istişare, ASEAN entegrasyonuna ilişkin sınırlı kamuoyu farkındalığı ve anlayışı, ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinin başlıca eksiklikleri olarak belirlenmiştir.

ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinin özellikleri, başta ASEAN Yolu olmak üzere, üye ülkelerin demokratik olgunluğu, düşük kurumsallaşma düzeyi, daha derin entegrasyona karşı isteksizlik, sivil toplum ve devlet dışı aktörlerin dışlanması, sınırlı kapsayıcılık ve katılım, AIPA'nın zayıf statüsü ve ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki sınırlı rolü söz konusu olduğunda parlamento boyutunda önemli sonuçlara yol açmaktadır.

ASEAN üye devletleri Brunei Darussalam, Kamboçya, Endonezya, Laos Demokratik Halk Cumhuriyeti, Malezya, Myanmar, Filipinler, Singapur, Tayland ve Vietnam parlamentoları arasında bilgi alışverişi ve iletişim merkezi olarak AIPA, bölgesel bir parlamento örgütüdür. AIPA, üye parlamentolar ile gözlemciler ve diğer parlamento örgütleri arasında yakın bağları, anlayışı ve iş birliğini teşvik etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, AIPA Güneydoğu Asya halklarını ASEAN Topluluğu'nun kurulmasını hızlandırmayı amaçlayan politikalar hakkında bilgilendirmek açısından hayati öneme sahiptir.

AIPA'nın temel hedefi, ASEAN'ın amaçlarına ulaşılmasını kolaylaştırmak ve ASEAN üye devletlerinin parlamentoları arasında daha fazla iş birliğini teşvik etmektir. AIPA, yasa çıkarma yetkisine sahip olmadığı, kararları yasal olarak bağlayıcı olmadığı ve ASEAN bütçe süreci üzerinde hiçbir etkisi olmadığı için ASEAN Parlamentosu olarak kabul edilebilecek güce sahip değildir. Ancak ulusal parlamenterlere ortak endişeler konusunda etkileşim ve bilgi paylaşımı için bir parlamenter forum sunduğu için AIPA, Güneydoğu Asya'daki siyasi kültürün ve ilişkilerin gelişmesine katkı sunmaktadır.

Başlangıçta AIPA, Avrupa Parlamentosu model alınarak bölgesel bir parlamento kurumu olarak tasarlanmıştır. ASEAN'ın sonraki yıllarda AB benzeri bir yapıya dönüşmesiyle, parlamento kurumunun tam teşekküllü bir ASEAN Parlamentosu'na evrilebileceği tartışılmıştır. Ancak, ASEAN Parlamentosu'nun kurulması fikri

nadiren gündeme gelmiş ve hiçbir zaman ciddi bir şekilde resmi gündemde yer almamıştır.

ASEAN'ın 'İlişkili Kuruluşu' olarak tanımlanan AIPA, ASEAN-AIPA Liderler Arayüzü toplantısı gibi iki örgütün kendi toplantılarına katılımını sağlayan belirli yöntemlere sahiptir. Bu nedenle, düzenli iş birliği kanalları mevcuttur. AIPA, diğer hedeflerin yanı sıra ASEAN'ın hedeflerine ulaşılmasını kolaylaştırmayı ve ASEAN entegrasyonuna parlamenter katkı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, AIPA Genel Kurulu, bölgesel entegrasyonla ilgili tüm konularda ASEAN hükümetlerine bildirge şeklinde yasama girişimleri önerebilir. Bu kararlar bağlayıcı olmayıp sadece ASEAN'a tavsiye niteliğinde olduklarından, AIPA ASEAN'a karşı yasama ve denetim yetkileri edinmemiştir.

Norm yayılım teorisine dayanarak, AIPA'nın bölgesel bütünleşme ve anayasallaşmanın itici gücü olmaktan ziyade, öncelikle yerel ve dış normatif baskılara yanıt olarak geliştirildiği öne sürülmektedir. Her bir bölgesel örgütün "bilişsel önceliğini" değiştirmeden bu yeni normları benimsemek için hükümet liderleri bölgesel yasama organları kurmuştur. ASEAN bilişsel önceliği, yerel organikçi otorite ve devlet anlayışını II. Dünya Savaşı öncesinden ithal edilen Avrupa korporatist görüşleriyle birleştirir. AIPA'nın kurulması ve ASEAN bölgesel entegrasyon süreci çerçevesindeki diğer değişiklikler, çoğunlukla küresel bir kitleye hitap ettikleri, son derece öngörülemez bir bağlamda meydana geldikleri, üye ülkeler tarafından herhangi bir kamuoyu tartışması olmadan yukarıdan empoze edildikleri ve ilgili tarafların kişiliklerini en ufak bir şekilde bile değiştirmedikleri için izomorfik davranış gereksinimlerini karşılamaktadır.

AIPA, parlamenterler için aktif bir platform sağlama ve bölgesel iş birliği ve kalkınmayı desteklemek için yasama faaliyetlerini uyumlu hale getirme ve koordine etme önlemlerini başlatma konusunda yıllar içinde oynadığı pro-aktif rol de dahil olmak üzere, ASEAN'ın bölgesel entegrasyonunun ilerlemesine çeşitli katkılarda bulunmuştur. AIPA'nın ASEAN Topluluğu içindeki temel rolü, çeşitli ulusal parlamentoların ilgili Devlet ve Hükümet Başkanlarının ve karar alma mekanizmasını oluşturan çeşitli ASEAN sektörel organlarının çalışmalarına yardımcı

olabileceği ve destekleyebileceği bir platform sağlamaktır. AIPA'nın temel işlev ve rolleri, yasama iş birliği, bölgesel entegrasyonu destekleme, diyaloğu ve değişimi kolaylaştırma, demokrasi ve insan haklarını teşvik etme, yasa ve politikaların uyumlaştırılması, yasama desteği ve kapasite oluşturma, kamuoyu katılımını teşvik etme ve ASEAN ile AIPA arasındaki kurumsal iş birliğini derinleştirme olarak sayılabilir.

ASEAN ve AIPA tüzüklerindeki hükümlere baz alındığında, AIPA ile ASEAN arasındaki kurumsal ilişkinin oldukça sorunlu olduğu görülebilir. ASEAN Tüzüğü, AIPA'yı ilişkili bir kuruluş olarak tanımlar ve AIPA'ya ilişkin tek referans, diğer iş örgütleri, düşünce kuruluşları ve akademik kurumlar ile sivil toplum örgütleri arasında Ek II'de 'ASEAN ile İlişkili Kuruluşlar' başlığı altında sayılmasından ibarettir. Açıkçası, AIPA'nın ASEAN'ın yasama organı olarak açıkça tanımlanmış bir statüsünün olmaması, AIPA'nın genel performansında ve ayrıca iki kuruluş arasındaki ilişkinin düzeyinde olumsuz etkisi olan önemli bir faktördür.

ASEAN, AIPA'nın önemini kabul etmesine rağmen, ona herhangi bir güç ve yetki vermemiştir. Bunlar, ASEAN'ın demokratik açığına katkıda bulunan önemli eksikliklerdir. Sonuç olarak, ASEAN üye devletlerinin AIPA'yı hükümetleri tarafından belirlenen ASEAN politikaları için bir 'iletim kayışı' olarak gördükleri iddia edilmektedir. AIPA, ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinde şimdiye kadar sınırlı bir rol oynamış, tatmin edici bir performans göstermemiş ve ASEAN'da demokratik yönetimi güçlendirme, ASEAN'ın demokratik hesap verebilirliğini artırma ve demokratik açığı gidermeye yardımcı olma, insan merkezli ve kapsayıcı bölgesel kalkınmayı teşvik etme ve ASEAN karar alma sürecinde daha fazla şeffaflık ve hesap verebilirliği teşvik etme gibi alanlardaki vaatlerini yerine getirmemiştir.

AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki sınırlı rolünün, AIPA'nın kurumsal tasarımı ve ASEAN'ın kurumsal yapısı içerisindeki statüsü, üye ülkelerin desteği ve iş birliği, faaliyetlerine ayrılan kaynak düzeyi ve ASEAN içindeki daha geniş siyasi dinamikler dahil olmak üzere çeşitli faktörlerden etkilendiğini dikkate almak önemlidir. AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki sınırlı rolü, yetki ve güç eksikliği, AIPA'nın kararlarının tavsiye niteliğinde olması ve bağlayıcı olmaması,

ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinde yürütmenin etkin olması, üye ülkelerde yasama organlarının farklı düzeylerde gelişmiş olması, sınırlı kaynaklar ve kurumsal destek gibi çeşitli nedenlere bağlanabilir. Bu engelleri aşmak ve AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki etkisini artırmak için, AIPA'nın üye ülkeler genelindeki yasama yetkisini güçlendirmek, özellikle karar alma konusunda ASEAN ile ilgili gücünü ve yetkisini artırmak, eşit temsili garanti altına almak, yeterli kaynak sağlamak ve AIPA ile diğer ASEAN kurumları arasında artan iletişimi ve iş birliğini teşvik etmek için koordineli eylemlere ihtiyaç vardır.

ASEAN'daki parlamenter deneyim, hükümetlerin örgütsel meşruiyet kaybına yanıt olarak bilinçli olarak uluslararası parlamenter kuruluşlar teşkil ettikleri genel teziyle büyük oranda örtüşmektedir. ASEAN içinde demokratik yönetimi güçlendirme iddiasıyla AIPA'nın kurulması, hükümetlerin önemli uluslararası bağışçılar ve ortaklar ile yerel sivil toplum ve parlamento kitleleri de dahil olmak üzere önemli iç ve dış paydaşlardan tanınma elde etmesini sağlamıştır. Ayrıca, kendi egemenliklerini veya ASEAN karar alma süreçlerinin verimliliğini tehlikeye atmadan bu avantajlardan yararlanmak istemişlerdir. AIPA'nın tarihi bu nedenle stratejik meşruiyetin güzel bir örneğidir.

AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü analiz etmek için, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların işlevlerine atıfta bulunarak AIPA'nın bir parlamenter kuruluş olarak başlıca güçlü ve zayıf yönleri ortaya konulmalıdır. Parlamenter işbirliğinin kurumsallaştırılması, şeffaflık, sinerji ve diğer örgütlerle işbirliği, AIPA'nın bir parlamenter örgüt olarak güçlü yönleri olarak vurgulanabilirken, zayıf yönleri ve iyileştirilmesi gereken alanları, yasal statüsünün belirsizliği, ASEAN karar alma sürecine katkıda bulunacak mekanizmaların eksikliği, kamuoyuna ulaşma ve kamuoyunun taleplerini AIPA'nın çalışmalarına dahil etme noktasındaki sorunlar, seçim gözlem misyonlarının sınırlı niteliği ve AIPA ulusal delegasyonlarının oluşturulmasındaki eksiklikler olarak belirtilebilir.

Tez çerçevesinde AIPA üyesi milletvekilleri ve AIPA Sekretaryasında görevli diplomatlarla yapılan mülakatlar bazı önemli sonuçları ortaya koymaktadır. Görüşülen kişilerin AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki rolüne ilişkin genel

değerlendirmesi 'tatmin edici' olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. AIPA'nın AIPA üye ülkeleri içindeki ve Güney Doğu Asya'daki insanların gözündeki mevcut durumuyla ilgili olarak, katılımcılar AIPA'nın insanların ASEAN'ın hedeflerine ulaşmada katılımını sağladığını ve insanların seslerini duyurmaları için önemli bir kanal görevi gördüğünü düşünmektedir. AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki rolü söz konusu olduğunda, AIPA'yı parlamenter işbirliğini güçlendirmek için önemli bir mekanizma olarak görüyorlar, bu da insanların ASEAN'ın hedeflerine ulaşmada katılımını sağlamanın yanı sıra mevzuatın uyumlaştırılmasında hayati bir rol oynuyor. AIPA'nın parlamento örgütü olarak ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü sınırlayan zayıflıkları söz konusu olduğunda, AIPA'nın bağlayıcı olmayan kararlara sahip bir danışma organı olarak misyonu, AIPA Sekreteryasının gerekli mali imkânlara ve insan kaynaklarına sahip olmaması ve AIPA'nın ASEAN'ın yasama organı olarak görülmemesi ve endişe duyulan konulardaki pozisyonunu yansıtacak ilgili mekanizmalardan yoksun olması AIPA'nın önemli zayıflıkları olarak kabul edilmektedir. AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü güçlendirmek için atılması gereken adımlara gelince, AIPA'nın ASEAN'ın yasama organı olarak yapısına dahil edilmesi gerektiğini, AIPA Sekreteryasının mali ve insan kaynakları açısından güçlendirilmesi gerektiğini ve AIPA'nın ASEAN bütçesinin ve ASEAN Genel Sekreteri'nin onaylanmasında rol alması gerektiğini düşünmektedirler. AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinde daha büyük bir rol üstlenmesi beklentilerine gelince, milletvekilleri ve diplomatlar AIPA'nın bölgede demokrasi ve insan haklarını güçlendirmek için yeni mekanizmalar geliştirmesi gerektiğini, mali ve insan kaynaklarının faaliyetlerini çeşitlendirmek ve görünürlüğünü artırmak için güçlendirilmesi gerektiğini ve AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki etkinliğini artırabilmesi için ASEAN'ın yasama organı olarak tanımlanması gerektiğini belirtmektedirler.

Tez, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların kurumsallaşması ve yetkisi üzerine yapılan bir çalışmada geliştirilen analitik çerçeveyi kullanarak AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki etkinliğini analiz etmektedir. Bu analiz, anayasal statü, kurumsallaşma, kurumsal otorite ve diğer girişimlerle sinerjiler olmak üzere dört boyutta yapılmıştır. İlk boyut olan anayasal statü, AIPA'nın ASEAN ile ilişkisini, AIPA'nın kuruluşu ve hedefleri hakkındaki bilgilerle birlikte ele almaktadır. İkinci

boyut olan kurumsallaşma, AIPA'nın etkili bir şekilde faaliyet gösterme derecesini ifade etmektedir. Üçüncü boyut olan kurumsal otorite, AIPA'nın yetkileri ve yeterlilikleri ile faaliyet özerkliğini ifade etmektedir. Yetkiler ve yeterlilikler açısından, AIPA'nın ASEAN'a karşı karar alma yetkilerine sahip olma derecesi de analiz edilmiştir. Dördüncü boyut, AIPA'nın farklı Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar ile ilişkisini incelemektedir. AIPA'nın uluslararası parlamenter örgüt olarak güçlendirilmesini ele almak için, AIPA'nın ASEAN nezdinde danışma, gözetim, bütçe ve yasama yetkilerinin ölçülmesinden oluşan bir analiz yapılmıştır.

Karşılaştırmalı bir analiz yapmak için, farklı coğrafi bölgelerdeki Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar da incelenmiştir. Bunlar Avrupa'dan AKPM, Afrika'dan ECOWAS Parlamentosu, Amerika'dan PARLATINO ve Asya'dan TÜRKPA ve AIPA'dır. AKPM ve ECOWAS Parlamentosu, yürütme ayağına ait uluslararası örgüte göre daha yüksek güç ve yetkiye sahipken, AIPA, PARLATINO ve TÜRKPA'nın neredeyse hiç gücü ve yetkisi yoktur. Bu nedenle, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların rolü ve gücü söz konusu olduğunda, farklı coğrafi bölgelerde farklı durumlar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu durum anılan kuruluşların bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerindeki rolleri konusunda açıkça tanımlanmış genellemelere ulaşmanın mümkün olmadığını göstermektedir. AIPA'nın sınırlı bir rol oynamasına neden olan faktörler, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların danışma organları olarak içsel özelliklerine, yalnızca bağlayıcı olmayan tavsiye niteliğinde kararlar alabilmelerine ve ASEAN bölgesel entegrasyon sürecinde karar alma süreçlerinde yürütme organının üstünlüğüne atıfta bulunan yapısal faktörler olarak analiz edilebilir. AIPA, tavsiye niteliğinde kararlar alan bir danışma organı olduğundan, bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerindeki rolü sınırlıdır ve etkili olmaktan uzaktır. Sistemik faktörler, ASEAN bölgesinin düşük demokratik olgunluk seviyesine, üye ülkelerdeki rejimlerin demokratik olmayan doğasını örtmek için kozmetik bir adım olarak 1970'lerde AIPA'nın kurulmasının arkasındaki pragmatik gerekçeye atıfta bulunmaktadır. ASEAN ülkelerindeki siyasi sistemlerin açık bir yansıması olan ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinde yürütme organının üstünlüğü, parlamenter boyutun daha fazla güç ve otorite üstlenmesi için çok az alan bırakmakta ve böylece AIPA'nın bölgesel entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü kısıtlamaktadır. Son olarak, AIPA'nın kurumsal ve operasyonel kapasitesinin belirli kriterlere dayalı bir analizini

içeren operasyonel faktörler, örneğin ASEAN ile ilişkinin belirsizliği, 2008'de ASEAN Tüzüğünde ilişkili bir kuruluş olarak tanımlanmasına rağmen hala ASEAN'ın yasama organı olarak tanımlanmamış olması; AIPA'da üye ülke parlamentolarının daimi delegasyonlarla temsil edilmemesi ve ulusal delegasyonların kendi meclislerindeki güç dağılımını tam olarak temsil etmemesi, yani iktidar ve muhalefet partilerinin ulusal yasama organlarındaki sandalye sayılarına göre temsil edilmemesi ve Sekreteryanın sınırlı bütçesi ve personel sayısı gibi AIPA'nın genel kurumsal dayanıklılığını etkileyen örgütsel zayıflıklar olarak sayılabilir.

AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünün artırılmasına yönelik yollarla ilgili olarak, yasama yetkisi ve otoritesinin güçlendirilmesi, politika yapım süreçlerine katılımın iyileştirilmesi, kaynakların ve kapasite geliştirmenin artırılması, daha fazla koordinasyon ve işbirliğinin teşvik edilmesi, diğer ASEAN organlarıyla etkili koordinasyonun sağlanması gibi belirli adımlar atılmalıdır. AIPA'yı güçlendirmek için somut adımlar atılmalıdır, örneğin AIPA'nın ASEAN'a göre yasal statüsünün açıklığa kavuşturulması ve güçlü bir yasal temel sağlanması, yani AIPA'nın bölgesel bir parlamenter örgüt olarak ASEAN Tüzüğünde ASEAN'ın parlamento organı olarak belirlenmesi büyük önem arz etmektedir. ASEAN'ın parlamento organı olarak belirlenmesi, AIPA'nın Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlara atfedilebilen danışma, gözetim, yasama ve bütçe gibi tüm yetkileri üstlenmesini sağlayacaktır. Bu da AIPA'ya ASEAN entegrasyon sürecinde daha aktif ve etkili bir rol üstlenmek için gerekli araçları sağlayacaktır. Bölgesel entegrasyona ilişkin karar alma süreçlerine farklı ve uygun yollarla ASEAN içinde katılım için düzenlemeler ve parlamento girdisinin politika yapım sürecine dahil edilmesi için ilgili ve uygun kanalların sağlanması, her iki kurumun kurucu belgelerinde karşılıklı olarak yapılmalıdır. Bu düzenlemelerin, AIPA tarafından sunulan girdinin bölgesel düzeyde politika yapımına katılımını garanti altına alacak şekilde uygulanması için gerekli adımlar kararlılıkla atılmalıdır. Komiteler daha aktif çalışmalı ve Genel Kurul marjları dışında da yıl boyunca birden fazla toplantı yapmalıdır. Bölgesel entegrasyona ilişkin somut konular toplantıların konusu olarak belirlenmeli ve hazırlanacak kararlar ve öneriler ASEAN'ın ilgili kurumları ve üye ülkelerle paylaşılmalıdır. Seçim gözlemi, AIPA'nın kurucu metninde birincil faaliyetlerden biri olarak yer almalı ve kurumsal standartlara sahip seçim gözlem

faaliyetleri, hem AIPA'nın hem de yapılan seçimlerin demokratik meşruiyetini artıracak bu yasal temele dayanarak hem üye ülkelerde hem de yakın çevredeki komşu ülkelerde uygulanmalıdır. AIPA Sekreteryası, AIPA'nın faaliyetlerini artırmasını sağlayacak ve bu görevi daha verimli bir şekilde yerine getirmek için gerekli personel sayısını sağlayacak şekilde bütçeyi tatmin edici bir düzeye çıkararak finans ve insan kaynakları açısından güçlendirilmelidir. AIPA bütçesi ASEAN bütçesiyle karşılaştırıldığında önemli ölçüde sınırlıdır ve AIPA'nın örneğin ASEAN'daki dört genel sekretere kıyasla bir genel sekreter yardımcısı vardır. Komitelere atanan görevlilerin sayısı da çalışmalarını daha etkili bir şekilde desteklemek için çeşitli konulardaki geniş komite yelpazesi dikkate alınarak artırılmalıdır.

AIPA'nın statüsünün güçlendirilmesi ve bölgesel entegrasyon sürecinde etkinliğinin artırılması, AIPA'nın ASEAN'ın parlamento organı olarak belirlenmesine ve danışma, gözetim, yasama ve bütçe yetkileri kazanmasına bağlıdır. Ancak, Güneydoğu Asya ve ASEAN üye ülkelerindeki mevcut siyasi rejimlerin ve yönetim sistemlerinin demokratik bir yöne doğru evrilmesi ve yönetici elitlerin uzun yıllardır sürdürdükleri korporatist fikirler ve yerel organikçi güç ve devlet anlayışı gibi bilişsel öncelikleri terk etmesi yakın gelecekte mümkün görünmediğinden, AIPA'nın kapsamlı yetki ve otoriteye sahip bir ASEAN parlamento organı haline gelmesi olası görünmemektedir.

Bu çalışmadan, kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturan ilkeler ve çalışmanın birincil konusu olan Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar ile ilgili olarak bazı sonuçlar çıkarılmıştır. Öncelikle, bölgeselcilik tartışılırken eski ve yeni kavramsallaştırmalar arasındaki ayrımı vurgulamak önemlidir. Eski bölgecilik çerçevesinde hükümet dışı aktörlere bölgeselleşme sürecinde bir rol verilmezken, yeni bölgecilik çerçevesinde bunu yapmaya başladılar. Sonuç olarak, II. Dünya Savaşı'nı izleyen yıllarda ve özellikle Soğuk Savaş'tan sonra, parlamentolar ve parlamenterler de bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinde aktif katılımcılar haline gelmiştir. Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar bu çabaların kurumsal yansıması olarak oluşturulmuş ve önemi ve etkinliği Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar çeşitli bölgesel örgütler çerçevesinde yaratılmış olmasına rağmen, etkinlikleri sorgulanmış ve yetkileri ve görevleri büyük ölçüde

sınırlandırılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın bu durum için iki yönlü bir açıklama sunduğu göz önüne alındığında, hükümetlerin, her şeyden önce, bu kuruluşların bölgesel entegrasyon sürecindeki etkisini, onlara gerekli güç ve yetkileri vermeyerek bilinçli olarak sınırladıkları ve süreci öncelikle yürütme organının gözetimi ve otoritesi altında yürütmeyi tercih ettikleri sonucuna varılabilir. Öte yandan, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların bu kısıtlı güç ve yetkiye sahip olmamaları nedeniyle, bölgesel entegrasyon süreçlerinde öngörülen sorumlulukları yerine getirmek için gerekli kurumsal kapasiteye sahip olmadıkları ortaya konulmuştur.

ASEAN'ı Güneydoğu Asya'da bir bölgesel örgütlenme modeli olarak incelemek, özellikle 'ASEAN Yolu' kavramında belirgin olan belirli özelliklere sahip olduğunu ve kurumlarının ve operasyonlarının, öncelikle kurumsallaşmaya karşı isteksizliği nedeniyle nispeten yavaş geliştiğini ortaya koymaktadır. AIPA'nın ASEAN bölgesel entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünün analizi, sorunu daha da net hale getirir. AIPA'nın, özellikle kuruluşunu çevreleyen koşullar ışığında, kamuoyunu entegrasyon sürecine dahil etmek ve insan hakları gibi nedenleri ilerletmek için yurtdışından gelen baskıyı ele almak için sadece kozmetik bir önlem olduğunu iddia edilmektedir. Sonuç olarak, AIPA'ya ASEAN yapısı içinde bölgesel düzeyde karar alma sürecini etkileme gücü veya yetkisi verilmemiştir. Dahası, ASEAN örgütsel çerçevesi içinde AIPA, yasama yetkisini yansıtan bir organ olarak iyi tanımlanmış bir rolden yoksundur. Dolayısıyla, AIPA'nın ASEAN entegrasyon sürecindeki işlevinin, zayıf kurumsal ve insan kaynakları yapısı göz önüne alındığında, bağlayıcı yetkisi olmayan bir danışma organı işleviyle sınırlı olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Ayrıca, siyasi ortam küresel olarak gelişmeye devam ettikçe, AIPA gibi Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların iklim değişikliği, halk sağlığı krizleri, göç ve dijital yönetişim gibi sınırları aşan zorluklar için giderek daha fazla rol ve sorumluluk üstlenmesi beklenebilir. Bu sorunların her biri sınır ötesi koordinasyon ve dolayısıyla çok uluslu bir yanıt gerektirmektedir. Bu tür zorluklara yanıtlar oluşturmada parlamenterler, politikaların bölge genelindeki vatandaşların ihtiyaçlarını ve endişelerini yansıtmasını sağlamak için kritik öneme sahiptir. AIPA, bu tür sorunlar sınırların ötesinden ortaya çıktığı ve bölgesel politika yapım süreçlerine demokratik meşruiyet kazandırdığı için diyalog ve iş birliğini kolaylaştırmada ASEAN ülkelerinin parlamentolarının temsilcisi olarak önemli bir rol üstlenebilir.

Ancak bu, yalnızca ASEAN üye devletleri bölgesel işlere daha fazla parlamento katılımına izin veren daha kapsayıcı bir yönetim modeli benimsemeye istekliyse gerçekleşebilir. Bu durum ASEAN'da karar alma süreçlerinde yürütmenin hakimiyetini dengelemek ve bölgenin karşı karşıya olduğu karmaşık zorluklarla başa çıkmak için açık, hesap verebilir, katılımcı bir çerçeve oluşturmak için elzemdir. Ayrıca, çalışmadan elde edilen önemli bir gözlem, ASEAN'ın bazı üye ülkelerindeki demokratik eksikliklerin, hem ulusal hem de bölgesel düzeylerde parlamenter denetimin etkili bir şekilde geliştirilmesini engellediğidir. Üye ülkelerdeki demokratik kurumların güçlendirilmesi, AIPA'nın daha önemli bir rol üstlenmesi için daha elverişli bir ortam yaratacaktır.

Çalışma ayrıca, Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşlar ve demokratikleşme süreçleri üzerine yapılan araştırmanın farklı bölgelere genişletilmesi gerektiğini yinelemektedir. ASEAN üye ülkelerindeki siyasi sistemlerin AIPA'ya nasıl sınırlamalar getirdiğine odaklanan bir vaka çalışması sunarak, araştırma, demokratik yönetişimin bölgesel düzeydeki parlamenter kuruluşların daha etkili olmasını nasıl sağlayabileceğine dair argümanlar ortaya koymaktadır. Böyle bir analiz daha sonra, özellikle demokratik uygulamaların önemli ölçüde değiştiği bölgelerde, diğer bölgesel örgütlerin ve ilgili Uluslararası Parlamenter Kuruluşların performanslarını analiz etmek için karşılaştırmalı bir çerçeve olarak kullanılabilir.

Tüm bu analizler ışığında tez temel argüman olarak, bölgesel entegrasyona ilişkin konularda parlamenter katılım için bir platform sağlaması da dahil olmak üzere birçok açıdan önemli işlevlere sahip olmasına rağmen; ASEAN ile ilişkisinin kurumsal olarak zayıf ve muğlak olması, bunun sonucunda yasama, denetim ve bütçe yetkilerinin bulunmaması, özellikle ASEAN çerçevesindeki bölgesel politikalara ilişkin karar alma süreçlerine katkı sunamaması gibi faktörlerin, AIPA'nın ASEAN bölgesel entegrasyon sürecindeki rolünü sınırladığı tespitini yapmaktadır.

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